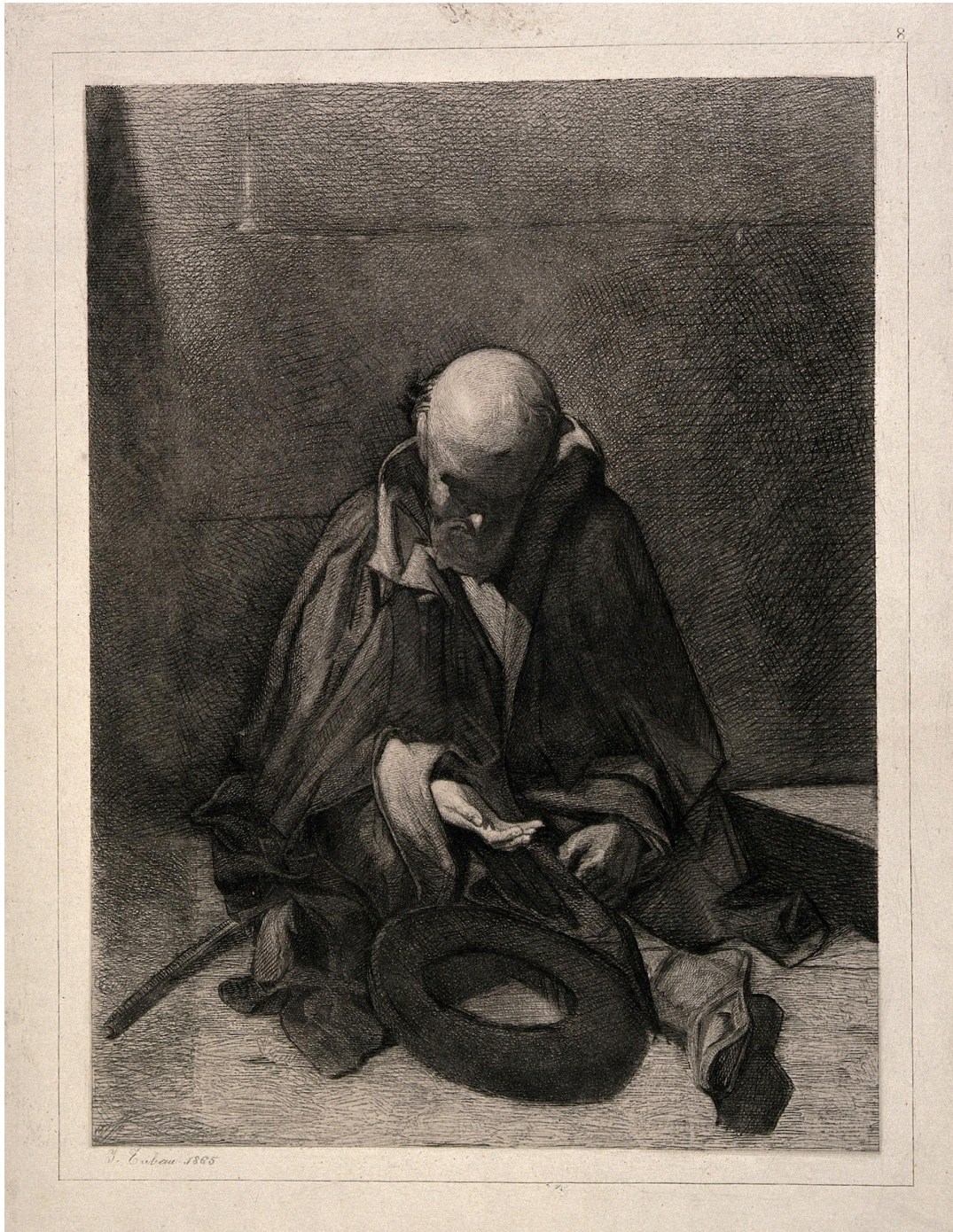


BLIND BARTIMAEUS



READING: MARK 10.46-52

- Why are accounts like this recorded in God's word?
 - To show Christ as the mighty Divine miracle worker?
 - Yes, but there's a deeper intention

- The narrative is designed to point to various things, for us to see ourselves in it.
 - It's so beautifully simple, yet so profound.
- Let's look at what God wants us to see in this.
- There was a great number of people gathered.
 - Like all the clamouring mass of humanity before God.
- A blind man begging by the road as Jesus passes by him
 - At times God is closer to us than others, and seems to pass by, but He'll go on unless we call upon Him.
- The man's is named- Bar-timaeus
 - It means the son of Timaeus
 - And if names are significant (and it seems they are in the Bible) Timaeus means 'highly prized', but
 - Bartimaeus also means 'the unclean'
- Bartimaeus would have seemed so insignificant, a filthy beggar
 - But at the same time he's a precious soul, 'highly prized' in God's eyes- (No one is worthless, even though the world might treat people that way).
 - This beggar is actually the focus of the narrative
- He's a blind beggar
 - This is how we must see ourselves spiritually before finding Christ.
 - We're in a terrible state and condition.
Unable to see ourselves, others, or the way to go in life.
 - Spiritually we're without light and understanding.
 - We need to survive upon the scraps we're given by the world.
- He heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth
 - the One who had come to that place and time.
 - The one who some said was the Christ [the saviour of lost souls], the promised Messiah.
 - He heard, as it were, this preached good news, just like we have.
- So he calls out
 - This can be nothing other than pointing to how someone prays for salvation, crying out to God.
- What does he say?

