



Recognizing Jesus, Recognizing Bartimaeus – TouchPoint for October 20, 2021

Mark 10:46-52 (NRSV) ⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” ⁵² Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Grace and peace from the Mystery in whom we live and move and have our being.

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This is the last of the healing stories in Mark’s gospel. It is also the last one in Matthew and Luke. You have to believe that the synoptic gospel writers are trying to get something across here, some major point about Jesus and the disciples and seeing things ... a story of recognition.

Now, it is not a story that makes the disciples look good.

You have to wonder at this point in Mark’s gospel, just how clueless the disciples can be. Bartimaeus, the blind man, cries out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And the disciples and many of the followers of Jesus try to silence him.

But he keeps crying out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And they keep pushing him aside, ignoring him, trying to silence him.

How stupid are the disciples of Jesus? When are they going to get it? When are they going to see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is?

Think of all they have been through. Think of all the healing they have seen according to Mark’s gospel. And still... still... still... Have they not seen him healing a man with an unclean spirit? And healing many at Simon’s house when they were in Capernaum?

How stupid are the disciples? When are they going to get it? When are they going to see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is?

Have they not seen him touch a leper and be made clean? Did they not see a paralytic rise up and walk with sins forgiven? And what about the man with the withered hand?

How stupid are the disciples? When are they going to get it? When are they going to see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is?

The Gerasene demoniac sees it. A gentile man, demon possessed, living amongst dead people sees it. By chapter four of Mark, two demon filled people see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is. Why can't Jesus' disciples?

Did they not see Jesus heal a woman with a blood flow, and a little girl brought back to life? Both females, considered property of men in those days. The least of the least.

And what about healing the sick in the whole gentile region of Gennesaret, where all the people recognized him? THE GENTILES RECOGNIZED HIM!!!

How stupid are the disciples? When are they going to get it? When are they going to see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is?

And then there is the Gentile woman, who corrects Jesus, in front of the disciples, when even he seems to get a little off track from his mission. And he heals her, and marvels at her. And points to her as an example to the disciples of great faith.

A deaf man hears, a blind man sees, a father cries out for healing for his son and admits his doubts, "I believe, help my unbelief?" And Jesus heals the son.

Yet, where are the disciples in all of this. Why can't they hear? Why can't they see? Why can't they acknowledge their unbelief?

How stupid are the disciples? When are they going to get it? When are they going to see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is?

And you have to ask yourself after reading Mark's gospel up to this point, "Who is the blind one in today's passage? Who are the blind ones? Who are most in need of mercy?"

Because the blind man seems to be able to see Jesus and his mission and the disciples don't. The blind man recognizes his need for mercy and the disciples, who include a denier, betrayer and doubter, don't.

So, you tell me, who is most in need of mercy? Who most needs their eyes opened?

YOU TELL ME!!! Who are the real blind ones who need to beg for mercy?

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In the United States today, 37.2 million people live in poverty. 11.4% of our population. More than 1 in 10. I drove by 3 of them on my way home from the supermarket the other day.

I DROVE BY THEM!!!

At the stoplight, I looked away from one of them, not wanting to make eye contact, not wanting to recognize her existence. I preferred to not see her. I preferred to turn a blind eye.

In the United States today, 37.2 million people live in poverty. 11.4% of our population. More than 1 in 10. All crying out for mercy from those of us who call ourselves the 'body of Christ' and 'followers of Christ'. Crying out for mercy, crying out to be seen.

And I drove by three of them on my way home...

with a car **FULL OF GROCERIES...**

How stupid are **WE** disciples? When are **WE** going to get it? When are **WE** going to see Jesus for who he is and what his mission is?

And now I recognize that I am the blind beggar, or the blind beggar is me, just in a different condition. And the command to love my neighbor **AS** myself isn't theoretical anymore.

Because, after reading this passage, and driving by those three, I am left with only this cry from my lips,

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me ... and cure my blindness.”

Amen

Spirit in the Desert

Opening Song

Be Still

(London Fox Taize Choir)

Be Still, know that I am God.

Kyrie Eleison

(London Fox Taize Choir)

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Bible Passage

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

Touchpoint

(Where God's story touches our life story)

In the Arms of God

(Tony Alonso, Marty Haugen, Michael Joncas)

Refrain: Come and rest in the arms of God. Leave your worry and fear. Make your home in the heart of God. God will dry every tear. For the burden you carry will fade within God's care.

Come and rest in the arms of God.

1) Gentle is God's way and humble is God's heart. God's love will light the way that leads to peace. Surely you shall see God's goodness and God's grace. Rest now in God's embrace.

Refrain

2) Do not be afraid. God heals the broken heart. Through grief and disbelief God still remains. God and God alone will be your souls true rest. Fall in the arms of God.

Refrain

3) You are not alone, for God is always near. Come place your doubt and fear within God's care. God will give you rest, and soothe your weary soul. Dwell in the heart of God.

Refrain

The Meal

The Lord's Prayer

(Choirs of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic church)

Benediction

A Celtic Blessing

(Margaret Rizza)

The guarding of the God of Life be on you, the guarding of loving Christ be on you, the guarding of the Holy Spirit be on you, to aid and uphold you each day and night of your life. The guarding of God, the guarding of Christ, the guarding of the Spirit be upon you.

