

No Turning Back--Living the surrendered life
February 19, 2006

Song- The Blind Man Sat By The Road And He Cried...

Read- **Mark 10:46-52**

Can you picture the scene? A crowd of hundreds and hundreds of people moving all around Jesus. Everywhere He turns, all he sees is an ocean of people.

You know what that's like. You've been in crowds like that--it was just this past Thanksgiving that I was reminded about what it means to be overwhelmed by the crowd. Only my daughter Jessika could ever get me to go out the day after Thanksgiving to get one of those \$200 laptops that you know will already have been scooped up by some nocturnal customer who was willing to stand outside the Circuit City with blankets and thermos' from 1am to opening time (6am). I bet that was fun! Personally, I'd rather give you \$200 to leave me alone! But, it was bonding time between father and daughter, and you couldn't give me \$200 to change that (although I would be greatly tempted).

You know that there's pushing and shoving and confusion and noise. The noise would have been deafening. Through that tangle of shouts and yelling though--one voice cuts through the noise.

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

You see this man--this blind man--knows he needs Jesus' help.

When I think about what it means to be a disciple--a follower of Jesus, this man reminds me that the first requirement necessary for following Jesus--is to recognize that you need Jesus.

Here's a man so desperate to have Jesus come to him, that he shouts out **"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"** We know what he's asking for--he's asking for healing!

But those people around him yell at him. Be quiet (21 st. century translation--shut up will ya!)

Can I tell you what I know? Blind people in the first century had no social standing. The assumption by most people was--to be blind or to suffer from some kind of physical or mental handicap was some kind of punishment for sin (be it the individual or the parents).

John 9:1-2 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

This blind man's name in Mark's gospel is Bartimaeus-- He was literally and figuratively one of that culture's marginalized people. He was left on the edge of the road (the edge of the crowd) to beg. And beg--he could do well!

But the people around him yell at him--"Be quiet!" But Bartimaeus shouts all the more! **Have Mercy on me!"**

This man reminds me about another quality for following Jesus. It's having a persistence that will not be put off by potential obstacles.

This man knows that Jesus doesn't owe him anything. What he's asking for though, is mercy. And when challenged, he cries out all the more--not for anything that Jesus owes him, but for his mercy.

Following Jesus is all about humility and not about rights and privileges.

Finally, Jesus hears him. And when Jesus hears him, he stops. And when he stops, Jesus calls for Bartimaeus to come to him.

It's like being in the midst of that Day-after-Thanksgiving-Day Sale chaos that Jesus hears the voice of one man crying out for mercy. And he stops, and calls for him to come forward.

Now, before I continue here, you need to see how truly amazing this story is. In the middle of dealing with all this stuff, Jesus has made it known once again where He's going.

(Mark 10:32-34) They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. **33**"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, **34**who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

- **Jesus** is on His way to Jerusalem.
- **Jesus** himself knew he was a marked man.
- **Jesus** knew that it would not be long until he would be arrested and killed.

If we make the mistake of removing Jesus' humanity from him, there's not much to consider here. However if we also know Jesus to be 100% human as well as 100% divine than we have something to consider.

I wonder what anxiety Jesus might have been feeling? I wonder how distracted his thoughts might have been? We find it difficult to listen to our children or spouse if the T.V. is on--but I am amazed that Jesus gives a blind man undivided attention under these circumstances.

I'm amazed that Jesus hears this cry for help--not just in midst of all the chaos and confusion of the crowd, but while he's preparing Himself for His journey to the cross. Amazingly, Jesus calls him to come.

Ah... but look at Bartimaeus! He literally leaps at the chance to come close to Jesus and receive help. Bartimaeus doesn't wait for Jesus to come to him.

This man reminds me about another attribute of a Christ follower...someone who desires to be nowhere else but close to Christ.

So Jesus says to Bartimaeus, "**What do you want me to do for you**" and he responds, "**Teacher, I want to see.**" This beggar asks plainly and directly for his wants and needs. He knows what he is missing and he wants it more than anything else.

And so Jesus responds. Instantly, the blind man can see!