"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me."
- What a perfect prayer, like a tiny seed of faith!
 - This is the type of prayer God hears.
- He shows he knows who Jesus is.
He calls Him the
"Son of David"

- That was a term all the Jews knew to be for the Messiah.
 - Bartimaeus had obviously heard about this Messiah, and thought this was his only hope.
 - In the same way, you've heard about Him as well.
 - Will you believe like Bartimaeus did?
- He then says
 - *"Have mercy on me".*
 - He asks for what he needs
 - Bartimaeus gets straight to the point whilst he has the chance- he may not have it again)
 - Mercy- for his condition - blind (Spiritually blind also, he needs to be able to see, to see his guilt and to see his Saviour- same with us)
- Opposition -
 - *"And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."*
- The crowd tries to shut him up
 - Your friends, maybe, teachers, the internet, the world, will tell you that prayer is useless.
 - They'll discourage you.
 - *"Don't bother. Shut up about God, and Christianity. Why are you trying to speak to God?!"*
- But you know that your time is now, Christ is passing by close to you!
- These people can't help, they're like the crowd, only Christ can.
- So he cries all the more-
 - And you to must pray with more vigour, and repeatedly.
 - Don't listen to them, don't be disheartened.
 - They don't know what you know.
- He cries a great deal.
 - Not just a faithless prayer once *"God, if you're there, save me, but if not, I'll be ok without you. After all I'm a good person and life offers me so much!"*.
 - **No**, this is a repeated, urgent, persistent prayer of faith, believing that God can save through the promised Messiah, from a pointless material existence which is a living death.
- What is the result?
 - Does Christ just walk on and not hear above all the noise.
 - Or does he hear and ignore this insignificant beggar and focus on the rich important people?
 - No, men look upon the outward appearance but God looks upon the heart.
 - Christ was listening for one such as this, for one such as you!

- Christ is the Son of *David*.
 - That insignificant Shepherd boy who wasn't even considered to be King- but would become a King.
 - And we too can become kings before God if we call to Him, the King of kings, who can defeat our enemies like David defeated Goliath.
- Jesus stops,
 - He stands still.
 - He's been walking by.
 - Is He walking by you?
 - When Man first fell in the garden, the first act of grace from God was that He came to them walking in the cool of the day.
 - He could have immediately rained fire and brimstone down upon them, but He didn't.
 - There is a mercy available.
- Christ stands still.
 - Think about that- what we do and say can change the action of God Himself!
- He stands still.
 - Why? Because He heard someone saying something significant to Him.
 - He heard something He was listening for.
 - God is listening out for true prayers
- All our words- it has been written that on average a person speaks 860,341,500 words in his entire life.
- But what are the words that count, the words that God hears?
 - There must have been many people speaking, shouting,
 - but only these words made Jesus stop.
 - There are many words out there. Written, spoken.
 - The world thinks a small prayer is nothing - "shut up it says",
 - but God is listening for such words.
 - Will they come out of your mouth, or do you think words like these are useless as well?
- Jesus commands him to be called.
 - God commands-
 - He commands the angels who control the elements,
 - He commands them to order the winds of providence, the events that bring a person near to Him. "Bring him to church".
 - Instead of those that tried to shut him up, now this man will hear others - Christians, saying
"Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee."
 - We were told Jesus came with His disciples. He commands them to bring him.

- Those that speak to you about your soul. They can see your need, you're a poor blind soul in need of salvation
"Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee."
- Others may help and encourage you to come.
- They encourage him.
- They tell him to rise from his position.
- They tell him that Jesus calls him.
- This is what all Christ's disciples should do for the lost.

- So he does something. And so must we.
- He **ris**es and **casts away his garment**.
- He **ris**es, when before he was sitting on the earth. His will is starting to move.
 - His position was earthly minded and in the dust.
 - And we are the same, just living for the low earthly things of this poor material realm, not considering the higher things of existence.
 - We must raise ourselves in trust, raise our minds to the spiritual.
 - Will you trust like Bartimaeus did?

- He **casts away his garment**.
 - This is a clear reference to our own unrighteousness, and repentance.
 - We try to cover ourselves with our character, our reputation.
 - But it becomes dirty with corruption, and torn with bad actions, threadbare with repeated sin that makes it old and cold.
 - What we're trying to cover ourselves with isn't good enough!
 - Throw it away! Repent
 - You need to be given a new righteousness from God, a righteousness earned by Christ Himself.
 - That's a perfect Character, a perfect reputation.
 - If you have that, then you can clothe yourself and truly claim to be a righteous man in Him.
 - But try to claim to be a good man without this, then really you are clothed in rags and everyone can see it, especially God.

