

We pick up where we left off in scripture from last week. In fact, we've been in Mark 10 for the entire month of October. We've met some interesting characters this month. We got to see the Pharisees who were trying to trick Jesus into picking sides over the divorce controversy, and how Jesus said we should be more like children, living a simple faith. We then met the rich, young man who couldn't part with his possessions in order to follow Jesus, and last week, James and John who asked to be in places of honor instead of service. They were all asking for something from Jesus. Today's scripture is similar. Let's see what character is in this scripture and what he is asking for Jesus to do.

Mark 10:46-52: "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."

The main character that we have here is Bartimaeus, a blind beggar. He is sitting on the side of the road, begging, when he hears Jesus and the crowd coming. He doesn't see them coming; he hears them coming, so this crowd has to be pretty large. As it gets closer to him, he hears that it's Jesus of Nazareth. He has heard the stories

about him before, that Jesus healed people like him.

Bartimaeus knew this was the moment he was waiting for. His moment to be healed. Often overlooked and ignored, the outsider, knew this was his one shot to be healed, to be an insider. He took it – with boldness and every ounce of courage he could muster, he did his best begging – "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The people did what they always did – tried to silence him. But, he would not let them be successful this time. This was his moment. His coming-to-Jesus moment. He cried out even louder, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" He even shocked himself how loud he was. Before, he let others overpower him and he would shrink back down into his place. Not this time. He knew if anybody could heal him, it was Jesus. No one else could. Nothing else could. He put all his trust and faith in Jesus to bring him wholeness.

Above the noise of the crowd, Jesus heard his cries for mercy, stopped in his tracks, and called for Bartimaeus to come. Bartimaeus threw off his cloak, the one possession he had, and ran to Jesus. He wasn't going to let anything hold him back.

Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Notice this is the same question he asked James and John. They asked to be in places of honor, yet the beggar asked to be healed. Somewhere along his journey, he lost his way, and he wanted to go back to "seeing" the truth and the world through healed eyes. Jesus already knew what Bartimaeus wanted, but he gave Bartimaeus the opportunity to ask, to demonstrate that he had faith in Christ. By asking, he showed that he knew Christ was the only one who could heal him. That faith, as Jesus said, is what healed him.

Matthew and Luke tell a similar story about being healed from blindness. In one, Jesus spits and forms mud to place on

the blind eyes, and another he just touches the afflicted. But, unlike them, Mark says that Jesus heals with a word, “Go,” and it was the man’s faith that made him well. Bartimaeus’ faith and trust in Christ brings about the healing. Sometimes, all we need is faith.

Which character do you relate to the most? Are you the blind beggar? Sometimes you feel like an outsider. You want to believe, but you have this heavy cloak weighing you down. Your affliction makes you an outsider and keeps you from being a follower, but you know you need healing.

Perhaps you relate to Bartimaeus for being bold and putting all your faith in Jesus. Despite being overlooked or silenced by others, you took a chance, cried out for mercy, and was healed. Ever since, you have followed Jesus – you got on the Jesus train.

Or, do you relate to being in the insider crowd? You’ve followed Jesus for a long time, and have formed a close-knit community around you, that it’s hard to let in others from the outside. You feel comfortable with what you have always believed, so hearing someone yell and scream from the outside, makes you want to silence them. You don’t want to hear what they have to say. But, you do point them to Jesus, when he calls.

Or, maybe you even identify with Jesus, who hears the cries of the marginalized, the street people nobody wants and often ignores, and asks them to come to you for help. You ask them, “What do you want me to do for you?” You know what they need without asking, even though they don’t know what they need, but you know, that until they realize what they need, they won’t be healed. But, you still call to them. You still extend mercy.

You may see yourself in several of the characters or you have been in each of

these places during your faith journey. Maybe you experience all three in one day. I know I can, depending on the situation and what kind of day I’m having. Maybe you relate more to the previous characters we learned about this month – the Pharisee who twisted the law for his own benefit, or the rich, young man who couldn’t part with his possessions. Or, even James and John who sought prestige and power over service.

No matter the character, we all ask something from Jesus. Is it for self-gain or for healing? Do you need healing? Do you need to see the truth? Call out to Jesus because he is calling for you. We need to be bold when asking for mercy, even when others try to silence us. Don’t let them silence you. Be bold. Throw off what weighs you down. This is your moment to come to Jesus, to be healed, to get on the Jesus train. We have to take that bold step to demonstrate our faith in Christ, every day, throughout the day. Together, let’s board this train that’s bound for glory! Amen.