



Sermon, Sunday November 3, 2024

"The story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar"

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10:46-52 ⁴⁶They 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. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then 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." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Introduction: In front of the gates of Jericho

Today is the 24th Sunday after Pentecost. In the last year of his life, Jesus came to Jerusalem, was arrested, interrogated, tried, and then crucified. Today's text talks about a special event that occurred just before Jesus entered Jerusalem. If Jesus came down south from the Sea of Galilee along the Jordan River, he would have to pass through Jericho before entering Jerusalem.

Jesus and his party came to Jericho to go to Jerusalem. However, on the street in front of the city gate where people frequently come and go, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting to get alms from people. When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he cried out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Then, people scolded Bartimaeus, telling him to be quiet. Then, Bartimaeus shouts louder, '**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**' Jesus told them to call Bartimaeus, and Bartimaeus throwing off his cloak, jumped to his feet, and came to Jesus. Jesus asked him, '**What do you want me to do for you?**' and he answers, '**My teacher, let me see again.**' Jesus said to him, '**Go; your faith has made you well.**' After those words, Bartimaeus regained his sight and became a disciple of Jesus. This is the story of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, in today's text.

Body: Faith and Salvation

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! What part of this story resonated with your soul? Have you pay attention to the fact that Jesus had the power to heal disabled people? However, in today's text, Jesus' healing power is not the core message intended to be revealed.

The healing power that Jesus shows in today's text is also shown to the religious leaders of the time. We often see these stories of healing in Old Testament prophets.

What we need to pay attention to in today's text, the story of Bartimaeus, is that something special happens in our lives in a coincidence way.

In today's text, Bartimaeus was sitting on the side of the road where people frequented outside the gates of Jericho, following the routine of his life and begging. No one expected that Jesus and his group would pass by the place where Bartimaeus was sitting. If Jesus had gone to Jerusalem through Emmaus instead of Jericho, the meeting between Jesus and Bartimaeus would not have occurred.



Please imagine the heart of Bartimaeus, who met Jesus and cried out, **‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’** He may have heard a rumor about Jesus from someone. Jesus said that the poor in spirit are blessed. Jesus said that if you do not follow the kingdom of God like a child, you will not enter the kingdom of God. Additionally, Jesus criticized the Pharisees and scribes as hypocrites, who were respected by the people of his time. Furthermore, Jesus healed a disabled man on the Sabbath and performed the miracle of feeding five loaves and two fish.

Bartimaeus must have wanted to meet Jesus like this at least once. But there is no chance of him meeting Jesus. Because he was blind, he could not go to Jesus or recognize Him. Even if he went to see Jesus, there was no guarantee that Jesus would meet him. In this situation, Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by the roadside where he was staying. He shouted to see Jesus.

Just as the blind beggar Bartimaeus meets Jesus in today's text, some decisive events happen to us suddenly. The Holy Spirit also comes to us accidentally, suddenly, and at unexpected moments.

However, some people accept these life-critical events sensitively, while others do not. Bartimaeus in today's text was a person sensitive enough to capture the decisive moment in his life.

We can know Bartimaeus's heart through his conversation with Jesus. Jesus asks Bartimaeus, **‘What do you want me to do for you?’** Bartimaeus said to Jesus, **‘My teacher, let me see again.’** In this conversation, it is easy to think that Bartimaeus would naturally want to see because he cannot see. However, most people have a strong tendency to accept their lives and fate as is. People become used to their daily routine and find it comfortable to live that way.

Of course, there may be people who disagree with my thoughts. This is because people make diverse efforts to live their lives. People work hard to make money, work hard to raise children, and pursue hobbies to enrich their lives. However, doing various things and working hard to live our daily lives does not give us a deep experience of God.

According to today's text, Bartimaeus heard Jesus said, **‘Go; your faith has made you well’**. We must not misunderstand the faith of Bartimaeus, which Jesus acknowledged. The essence of Christian faith is not **‘you can do it,’** but **‘you can't do it.’** That is why we can completely entrust our lives and destiny to God.

The Bible declares that the only way for a person to be recognized as righteous before God is through faith. However, because faith is invisible, people focus on **‘actions’** rather than **‘faith.’** Of course, if there are no Christian actions, the faith is dead. However, humans cannot enjoy true peace and satisfaction of the soul by accumulating goodness through actions and efforts.

Apostle Paul clearly realized this. He said people are not justified by the law, but by faith.

Bartimaeus, who appears in today's text, is a man who has nothing to show off to others. There was nothing in his life he could rely on. However, he had a strong desire to escape his fate through Jesus. That is faith.

Conclusion: Bartimaeus becomes a disciple of Jesus

When I was young, I grew up in a beautiful place with a beach. So, during the summer, I often went to the beach with my friends and enjoyed playing in the water. I wasn't good at swimming at the time, so I used a rubber tube to play in the water with my friends. Then, very occasionally, the rubber tube would flip over due to strong waves and the body would be washed away by the waves. At that time, what I depended on to save my life was a line connected to a rubber buoy that was placed in the water to mark a swimming area. I vividly remember holding on to the rubber buoy line until my palms were chapped and bleeding to avoid being carried away by the waves.



Do you know what was going through my mind at that time? I only had one thought: **‘If I let go of this rubber buoy line, I will die.’**

The faith that Bartimaeus experienced today is a similar spiritual event. In other words, it means focusing on the fact that hope in life comes only from a relationship with God.

In today’s text, the story of Bartimaeus, there is a series of steps through which a person becomes a disciple of Jesus. There is a step where people focus only on begging on the roadside outside the city gates. There comes a time when you hear Jesus passing by. There is also a time of crying out, **‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.’** Furthermore, there is the time of hearing Jesus say, **‘What do you want me to do for you?’** There comes a time of saying to Jesus, **‘I want to see again,’** and the time of hearing Jesus say, **‘your faith has made you well’.** Like Bartimaeus, I hope that we all respond sensitively when the Lord approaches our lives and enjoy abundant grace through Him. **Amen!**

