

10.24.21 L30P22 From the Roadside to the Roadway

- Today's gospel reading is about more than a blind man receiving his sight
 - First, the blind man had a name – he was a person – and his name was Bartimaeus
 - Second, he was at the side of the road when Jesus was leaving Jericho, begging for money to live
 - And then Jesus healed him, and Bartimaeus received his sight
- If this was the whole story, it WOULD simply be a story of Jesus healing someone
- But in fact there is so much more
- Infused throughout this story is the language of faith
 - From the very beginning, unlike so many other people in the Gospel of Mark who wonder who Jesus is – from the very beginning Bartimaeus KNOWS who Jesus is
 - Son of David have mercy on me!
 - HAVE MERCY ON ME!
 - Those words are familiar words to us
 - In some seasons of the church year we sing what we call the Krie
 - In the Krie we repeatedly sing, LORD HAVE MERCY ON ME!
 - And in singing that, we are putting ourselves in the sandals, that is we are putting ourselves in the place of Bartimaeus – not because we are blind, but because like Bartimaeus we need, and we call out for God's mercy for us and for the world
- And it is in Jesus that we meet the Son of David
 - David, the ancient king a thousand years before Jesus – David, the ancient king three thousand years before us, who despite his terrible sin was beloved by God
 - David was so beloved that God promised that his kingship would endure eternally through his descendants
 - But this kingship through David's descendants had huge gaps without any king, and the God-promised Davidic kingship was unfulfilled for century after century during the unfolding events of history

- until in Bethlehem, in the city of David, an obscure child was born in manger
 - Instead of a regal, powerful, earthly king like David long ago, Jesus was born, and every Christmas don't we sing along with the angels, "GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING?"
 - Jesus, the infant-king born in obscurity, grew up to become an ordinary-looking teacher and preacher, who nevertheless was the Son of God
- And so it was Bartimaeus, the man who was blind, who could see with eyes of faith even in his darkness, that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-promised king
 - Bartimaeus asked to receive his sight, Jesus gave the man his sight, BUT that's not the end...
 - Bartimaeus followed Jesus on the way... Bartimaeus followed Jesus on his way to Jerusalem where the cross and tomb awaited him
 - More than a healing, Bartimaeus literally became a follower of Jesus
 - Jesus transformed Bartimaeus from a beggar along the side of the road, to a follower who walked the road with Jesus to Jerusalem and the cross
 - And there outside the walls of Jerusalem the cross of Christ cancels sin, the cross and empty tomb conquers death, and the Son of David through his death and resurrection changes the world by pouring out God's mercy
- Now, even 2000 years after Bartimaeus calling out for mercy, and Jesus pouring out God's mercy from the cross and empty tomb – now even 2000 years later when we sing the Kyrrie, calling out to the Lord in song, we are seeking God's mercy, not only for ourselves, but also for the whole world
 - Not just Bartimaeus, but both we and the world need God's mercy
 - We need God's mercy because in the words of Saint Paul, we "fall short of the glory of God. [Romans 3:23]"
 - Our lives are wounded by sin, there is nothing that we can do to earn God's favor, and meanwhile

our world dysfunctionally careens from one crisis to another tragedy

- But God has already had mercy on us. God not only restored sight years ago to Bartimaeus along the side of the road, even now God loves us into faith, and God takes people like Bartimaeus and us who otherwise would live on the edge of road, and makes us followers of the king
- And now, as followers of Jesus, today let us join Bartimaeus and cry out and sing out in prayer for Christ's mercy for us, the whole world, and all its people.
- Please take out a "red" hymnal, and turn to page 138 in the front of the book

- We are going to sing the Kyrie together.
- I will sing the parts in plain print, and you will sing the response that's in bold print, *Lord, have mercy*
- It's been a while since we have sung this in worship, so let's just go over your part. Audrey please give me an F – repeat after me: Lord, have mercy
- Good, now we are going to sing the kyrie, but I want you to pay particular attention to the words that I will sing, and those words will spell out the people and things on which by your singing, you are praying God's mercy...

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above,
and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.