

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost (Ordinary 30)
27-10-2024
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Job 42:1-6, 10-17 Job is humble before God, and his fortune is restored.
Psalm 34:1-8 I praise the Lord always, in Him is deliverance.
Hebrews 7:21-28 Jesus the perfect Sacrifice forever.
Mark 10:46-52 Jesus heals the blind man - Bartimaeus

Introduction

Good Morning Everyone.

Today I'd like to focus on the Gospel Story we have just heard, of Jesus and Bartimaeus.

Firstly, I'd like to look at how Bartimaeus called out to Jesus, and what happened as a result.

And secondly, I would like to ask the question, how do we call out to God in our lives?

Jesus and Bartimaeus

Let's look at the story, and begin by looking at the first two verses:-

⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

In these first two verses we hear about who Bartimaeus is and what he initially does.

Bartimaeus was a blind beggar. Being blind 2000 years ago in Palestine was probably very different to being blind today. It meant you were unable to work, and there wasn't any social security from the government then. Bartimaeus would have had a very challenging existence. On top of not being able to see, there would have been many daily activities he would have had to rely on others for.

So, when Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is coming, what does he do?

Bartimaeus cries out in faith. And what does he say?

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

Bartimaeus acknowledges who Jesus is, and he asks for his help.

By calling Jesus the “Son of David”, Bartimaeus is making a big claim about who Jesus is. David was the greatest king of Israel, and it was known, that the Messiah was to be a descendant of David. So Bartimaeus is not just calling out to any passerby for help. Bartimaeus is actually acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, and calling out in faith, to the Messiah.

Next

Let’s now look at the next two verses:-

⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “**Call him here.**” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.”

In these verses we hear that even when others were ordering Bartimaeus to be quiet, he didn’t stop acknowledging Jesus. In fact, he kept calling, and he even called out, more loudly.

And after we hear of the persistence of Bartimaeus, we hear how Jesus acknowledges him, and in turn calls Bartimaeus to come to him.

Next

Let’s now look at the next two verses:-

⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, “**What do you want me to do for you?**” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.”

In these verses we hear Jesus asking Bartimaeus what he wants, and Bartimaeus asks Jesus to restore his sight. Bartimaeus doesn’t beat around the bush. He is honest and direct when he speaks to Jesus.

Next

Let’s now look at the final two verses:-

⁵²Jesus said to him, “**Go; your faith has made you well.**” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

In these verses we hear how Jesus commends his faith.

Then Bartimaeus has his sight restored, and he FOLLOWS Jesus. The response of Bartimaeus wasn’t just to go off thankfully, but rather to FOLLOW Jesus.

Summing up the Story of Jesus and Bartimaeus

In one sense, this story that we have heard today is a short simple story, of a man being healed by Jesus, but what happens in this story is actually quite profound.

There is an acknowledgement of who Jesus is, and healing in the name of Jesus. Bartimaeus was physically healed, but in the context of the time, it was more like the restoration of a life that had been lost.

The fullness of God is beyond our human understanding, but in Jesus, we are offered more than we can even begin to imagine.

God loves us, and God wants us to know this, through Jesus.

Bartimaeus sensed this and didn't stop calling out to God.

How do we call out to God?

So how do we call out to God, in our lives?

Have you ever called out to anyone for help?

I would like to share with you some examples of calling out for help.

The first example is a simple one of calling out to someone else for help. We have a large display cabinet with a glass front and glass shelves. For those who have watched the movie, "The Castle", it is our "Pool Room". I was adjusting something one day and one of the glass shelves fell down. Luckily my hands were under it. The unlucky thing was that now I was stuck, holding up this quite heavy shelf from breaking and falling on the other shelves below it. I couldn't move but fortunately my wife, Leeza was home at the time. I called out to her for help, and she came and took the things off the shelf so I could manage to put the shelf back in its place. It was so fortunate she was home otherwise, I might have had to stand there for hours, because it was impossible not to drop the shelf without an extra set of hands.

It's a simple example with a good outcome. I called out to my wife, and she listened and came to help me. Sometimes God can help us like that.

Sometimes though, the solution is not that simple. But I have found that calling out to God, in and of itself, can often help us feel more relaxed about the situation, even if the problem is not so easily resolved.

The next example is of calling out to God for help.

One night I was called to hospital, to pray at the bedside of a man in his early seventies, who wasn't expected to live through the night. He had been getting dressed to go out to dinner with his wife, when he had a sudden medical episode, collapsed and became unconscious. The ambulance had brought him to hospital for treatment, but when the doctors examined him, they didn't

think there was anything they could do to help him. His son was in the room with him. He explained what had happened and asked me to pray. I asked what he wanted to pray for. He was unsure, and it was all such a big shock, but he asked to pray for healing, and that is what we did together. The next morning, I found out that the man hadn't died, but rather, he had woken up. The doctors said they had no explanation for what had occurred. It didn't fit with the tests they had taken the night before, but everyone just rejoiced.

The man had another two years with his family, before he died, and I took his funeral.

The son was willing to call out to God. And God answered his prayers in a most spectacular way.

Now God will not always answer our prayers like this. And the man of course did eventually die, like we all will, until Jesus returns. But when we cry out to God, we can have the assurance that Jesus, has promised the Holy Spirit will always be with us. God never leaves us, and we can have peace knowing that no matter what happens, God is with us.

And the presence of God in our lives will transform us, if we call out to God and trust God like Bartimaeus did.

Conclusion

So, what might we take away from today's gospel reading.

I hope we are reminded that Jesus is always there waiting for us to call out to Him.

The question for us is, are we always willing to cry out to Jesus?

Do we lack the belief that Jesus might help us? Do we risk being shouted down by the crowd? Bartimaeus didn't care what the crowd thought. Bartimaeus had realized who Jesus was, and he didn't back away from calling out to Jesus for mercy.

And in calling out to Jesus, Bartimaeus had his life transformed.

I pray each and every one of us will continue to call out to Jesus again and again in our lives. And I pray we will be comforted by the words of those who spoke to Bartimaeus:-

“Take heart; get up, he is calling you.”

Amen.