



Oct. 28/2018 Mark 10: 46-52 & Jer: 31: 7-9

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other Beck

Stone, Naomi. [Love Lifts Our Broken Hearts](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Risking God's Mercy](#)

https://newmelleray.org/Homily_Library

[You tube link](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

If you notice in this picture all the disciples have glasses on. The implication is that they needed their vision corrected. The blind man's darkened glasses indicate he can "see" nothing, but in reality he "sees" most clearly. The disciples are forging straight ahead, not even looking at the blind man. They are on a "mission" and the blind man is a distraction. Jesus however, turns towards the blind man and recognizes a person God loves: a person who has faith in the Father of mercy. Takes some time this week to reflect on the ways you forge ahead and block out the calls of the "blind" around you. Does this make you 'blind'?

Mark 10:46-52

46 Then they came to **Jericho**. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a **large crowd**, were leaving the city, a **blind man, Bartimaeus** (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the **roadside begging**. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, **Son of David**, have **mercy** on me!" 48 Many **rebuked** him and told

him to be **quiet**, but he **shouted** all the more, "Son of David, have **mercy** on me!" 49 Jesus stopped and said, "**Call him**." So they called to the **blind man**, "**Cheer up!** On your feet! He's **calling** you." 50 **Throwing** his **cloak** aside, he **jumped** to his feet and came to Jesus. 51 **What do you want me to do for you?**" Jesus asked him. The **blind man** said, "**Rabbi**, I want to **see**." 52 Go," said Jesus, "**your faith has healed** you." **Immediately** he received his **sight** and **followed** Jesus along the **road**.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted him to do for him. If Jesus asked you this today, how would you answer?

PRAYER: Our world today is filled with so much suffering. The noise and distractions around me often help to mask the cries of those who are calling out for my love. Help me hear with your ears and respond with your heart when someone calls my name, trusting that my love can also heal. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

JERICO: Jericho was the last stop on the way to Jerusalem and a perfect place for begging. Herod had rebuilt it into a luxury winter vacation site in 150 BCE. It was famous for its warm weather, pools, baths, and gymnasias. The road was a favorite place for robbers to ambush those going to the holy city.

The road was dangerous for those who had something to lose, but opportunity for those who had nothing. Have you ever had the chance to gain all at the place where others might lose all? Where are those places today?

LARGE CROWD: By this time, Jesus has a large crowd traveling with him, and that causes the powers to be anxious. It also makes it necessary for Bartimaeus to really assert himself if he is to get noticed.

Have you ever had to get "pushy" in order to have a real need met? What do you remember about the situation?

BLIND: Even though Bartimaeus cannot 'see', he has insight and "sees" who Jesus really is, that is, God's mercy.

What do you think enabled such insight?

BARTIMAEUS: It is unusual to have personal names of people recounted in the gospels, and usually indicates a deeper meaning is being revealed. Bartimaeus means son of Timai, or, son of one who is unclean.

What might that deeper meaning be?

ROADSIDE / ROAD: Mark's entire gospel is one of relentless movement. We are often on the road, and just as often encountering examples of Jesus' real mission with those he meets on the roadsides of life.

What might this tell us about your own life of faith? Where do you most often encounter the God of Jesus?

BEGGING: To beg is to publicly acknowledge your neediness in order to survive.

Have you ever had to beg for something in order to survive? How did it feel? How do you feel when you encounter someone begging?

SON OF DAVID: The son of one, who is unclean, begs from the Son of David who is to usher in "the reign of our father David".

What do you think the crowds made of this? The disciples? Does reading on in the text help you to answer this question?

MERCY: Another way of saying mercy in Hebrew is Chesed or steadfast love. This seems to be Pope Francis' way of using this word.

How does knowing this affect your reaction/response to the word mercy?

REBUKED: The demons are rebuked, Peter is rebuked, and now the people are rebuking Bartimaeus because they don't want any interruptions as they advance steadily toward Jerusalem.

Have you ever experienced a rebuke as you called out in need? Were you quieted, or emboldened by this rebuke?

QUIET: Bartimaeus was told to shut up. He was just a man who was being punished by God for someone's sin in the mindset of the day. He should take his medicine and not bother Jesus or the people who had big plans for Jesus.

What is it like to be told by others to shut up! What message does this give about your very self?

SHOUTED: Instead of being quiet, Bartimaeus calls out all the louder.

Have you ever had the experience of Bartimaeus in that the attempt to stifle you only caused you to get even bolder? What did you learn about yourself in that experience?

CALL HIM / CALLING: Bartimaeus called Jesus, and Jesus then calls Bartimaeus to himself.

Have you ever called upon Jesus and experienced him calling you to himself? If so, what do you remember about that experience?

CHEER UP: Now the crowd encourages, where before they were discouraging. In other translations they say to Bartimaeus that he had nothing to fear.

What do you think happened to make this change?

CLOAK: The poor often owned only one cloak, which was their protection against the elements, and their blanket at night. Beggars spread their cloaks out to catch coins thrown for their needs.

