

Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Mark 10: 46-52

Dear Friends,

The Bartimaeus story seems like a simple miracle story but it is much more than that. It is the story of what is a true disciple. For two and half chapters, Mark has Jesus challenging the disciples to realize his faithful following of the Father's will is the fate that awaits him on the road to Jerusalem.

This will lead to the Cross and the Resurrection.

The disciples just do not get it. They are confused, intimidated and fearful. Three times Jesus announces his fate to be a suffering servant Messiah. Each time the disciples responded in a way that shows their ignorance and confusion.

In the story of Bartimaeus, Mark gives us the characteristics of a true and faithful disciple. First of all, there is a hunger in the heart that leads one to look to Jesus. Bartimaeus would not let the crowd intimidate him so he continued to cry out until he received the call from Jesus.

Jesus has the same question for him that he had for James and John, ***"What do you want me to do for you?" (Mk 10: 51)*** Unlike the shameless ambition of the two brothers, the blind beggar seeks the light from Jesus. This is a symbol of the message of wisdom and truth that Jesus has been trying to teach the disciples.

Thirdly, when Jesus called, Bartimaeus cast away his cloak. This is a very powerful and profound gesture. The cloak was his only possession. He used it to lay out in front to beg for alms which were his only means of life's necessities. Likewise, it was his only protection from the cold nights. Unlike the rich man who went away sad at Jesus' plea to let go of his possessions, Bartimaeus, ***"threw aside his cloak, sprang up and came to Jesus." (Mk 10:50)***

The first part of his response to Jesus' call is in stark contrast to the confusion and fear of the disciples. ***"Immediately, he received his sight and followed him on the way." (Mk 10:52)***

The disciples will only move with the integrity and clarity of Bartimaeus after the Resurrection. The angel will say to the women at the tomb. ***"go tell the disciples and Peter 'He is going before you to Galilee, there you will see him.'"*** (Mk 16:7)

We can look to Bartimaeus and see what we have to do to be a disciple, one who walks with Jesus.

First, we need to recognize the hunger in our heart. We are all blind in many different ways. We all need to go to Jesus to ask for the light that we may see.

Secondly, we need to be open to Jesus message and not impose our message on Jesus as James and John did.

Thirdly, we need to recognize that any true following of Jesus will have a price to pay. We all have many things that we are obstacles to following Jesus. The ***“cloak”*** that needs to be cast away comes in many different forms for all of us. Whatever is the ***“cloak”*** for you, you need to cast it away in order to be free to follow Jesus. We need to put our trust in Jesus and walk with him on the road to Jerusalem.