

What do you want?
Mark 10:46-52

Jesus was visiting a very historic sight. We remember the Alamo. They remembered Jericho.

With 40 years of wandering behind them, they were ready to enter the Promised Land. To do so they had to cross the Jordan River which was overflowing its banks at the time. No problem for God! Making a dry path through bodies of water is one of His specialties. He tells Joshua to have the priests lead the way carrying the Ark of the Covenant. As soon as their feet touched the edge of the water it piled up on their right and flowed away on their left. The people passed over on dry ground with Jericho ahead of them.

Israel's conquest of the Promised Land would begin with Jericho. The Lord explained to Joshua a very unique plan to give them the city. They were to march around Jericho once a day for six days. The only sound was to be the priests blowing their trumpets. The seventh day they were to march around the city the same way six times. The seventh time around they were to combine their shouts with the trumpet blasts, and the walls would come tumbling down.

As the Lord spoke, so it was. The Israelites were given a great victory.

There are other famous names associated with Jericho: Rahab, Achan, and Hiel. You can travel to Jericho and read all about them on big historical marker. But, it would be easier to look them up in Joshua 6 and 1 Kings 16.

Today we are introduced to another guy with ties to Jericho: *Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus*. 1,400 years after

the Lord delivers the city into the hands of His people, He is busy doing some more delivering. He gives Bartimaeus what he wants.

Jesus is all set to travel. As He hits the road we are presented with a bookend. If you buy bookends, how many do you usually get? One? Three? Most of the time you get two – one for this end of the books; one for the other end.

Jesus is leaving an important city in the history of God's people. It is a symbol of new beginnings. He is leaving in the midst of a great crowd of people. And there is shouting: *Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! ... Son of David, have mercy on me!*

At the end of His journey Jesus will be entering another important city, Jerusalem. There will be a great crowd. And there will be shouting: *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* (Matthew 21:9)

As important as this journey is for Jesus, He takes the time to hear what Bartimaeus wants. *Jesus stopped and said, "Call him. And they called the blind man saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you. And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."*

Jesus is a busy man, and do you think He already knows what Bartimaeus wants? I would say He does, and yet He wants to hear from Bartimaeus. It sounds kind of like our relationship with Jesus. He knows very well what we want, but He likes for us to tell Him about it in prayer.

What we see Bartimaeus do does not seem ordinary for a blind person. I sat near a blind man at a chapel service at the Seminary just over a week ago. He kept his things very close to him. Bartimaeus throws off his cloak. He doesn't seem worried

about finding it later. I struck up a conversation with the man in the chapel when the service was over, and at his request helped him make his way out of the building. His movements were slow and cautious. Bartimaeus springs up and makes His way to Jesus. I am not picturing him moving very slowly or cautiously. He hears Jesus' invitation, and eagerly draws near as quickly as He can. His actions make me feel a bit ashamed of the times I have been less than eager to answer Jesus' call.

Jesus calls me to be in His house for worship, and I am, but not always eagerly. And even when I am here, I'm not always paying attention. More than one Lay Minister has heard me sing the wrong words of a hymn because my mind wandered. Just last week Darla spoke up when I was leading us to the wrong page in the hymnal. Maybe you are like me.

Jesus calls me to love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, and strength and to love my neighbor as myself. I am not always eager to do these things. And I often fall short, even when my intentions are good. And there are many times when my intentions are not good. Maybe you are like me.

There is good news for people like you and me, just as there was for Bartimaeus. He responded to Jesus' invitation. He came to Jesus' and told Him what he wanted. Jesus' response was, literally, an answer to prayer: *Go your way; your faith has made you well.* What wonderful words! *And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.*

On Sunday mornings we come to Jesus and tell Him what we want. We confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness. Jesus speaks as I speak. By His command and with His authority I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. What wonderful words! We are forgiven and follow Jesus on the way.

Jesus invites us to His table where He serves as host and meal. He offers His very body and blood in the bread and wine for the forgiveness of our sins. We come to Him asking for forgiveness, strengthened faith, and assurance of life everlasting. We walk back to our pew hearing Jesus's words to Bartimaeus: *Go your way; your faith has made you well.* Go in the joy and peace of the Lord. What wonderful words!

The road Jesus walked from Jericho to Jerusalem to His cross on the hill of Calvary, He walked for you. He walked eagerly and in complete obedience. He would let nothing distract Him from what He needed to accomplish to save you from your sin. What wonderful words He uttered from the cross just before He died: *It is finished.* God's plan of salvation was complete.

With the victory won, Jesus rose from the grave so His disciples might see Him and know that wasn't just the suffering servant – that He was the living Lord, living and reigning throughout all eternity. What unbelievably good news for the disciples!

What unbelievably good news for us! And yet we do believe it. The Holy Spirit has given us the gift of faith. We believe that Jesus is our Savior. We hear His call to come to Him and we respond in faith. We know He will take the time to listen as we tell Him what we want. We believe that He will answer in His good time, in His good way. We live a life full of peace and joy because we again and again we hear Him say to us, *Go your way; your faith has made you well.* Amen.