What serves as your 'cloak'?

THROWING: Bartimaeus flings aside his 'security blanket' in order to respond to Jesus invitation to come to him.

What 'security blanket' do you need to fling aside in order to come to Jesus, so that he can heal your needs?

JUMPED: To jump at something is to respond without hesitation.

Have you ever jumped without hesitation at Jesus' call? When? Where?

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?: This is the question most often asked by Jesus when someone calls out to him. Earlier in v. 36, Jesus asks this when James and John come to him with a request.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus never assumes that he knows what people want from him, especially if they have an obvious need? What happens when you have to put into words your need? Does Jesus protect the person's dignity by doing this?

RABBI: One translation of Rabbi is: my great one.

Does this translation tell you something that Mark wants you to know about Jesus?

SEE / SIGHT: While blind, Bartimaeus was able to see who Jesus really was. The disciples had their sight, but were blind to this reality.

Have you ever experienced a limitation that became an opportunity in disguise? Has a lack of limitations ever hampered your ability really 'see'?

YOUR FAITH HAS HEALED YOU: Over and over, Jesus tells people that it was their faith that healed them.

What is he really saying when he tells people that their faith was what healed them?

IMMEDIATELY: In 8:22f, the blind man at Bethsaida received his sight in stages. Bartimaeus' sight is complete without hesitation. These two blind men are like bookends in a section of teachings and miracles in Mark.
What is Mark doing by placing these two men as bookends in this part of his gospel?

FOLLOWED: It has been said that faith is a trust that does not allow it to be dissuaded. Without hesitation, Bartimaeus gets up and starts to follow Jesus.
What, in this gospel text, might help you to follow Jesus?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mk.10: 46-52 // Mt. 20: 29-34; Lk. 18:35-43;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Jer. 31:7-9; [Ps. 126: 1-6](#); Heb. 5:1-6; Mk. 10:46-52;
Revised Common Lectionary: Job 42:1-6, 10-17; [Ps. 34:1-8, 19-22](#); Heb. 7:23-28; Mk. 10:46-52;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

It is not hard to surmise the motivation for those who would protect Jesus and distance him from the crowd. It was likely a mixture of their concern for his safety and well-being along with a dose of their own sense of importance. They are protecting the important man, and in so doing are sharing in his importance. And the more important they make him out to be, the more glory overflows upon them. But this is not Jesus' way. It is not what he has been trying to tell them all along the road to Jerusalem, about being disciples of the Servant. All along, his attention goes out to those who are marginalized and disregarded. This story, the last before Jesus comes to Jerusalem, also follows a story of importance, one we saw last week. James and John missed the point about servant discipleship and were jockeying to land the best seats in the coming kingdom. Today's blind man is presented as their opposite. (Matthew emphasizes this point, by telling about two blind men, contrasted with the two "blind" apostles.) In loaded language, Mark tells us "he received his sight and followed him on the way." [Fr. Robert Beck](#)

When we think of mercy (steadfast love), we should be thinking first and foremost of a bond, an infallible link of love that holds the created and uncreated realms together. The mercy of God does not come and go, granted to some and refused to others. Why? Because it is unconditional—always there, underlying everything. It is literally the force that holds everything in existence, the gravitational field in which "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Just like that little fish swimming desperately in search of water, we, too "swim in mercy as in an endless sea." Mercy is God's innermost being turned outward to sustain the visible and created world in unbreakable love. Cynthia Bourgeault, *Mystical Hope: Trusting in the Mercy of God*

Richard of St. Victor (1123-1173) and his teacher Hugh of St. Victor (1078-1141) wrote that humanity was given three different sets of eyes, each building on the previous one. The first eye was the eye of flesh (the senses), the second was the eye of reason (meditation or intellectual reflection), and the third eye was the eye of true understanding (contemplation). [1] Third-eye seeing is the way mystics see. They do not reject the first eye; the senses matter to them. Nor do they reject the second eye; but they know not to confuse knowledge with depth or mere correct information with the transformation of consciousness itself. They are led still further. The mystical gaze builds upon the first two eyes--and yet widens the lens. It agrees to know by pure presence; it agrees to know without knowing, as it were. Richard Rohr

"It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts."—Qur'an 22:46"

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who look outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens.
Carl Jung

There is no wilderness so terrible, so beautiful, so arid and so fruitful as the wilderness of compassion. It is the only desert that shall truly flourish like the lily. Pg. 323 Merton, *Thomas. The Sign of Jonah.* Orlando. FL. Harcourt & Brace. 1953.

You have been in the storms and swept by the blasts. Have they left you broken, weary, beaten in the valley, or have they lifted you to the sunlit summits of a richer, deeper, more abiding manhood and womanhood? Have they left you with more sympathy with the storm swept and the battle-scarred? - Anonymous

Insofar as it is related to our capacity to ascribe worth to and bestow kindness on ourselves, recognize and honor the sacredness of others, connect with them in their suffering, and take action toward the betterment of their lives, this kind of attuned, nonjudgmental self-relationality is a key component in a spirituality of compassion. Pg. 851.
Hollingsworth, Andrea. *Neuroscience and Spirituality.* Zygon. 12/08.

