

ST JOHNS BUCKLANDS BEACH

SERMON FOR SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENTED BY DICK MCDONALD CONGREGATIONAL MEMBER

THEME: THE FAITH TO ASK AND TO FOLLOW

FOCUS TEXT: MARK 10:46-52

SUMMARY OF DELIVERY:

- The healing of Bartimaeus is also recorded in Luke 18:35-43 and Matthew 20:29-34. Together with Mark these 3 gospels are known as the synoptic gospels. Interesting to note that Matthew records that 2 men were healed at the same time!
- This incident near Jericho is Jesus last healing recorded in Mark's gospel. For Jesus the end of the road was not far away – the shadow of the cross now loomed heavily over him.
- Jericho, only 24 kilometres or 15 miles from Jerusalem features several times in Jesus ministry e.g. the parable of the Good Samaritan, the calling down of Zacchaeus etc.
- Visualise the scene. Jesus on his way to the Passover was, as a distinguished Rabbi or teacher surrounded by a crowd of people.
- Many of those would be eager to see this rebel who was about to "invade" Jerusalem and they would not always be friendly towards him. WHY? Because if Jesus was right much of the whole Temple worship was irrelevant and rules bound.
- At the northern gate sat Bartimaeus who asked, what is happening, and then yelled out to Jesus. Bystanders tried to silence him BUT no one was going to take from him his chance to escape from the world of blindness – his outburst stopped the procession and he was brought to Jesus. Jesus has already shown that no one – a leper, a woman with a haemorrhage, little children and now a blind beggar is beyond his care. It is interesting to note that this is the second time that Mark records his healing of a blind man – see Mark 8:22-25.
- We do not know why Bartimaeus was blind or how long he had been blind but in some people's eyes, not all, he was an object to be pitied, cursed or ignored. But maybe there had been some compensations for his blindness? He couldn't work and in a Jewish society his special status as a handicapped

person meant he would have received some financial support.

- Perhaps his blindness might not have been an easy thing to give up BUT he did speak out. Unless we have suffered severe sight loss it is difficult to imagine his true circumstances. Blindness is something, I believe, that most of us would seek to escape!
- Even in the middle of a crowd Jesus acts as if Bartimaeus is the only person who matters. And this happens time and time again as he gives all of himself entirely to one single person.

#### TO SUM UP

- NOTE the persistence of Bartimaeus and that he was prepared to ask for help – a desperate desire and longing for sight and his Faith that Jesus could heal him. He knew precisely what he wanted – his sight.
- NOTE his response to the call of Jesus was immediate and eager – immediately he saw “again” and he followed him.
- Bartimaeus saw Jesus as the Son of David, one who brings healing and sight NOT as the Disciples wanted, which was to sit on thrones with Jesus and reign with Him in triumph. Jesus had asked Bartimaeus the same question that he had asked James and John in v 36 “what do you want me to do for you?”
- AND this blind man showed that of all these people who wanted to be kingpins in the Kingdom he is the most perceptive of all. He saw Jesus as the one who could help him, the Son of David, the Messiah.
- He leaves his cloak, perhaps his sole worldly possession, his begging cloth by day and his blanket by night, and with eyes wide open he follows Jesus to Jerusalem to the acclaim of palm waving crowds, the confrontation at the temple, the last meal with his friends, his arrest, humiliation and suffering, to death on the cross and ultimately to glory. To a life never dreamed of when he sat by the roadside as a blind beggar.
- If we were asked by God “what do you want me to do for you?” How would we answer that question today? There are times when we all need help but do we or are we willing to turn to other people and to God and ask for what we need?
- How much more are we prepared to trust and have faith in God? Job did. We read in Job 1:1 In the land of Uz.....This man was blameless and upright;

the feared God and shunned evil – a righteous man, a man of great wealth and with a happy family life BUT he loses all his own material possessions and his own health fails him but nevertheless he cries out “I know that my Redeemer lives” Job19:25

- A cynic might say that his motivation for righteousness was because it was to his advantage to be so. **NO!** although when tragedy strikes he initially expresses himself with ancient gestures of mourning, tears his robe and shaves his head he falls to the ground **not in weeping but in worship!** Job comes to rest in faith alone and God vindicates Job’s trust in him (chapter 42) by restoring him mightily. Genuine faith could not be destroyed.

**SO**

What is the real essence of Bartimaeus and Job’s miracles, if that is what we can call them?

- a. God is too kind to do anything cruel
- b. God is too wise to make a mistake
- c. God is too deep to explain himself

We put our trust and faith in God.

I like these statements about our FAITH

Forsaking all I take him

OR

Feeling afraid I trust him

And from Hebrews 11:27

Faith is persevering and trusting in “Him who is invisible”

Faith – That mysterious surge of confidence which sometimes arises within a person in a particular situation.

To conclude

Faith is:

- a. a choice
- b. requires perseverance and patience – God may not always respond to our questions with neat pat answers but He will always always answer our questions in his own time and way.
- c. requires expectancy
- d. our relationship with God which essentially is one of trust believing in God’s power to work in our lives.

Faith must be built on the confidence that God’s ultimate purpose will happen.

SO what about us? May God grant us the grace to seek, the courage to be blind no more, and the faith to submit to God, find our delight in Him, pray and obey and hold God's words in our hearts.

**Bartimaeus and Job did not know WHY but they knew WHO – do we?**