



SIGHT AND INSIGHT

(MARK 10:46-52)

As with all the stories about Jesus healing a person, there is a deeper meaning to the episode of Bartimaeus at Jericho.

The mention of this oasis city tells us that Jesus is approaching his final destination, Jerusalem. Bartimaeus may well have lost his physical power of seeing, but he has insight into Jesus: other people refer to "Jesus of Nazareth", but the beggar recognises him as "Son of David" and calls out "have mercy on me" (not "pity", as our version renders it); this verb is only used of God, so he understands Jesus to be the bringer of God's mercy. When Jesus tells them to call Bartimaeus, the others tell him, "Arise; he is calling you." Mark uses the verb which has overtones of the resurrection (rather than simply "Get up"), which finds an echo in Jesus' final remark to him that "your faith has saved you". He receives more than the restoration of his ability to see physically: he now becomes a disciple of Jesus, following him "along the road", the way to Jerusalem, which for Mark represents the place where Jesus is finally rejected and put to death.

Thus the Bartimaeus story presents a lesson in discipleship: a personal encounter with Jesus leads to a radical decision to follow Jesus along the way which leads to the cross, a theme which runs through the whole of Mark's Gospel narrative. ■

SAY

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

(Mark 10:48)

LEARN

Jericho is an oasis in the Judaeen desert, 15 miles north-east of Jerusalem.

The city was a popular winter resort for wealthy citizens of Jerusalem, which was cold and windy at that time of the year.

Bar is the Aramaic word for "son": the Hebrew equivalent is *ben*.

DO

If you wear spectacles, when you clean them, think of the story of Bartimaeus and your own spiritual way of looking at life. If you don't wear glasses, study a window and think about your spiritual sight in the same way.



REFLECT

We find the use of sight as a metaphor for faith in several places in the four Gospel versions. In this case, it is the recovery of sight which is at the centre of the meeting between Jesus and Bartimaeus. People who have had an operation to remove cataracts from their eyes often say what a difference it has made, not just to their sight but to their whole lives. Even a change of prescription to a person's spectacles can have a dramatic effect. Perhaps the latter might be something that a greater number of

us can relate to: we might have put off going to the optician for some reason or another and so we get used to our vision becoming weaker without realising it. When eventually we do go and it is apparent that new lenses will make all the difference, we wonder why we did not go for a test long before.

Imagine for a moment that Bartimaeus did not pay attention to what was happening around him: he would have missed the opportunity to encounter Jesus and not just to recover his sight,

but the chance to be saved would have passed him by. He would have remained a beggar all his life, but instead became a committed follower. These stories are meant to encourage us to look at ourselves, to see how we have allowed our vision about who we really want to be, to become dimmed. We may not need to have an operation to remove cataracts from our eyes, but we can all benefit from cleaning our spectacles. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice;
turn to the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:7-9

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

The Lord says this:

Shout with joy for Jacob!
Hail the chief of nations!
Proclaim! Praise! Shout!
"The Lord has saved his people,
the remnant of Israel!"
See, I will bring them back
from the land of the North
and gather them from the far ends of earth;
all of them: the blind and the lame,
women with child, women in labour:
a great company returning here.
They had left in tears,
I will comfort them as I lead them back;
I will guide them to streams of water,
by a smooth path where they will not
stumble.
For I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my first-born son.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 125

Response:

What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad.

1. When the Lord delivered Zion from
bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs. (R.)

2. The heathens themselves said: "What
marvels
the Lord worked for them!"
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad. (R.)
3. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. (R.)
4. They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of
song,
carrying their sheaves. (R.)

SECOND READING

Hebrews 5:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Every high priest has been taken out of
mankind and is appointed to act for men in
their relations with God, to offer gifts and
sacrifices for sins; and so he can sympathise
with those who are ignorant or uncertain
because he too lives in the limitations of
weakness. That is why he has to make sin
offerings for himself as well as for the people.
No one takes this honour on himself, but
each one is called by God, as Aaron was. Nor
did Christ give himself the glory of becoming
high priest, but he had it from the one who
said to him: You are my son, today I have
become your father, and in another text: You
are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and
for ever.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord,
anyone who follows me
will have the light of life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 10:46-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a
large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of
Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the
side of the road. When he heard that it was
Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to
say, "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me."
And many of them scolded him and told
him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all
the louder, "Son of David, have pity on me."
Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So
they called the blind man. "Courage," they
said, "get up; he is calling you." So throwing
off his cloak, he jumped up and went to
Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, "What do you want
me to do for you?" "Rabbuni," the blind
man said to him, "Master, let me see again."
Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has saved
you." And immediately his sight returned and
he followed him along the road.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look, we pray, O Lord,
on the offerings we make to your majesty,
that whatever is done by us in your service
may be directed above all to your glory.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

We will ring out our joy at your saving help
and exult in the name of our God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray,
perfect in us what lies within them,
that what we now celebrate in signs
we may one day possess in truth.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

I complained about my eyesight, my
parents would say, "You're lucky you're not
blind." My upbringing gave me a sense of
confidence even if we didn't have much.

Roger McGough