Acting with compassion, we gather allies rather than multiplying enemies.

Without love and compassion for others, our apparent love for Christ is a fiction. Thomas Merton

Compassion is neither pity nor mercy, but the willingness to offer others, in their suffering, "the gift of our presence." Irma Zaleski

God's whole reason for creating the universe was only to make a place in which He could reveal His compassion.
Rabbi Nachman of Braslau (1772-1820)

"Three quarters of Americans believe the Bible teaches that 'God helps those who help themselves.' That is, three out of four Americans believe that this uber-American idea, a notion at the core of our current individualist politics and culture, which was in fact uttered by Ben Franklin, actually appears in Holy Scripture. The thing is, not only is Franklin's wisdom not biblical; it's counter-biblical. Few ideas could be further from the gospel message, with its radical summons to love of neighbor."

- **Bill McKibben**, *Harper's*, "The Christian Paradox"

The ancients, like modern people, realized that the deprivation of sight could enhance the other senses. The philosopher Democritus is supposed to have given up his sight to free his spirit from distraction. Phineus reputedly blinded himself to become a seer. Wolfgang Schrage points out that in rabbinic tradition the blind person is euphemistically called "one who sees clearly," indicating that although deprived of sight, the blind person's spiritual sight is bright. The blind were thought to have sharp memories and enhanced intellectual powers, such as the blind scholars R. Shesheth and R. Joseph.

Beavis, Mary Ann. From the Margin to the Way. Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion. Spring 1998. Pages 19ff.

Selective mercy is not God's mercy. Limited goodness is not God's goodness. Loving only some is not God's love. We can be merciful, good, and loving to all of God's people and creatures without being foolish, unsafe, or gullible. Wise as serpents and gentle as doves. If we are only merciful, good, and loving toward some it is not really mercy, goodness, or love - it is self-interest, favoritism, and fear. Perfect love casts out all fear. For skeptics and believers alike; conscience, reason and the heart speak this truth. Believers even have it in writing. God's mercy, goodness, and love extend to everything. Are we not called to do the same? Dr. David Hirstius

No miracle in the gospel is offered as a "proof" of anything. Every miracle is a spoken promise and every miracle is a work of human compassion. Jesus says to the beneficiary of the miracle, "Your faith has made you well." He never says, "I worked this miracle to reward your faith." Likewise the gospel says, "He had compassion...He took pity" and this does not say that when he "had compassion" or "took pity" that he called on a reserve source or divine power and worked the miracle, but rather is it always a clear affirmation that the miracles were the work of his human compassion and pity, and they are the promise that those who believe in the "Word made flesh" will by believing, become the word made flesh themselves and, by their pity and compassion, perform the same miracles and will perform even greater works. Real believers in the Word of God by their faith become the real living loving presence of God doing the wondrous works of God by their immediate sacramental presence, not as a remote link in a chain of causality. Parr, Raymond. Process Person Presence. Thomas More Press, Chicago.1990. Page 116..

Jericho: About two miles south of the mound of the older Jericho, an American expedition in the 1950's excavated magnificent pools, palaces, baths, and gymnasias, built by the Hasmonean priest-kings and by Herod in the 150 years before Jesus' ministry. Evidently the warm weather of the Jordan valley made Jericho a Herodian winter resort.

Brown, Raymond E. Recent Discoveries and the Biblical World. Wilmington, DE. Michael Glazier, Inc. 1983. Pg. 57.

The greatest need of our time is to clean out the enormous mass of mental and emotional rubbish that clutters our minds and makes of all political and social life a mass illness. Without this housecleaning we cannot begin to see. Unless we see, we cannot think.

Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Image) 77

Mk. 10.46-52: Blind Bartimaeus (Mt 20.29-34; Lk 18.35-43). 46: Bartimaeus means son of Timaeus. 47: Son of David, have mercy on me was likely a standardized form of words in a petitionary prayer. Some Jewish healers healed in the name of Solomon, the original son of David (Ant. 8.42-49). In Pss. Sol. 17.21, the coming king will be the son of David: "See, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David / at the time which you choose, O God, to rule over Israel your servant." In both Matthew (1.6-7) and Luke (1.27; 3.31) Joseph is given a genealogy that includes David, but Mark does not have any such information. Pg. 82.

[The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

SELECTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pgs.154-157 . To order contact Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2005. Pgs.162-167.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2009. Pgs. 177-180.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2011-12. Pgs. 145-147.

Shea, John. The Hour of the Unexpected. Argus Communications, Allen, TX. 1977.

A PRAYER TO JESUS: Page 12; A PRAYER TO THE PAIN OF JESUS: Page 102;

Mitchell, Stephen. The Enlightened Heart. Harper & Row, NY. 1989. The Love of God: Page 68.