

# Scripture Study

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time—Cycle B



## **Opening prayer**

Jeremiah 31:7-9

(Psalm 126:1-6)

Hebrews 5:1-6

**Mark 10:46-52**

## **Overview of the Gospel:**

- Jesus is on the last leg of his final journey to Jerusalem. He has spent the entire journey trying to break through the spiritual blindness of his disciples and to show them who and what the Messiah really is and what it means to be his disciple.
- He passes through Jericho, an oasis city about 18 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was a major administrative center for the Roman occupiers and the site of King Herod's luxurious winter retreat. On his way out of the city, the crowd is embarrassed by the cries of a blind man begging by the road. Matthew's version of this story (Matthew 20:29-34) tells of *two* blind men. Perhaps Mark mentions only one because Bartimaeus was the bolder of the two and the one who displayed the most faith.
- Bartimaeus (the name means "son of Timaeus") addresses Jesus as "son of David," a messianic title related to salvation, as in Luke 1:69.
- Blindness and other physical ailments were thought to be a result of sin, either the persons or their parents (John 9:1-7). These people were often outcasts who were reduced to begging. Jesus, however, stops and delivers an object lesson on blindness—both physical and spiritual.

## **Questions:**

- In the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, what is God doing for his people as they return from Exile in a foreign land? What does he want to do for us when we return to him in humility and repentance?
- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, what qualities does Jesus possess as high priest of the New Covenant that enables him to respond to Bartimaeus as he does? How can we imitate these qualities of Jesus?
- What is significant about the way that Bartimaeus addresses Jesus (verses 47, 48)? See also 1 Samuel 2:10, 2 Samuel 7:8-16.
- How does he show his faith while the crowd does not? How is he different from the rich young man in Mark 10:17-22? How is his request different from that of James and John in Mark 10:36-37?
- What can you learn about prayer from the attitude and approach of Bartimaeus?
- If Jesus asked you, "What do you want me to do for you?" what would you say?
- Bartimaeus sees with the eyes of faith and is healed. Do you think God still works miracles in individual peoples lives today? Does your faith enable you to see God's work in your life?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 439, 548, 2616, 2666-67**

## **Closing prayer**

*So let us follow Him as our pattern: offering Him for our ransom, receiving Him as our Eucharistic food and waiting for him as our endless and exceeding great reward.* -St. Augustine

**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!**

# "Your faith has made you well"

**Scripture:** *Mark 10:46-52*

**Meditation:** Have you ever encountered a once in a life-time opportunity you knew you could not pass up? Such a moment came for a blind and destitute man, named Bartimaeus. He was determined to get near the one person who could meet his need. He knew who Jesus was and had heard of his fame for healing, but until now had no means of making contact with the *Son of David*, a clear reference and title for the Messiah. It took a lot of "guts" and persistence for Bartimaeus to get the attention of Jesus over the din of a noisy throng who crowded around Jesus as he made his way out of town. Why was the crowd annoyed with the blind man's persistent shouts? He was disturbing their peace and interrupting Jesus' discourse. It was common for a rabbi to teach as he walked with others. Jesus was on his way to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem and a band of pilgrims followed him. When the crowd tried to silence the blind man he overpowered them with his emotional outburst and thus caught the attention of Jesus.

This incident reveals something important about how God interacts with us. The blind man was determined to get Jesus' attention and he was persistent in the face of opposition. Jesus could have ignored or rebuffed him because he was disturbing his talk and his audience. Jesus showed that acting was more



important than talking. This man was in desperate need and Jesus was ready, not only to empathize with his suffering, but to relieve it as well. A great speaker can command attention and respect, but a man or woman with a helping hand and a big heart is loved more. Jesus commends Bartimaeus for recognizing who he is with the *eyes of faith* and grants him physical sight as well.

Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), an early church father, comments on Bartimaeus' faith with an exhortation that we, too, should put our faith in the light of Christ's word:

"The commandment of the Lord shines clearly, enlightening the eyes. Receive Christ, receive power to see, receive your light, that you may plainly recognize both God and man. More delightful than gold and precious stones, more desirable than honey and the honeycomb is the Word that has enlightened us (Cf. Psalm 19:10). How could he not

be desirable, who illumined minds buried in darkness, and endowed with clear vision "the light-bearing eyes" of the soul? ... Sing his praises, then, Lord, and make known to me your Father, who is God. Your Word will save me, your song instruct me. I have gone astray in my search for God; but now that you light my path, Lord, I find God through you, and receive the Father from you, I become co-heir with you, since you were not ashamed to own me as your brother. Let us, then, shake off forgetfulness of truth, shake off the mist of ignorance and darkness that dims our eyes, and contemplate the true God, after first raising this song of praise to him: "All hail, O light!" For upon us buried in darkness, imprisoned in the shadow of death, a heavenly light has shone, a light of a clarity surpassing the sun's, and of a sweetness exceeding any this earthly life can offer."

[*Exhortation to the Greeks 11*]

Do you recognize your need for God's healing grace and light, and do you seek Jesus out, like Bartimaeus did, with persistent faith and trust in his goodness and mercy?

*"Lord Jesus, remove from me the darkness of sin and unbelief and give me eyes of faith to recognize the truth of your word and your saving presence in my life."*

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