



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 22.10.2023

“Bartimaeus”

Preacher

Ps. Nathan Bean

Scripture

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

39 “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

46 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

52 “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Mark 10:35-52

Thought

Mark is always intentional with the way he writes his accounts of Jesus, and today’s passage is no different. Mark is wanting us to see something in these stories, and reflect on our own lives and faith journey.

In the latter half of the account, we read of Bartimaeus crying out as Jesus walks through the crowds. Bartimaeus means “son of uncleanness” and this fascinating detail gives us an insight into the type of person that Jesus seeks. In the ancient near east, people considered someone with a physical disability (such as blindness) to be ‘unclean’, and assumed the disability to be a result of the person’s (or their parent’s) sin. Yet Jesus steps past the layers of tradition and exclusion, and writes the name of Bartimaeus into His story of redemption.



Time and time again, there are crowds of people around Jesus. People pressed against him in the hustle and bustle, yet faith is more than just pressing against Jesus, or being around Jesus, or having knowledge of Jesus - it's about reaching out in faith and encountering Him. Jesus was never overly interested in the loud and bustling crowds, but He always responded to the tiniest whimper of faith.

Knowing about Jesus isn't enough. Having head knowledge isn't enough. Yet when we combine information about Jesus with the tiniest bit of faith, it leads to an encounter.

Jesus asked Bartimaeus what it was that he needed. He could have asked for money (no doubt he had asked many other passers by for that), yet Bartimaeus knew that Jesus could offer him more than that. He saw Jesus as more than a genie in a bottle, and Bartimaeus knew that Jesus had the capacity to not just provide temporary help, but to provide true healing.

We, too, have to come to a point where we make the decision to reach out in faith. To cry out to the Lord "have mercy on me", to truly encounter Him, and to begin to walk the journey with Him. It may not be an easy road, but He promises to walk with us, that our eyes would be indeed open to who Christ is, and to understand that He offers life and life in abundance - more than we could hope or dream of, more than we are asking of Him.

The story begins with Bartimaeus laying beside the road, and ends with Him following in the footsteps of Jesus with new sight, and a new journey ahead.

Jesus knows our deepest needs, deeper than our questions, deeper than our hurts, deeper than our weaknesses. He can bring healing of the body, of the heart, of relationships. Yet He offers even more than that! As we reach out in faith, He invites us to join Him on the journey - it may be a hard road, but there is nourishment on the way, streams of living water, and the promise eternal of a God who loves us still.



Discussion Points

1. How can I know the difference between having knowledge of God, and having a faith encounter with God?
2. Why does Mark record this story directly after the story of the disciples?
3. What is God saying to me today from this passage of scripture? Where am I on my walk with Christ today, and what is the Lord asking of me?

Personal application + Prayer

Dear Jesus,

You, and You alone know my deepest needs, You know when I'm broken, when I need healing, You know when I'm weak. You see me. Open my eyes today, Lord, so that I may truly see and know You. You are my healer, You are my saviour, You are my Lord and friend. You call me to walk the dusty road of life by Your side, and you promise to never leave me. Lead me in Your ways, now and forever.

Amen.