This is the Jesus I want to introduce to you. A Jesus that gave Bartimaeus exactly what he asked for--his sight.

Scripture tells us Bartimaeus did receive his sight--he did get what he asked for. But guess what? he got a lot more than he asked for!

There is something about Bartimaeus that Jesus recognizes and it leads Jesus to do more for Bartimaeus than he had asked for.

Let's rewind the tape: "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked. "Teacher, the blind man said, "I want to see." Now listen carefully to what Jesus said to Bartimaeus. "Go . Your faith has made you whole." Your text probably says, "healed." But don't miss what's really going on here. The thought is that Bartimaeus is whole... Bartimaeus has been put back together--body and soul.

Bartimaeus doesn't just leave the side of the road able to see--he left the side of the road a whole man.

Now don't space out here! Hear me carefully; I am not saying that he wasn't a whole man because he was blind. Being blind was the least of Bartimaeus' problems.

- Bartimaeus wasn't just blind; he was one of the walking wounded.
- Bartimaeus had lived a life of surviving on handouts and leftover pity (he was a beggar!)
- Bartimaeus had made a living out of other people's embarrassment and fear.
- Bartimaeus had most likely lived a life of never getting what he hoped for, dreamed about, or wanted most. He had never been treated with the dignity and respect of a real human being.

When Bartimaeus cried out for help the crowds told this blind man to shut up! His culture robbed him of human dignity and just pushed him to the side of the road.

Hallelujah! Jesus changed all that. Jesus gave Bartimaeus more than his sight -- he gave him his full humanity--He made him whole.

When Jesus looked into Bartimaeus' eyes and saw right down into his soul and saw faith. **Life changing faith!**

This encounter with Bartimaeus reminds me that yes-- **to be a follower of Jesus, you must recognize that you need Jesus.** And yes-- **following Jesus requires a persistence that will not be put off by potential obstacles.** And yes-- **being a Christ follower is to desire to be nowhere else but close to Christ.**

Mark wants us to know that Bartimaeus was more than healed, physically. Mark wants us to know that Bartimaeus followed him along the way. He leaves the side of the road and becomes a follower of Jesus.

Bartimaeus becomes a follower not because Jesus made a deal with him (if you follow, I'll heal you).

He becomes a follower because Jesus transformed his life by giving him more than he asked for.

And I hope some of us can relate to that. I hope that there are some of us who have similar stories of how Jesus has given far more than you've asked. My hope is that there are some here today who have a story of your own that reflects the transforming work of Jesus.

Instead of being satisfied to be blessed and simply contented to go back to an ordinary life, Bartimaeus chooses to go down the unknown road of following Jesus. And the road that Jesus is on is a road to deny self, take up the cross, and follow God. And--this is the same road we are invited to walk on as well.

VIDEO- "The crowd or the cross"

The road we're invited to walk on is one where there's no turning back and where we are called to live the surrendered life.

I believe that Jesus will do for us what he did for Bartimaeus. This morning I invite you to get to know Jesus--to cry out to him in whatever life circumstance you find yourself in and become his follower.

- Can you see yourself standing by the side of the road as Jesus walks by?
- Can you hear yourself crying out to him, "Jesus, have mercy on me!"
- Can you hear him asking you, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Get to know this Jesus who will give you more than you asked for.

The Blind Man sat by the road and he cried.
The Blind Man sat by the road and he cried.
The Blind Man sat by the road and he cried.
He cried oh...

Show me the way!
Show me the way!
Show me the way!
The way to go home...

Jesus hung on the cross and he cried.
Jesus hung on the cross and he cried.
Jesus hung on the cross and he cried.
He cried oh...

I'll show you the way...
I'll show you the way...
I'll show you the way...
The way to home.

Jesus rose from the grave and he cried.
Jesus rose from the grave and he cried.
Jesus rose from the grave and he cried.
He cried oh...

I am the way!
I am the way!
I am the way!
The way to home.

The layman lay by the pool and he cried.
The woman stood by the well and she cried.
The blind man sat by the pool and he cried.
They cried oh...

We found the way!
We found the way!
We found the way!
The way to go home!

Jesus!

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