- So he cast away his old garment, it's not good enough to come to God with.
 - Don't try to bring your 'good works', they're not acceptable.
 - Come just as you are, a poor sinner in need of mercy.

- Christ asks Him for more specifics, He wants the man to know what he is asking for.
 - God bids us to cry out, then, when we pray more, we come closer to Him and He will hear our prayer.
 - We can pray in vague hope, then as we continue we can pray knowing God is listening and can grant our request.

- Jesus says *"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"* Jesus draws the prayer out And the man replies *"that I might receive my sight."*
- At first you may just cry out for help.
 - But as you prevail in prayer, you will ask more specifically for light to see Christ so you can follow Him.

- And Christ will answer your request - the man immediately received his sight.
- Only God can work such a miracle of conversion.
- The first thing he saw was the face of the One who'd healed him.
- What is it to see Spiritually?
 - It is to have the eyes of faith.
- What is that?
 - Here's my definition.

It is **the ability to recognise, believe, and trust the truth of God in the Gospel by a gift of divine insight. An insight that is not contrary to reason and senses, but goes way beyond them.**

- You may ask "how do you know that the Christian Gospel is true?"
- Well you can know much by reasoning, by proofs of science and archaeology, and logical deductions. Internal and external Bible evidences.
- All this is a legitimate help, but in the end they may take you so far but not far enough.
- They can't give you the eyes to see and truly understand the Bible clearly.
- You need to be given your spiritual sight by God.
- If you are, then, when before, you couldn't see it. Now you'll suddenly see it.
- It will be clearly true to you when you read it, and you'll understand it when others can't.
- You'll see Christ as your Saviour, not merely as the Jewish Messiah.

"And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."

- You've received that sight by faith. (You're 'whole', fully formed like new born baby)
- Bartimaeus had trusted and believed enough to call out in a prayer of faith (in this, God had already been working in his heart) this is **saving faith** like a mustard seed- He was given this by God even before he came (why else would he even bother about Jesus?).
- The sight he receives is **ongoing faith** that grows into a mighty tree.
- He *"followed Jesus in the way."*

Now you must go your way.

 - Don't follow someone else.
 - Everyone has their own path to walk in life - we are saved *"unto good works foreordained that we should walk in them"*. Our individual path
 - Our path is to follow Jesus the Christ, where He leads us, that's our way.
- I hope and pray (and we do continually pray for all of you) that you'll find yourself on that way.
- There's only one Person that can save your soul like this.
- And only one way- by His sacrificial offering up of His righteousness and being punished for your sins on Calvary's cross.

- That's the reason we can be saved, and the means is by a true prayer of faith that God hears and responds to.
 - You'll know it when it happens.
- So to recap.
 - We must see our state and condition
 - We're blind, we can't understand and see the truth of things, not even about ourselves properly. We have no help and guidance in the events of life. We're led by other men.
 - We're poor- we don't have the riches of God's blessings.
 - We may have material things but they're like the scraps we beg for, not the precious bread of the Word, the spiritual blessings of a right relationship with God, answers to prayer,.
 - Bartimaeus understood the Gospel about the Messiah - the "Son of David" who was prophesied in the OT.
 - Do you know this? He clearly had heard, understood and realised Christ was his only hope for mercy. That's what we need, a free mercy.
 - We must call to God when He is near. Even when opposed by the world around us
 - We can prevail upon God.
 - He'll stop in His tracks, as it were, and command for us to be brought near.
 - We need to cast away that old garment of unrighteousness. The sins that envelope and cling to us.
 - It can't clothe us properly, it's a useless thing to trust in.
 - We must be rid of it and repent of it
 - We must clearly ask for what we need, and when we do, Christ will answer us and we'll receive eyes to see.
 - Now we won't be grubbing about upon the surface of the earth in worldly, material pursuits, but our mind and actions will be in high, heavenly, eternal things, instead of our minds being in the gutter.
 - We won't try to survive on the scraps begged for, but be able to seek out the good bread and milk of the word and the riches of God.
 - Now we won't be blindly stumbling around in the dark going by our feelings from one thing to another.
 From one experience, one party, one substance,
 But we'll see clearly to walk in the right ways, going in the right direction to our heavenly destination.
 We won't need to live by our base feelings.
 - What a glorious future.
 Not the tragic life of a poor blind beggar with no future.

- no light of the understanding of life.
 - and no blessings of God's riches.
- What future does the secular world promise you?
 - What can they offer?
 - Just scraps of trivial entertainments, to sugar a poisonous pill, a short lived sedative to deaden a complaining conscience and the reality of death eventually.
 - They don't like to talk about it much. "Just live for life! Career, money, relationships, pleasures, possessions" - but no life after death. Just earthly, material things, no spiritual blessings in life, just sit in the gutter by the road of life, in the dust of the earth, as real spiritual life passes you by.
 - Those fine clothes will get old, that car will rust, those pleasures won't last and fade out of reach, that body will age, and all will return to the dust.
- Live, instead, for things that will last.
 - Find the right way and follow Christ the Saviour.
- One day Christ passed by Bartimaeus, but he called out and was healed.
 - Will He pass on by you, or will you call out to Him in prayer and experience the miracle of conversion?