

Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
23rd Sunday after Pentecost
Reformation Sunday
Sunday, October 27, 2024
Scripture: Mark 10:46-52
Sermon: Cry Out

Some years ago in a small village in the Midwest, a little twelve-year old girl named Terri was babysitting her little brother. Terri walked outside to check the mail. As she turned back from the mailbox, she couldn't believe her eyes. The house was on fire. So quickly was the little house enveloped in flames.

Terri ran as fast as she could into the flaming house only to find her baby brother trapped by a burning rafter which had fallen and pinned him to the floor. Hurriedly, Terri worked to free her brother. She had trouble getting him loose as the flames were dancing around their heads. Finally, she freed him. She picked him up and quickly took him outside and revived him just as the roof of the house caved in.

By this time, firemen were on the scene and the neighbors had gathered outside the smoldering remains of the house. The neighbors had been too frightened to go inside or to do anything to help, and they were tremendously impressed with the courage of the twelve-year old girl. They congratulated her for her heroic efforts and said, "Terri, you are so very brave. Weren't you scared? What were you thinking about when you ran into the burning house?" I love Terri's answer. She said, "I wasn't thinking about anything. I just heard my little brother crying."

So many are crying out in our world for help, for love, for forgiveness, for hope, for healing, for faith.

Our scripture lesson today is about a man named Bartimaeus In Mark 10: 46 – 52 Jesus and His followers were walking through Jericho. They were on their way to Jerusalem. Many people were traveling through to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, so it was a carnival-like atmosphere. Venders had booths set up along the roadway to try to attract

business from people passing by them. They were selling and shouting to the people walking by.

A man named Bartimaeus was sitting beside the roadway, begging. Bartimaeus was blind. He didn't have anything to sell; he was just crying out for mercy from those who walked by him. In that society, there was no welfare or social security; if you couldn't work and didn't have someone to take care of you, you had to beg for money or food to eat. Sadly, that still happens in many countries around the world.

It was a very sad situation for Bartimaeus. When he heard that Jesus was walking in front of him, he began to cry out to him, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those standing nearby began to rebuke him and tell him to be quiet. " But Bartimaeus shouted even louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Suddenly Jesus stopped, right in front of him. "Call him," he said to those nearby. So they told the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Jesus heard Bartimaeus crying out for help. Bartimaeus threw his cloak out of the way, jumped to his feet and felt his way to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. Bartimaeus said, "Rabbi, I want to see!"

"Lord that I might receive my sight." His greatest desire was that he might see. This man needed many things, but he felt his greatest need was sight. When you and I came to Jesus we needed sight, we were blind, and God gave us life.

We all need to cry out to Jesus in our blindness and cry out to Jesus in our difficult times. Jesus notices us and brings light to our darkness.

So Jesus healed him and said, "Go, your faith has healed you." Bartimaeus left his begging spot and followed Jesus along the road.

Here is a man who ignores everybody and throws away everything he has to meet Jesus' face to face. And he is never the same again because of it. If Bartimaeus had listened to those around him and had not cried out to Jesus, he would have died a poor blind beggar.

Jesus was walking through Jericho for the last time before his death on the cross and no one knew that at the time. Bartimaeus certainly didn't, but he knew that Jesus could heal him, and he didn't let anything, or anyone get in the way of that. Bartimaeus had heard the stories of Jesus healing people and he knew this was his opportunity to see. Those standing around were telling him to be quiet. I'm sure he was glad he didn't listen to

those around him to be quiet. Jesus heard his crying out and noticed him and showed him love and mercy.

Notice that Bartimaeus threw his cloak aside when he went to Jesus. To us today, that doesn't seem like much, but that cloak, which is an outer coat or robe, may have been the only thing of value Bartimaeus owned. Poor people used their cloaks as covering when they slept and as shade during the day. It kept them warm at night and cool during the day. When he threw it aside to go to Jesus, he was saying, "I'm not letting anything in this world come between Jesus and me."

Imagine, throwing everything of value you own aside - your car, your big flat screen TV, or your computer, to get closer to Jesus. And isn't it true that often, it is those very things, those material possessions we think so highly of, that come between us and God?

Remember, Jesus said we can't love both God and money. (Matthew 6:24) James says that "friendship with the world is hatred toward God." (James 4:4) Bartimaeus didn't want that robe to slow him down as he raced to his healer. He wasted no time getting up and getting to Jesus. He threw his cloak aside quickly and without thought. Let's throw aside anything that comes between us and Jesus.

Come to Christ and tell Him what you want. It is okay to cry out to God telling him your needs and your pain. Notice that when he came to Jesus, Jesus asked Bartimaeus what seems like a silly question, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus knew exactly what he needed but God wants us to tell him our needs. He wants us to confess that we need him to help us. Tell God in your prayers what you need and cry out to God when you are going through a difficult time. What is it you really need? Be honest with God and confess to him that you cannot receive it without him.

Come to Christ and follow Him wherever He goes. Finally, when Bartimaeus was healed, he "followed Jesus along the road." Bartimaeus was compelled to follow Jesus.

For the first time in his life he could be independent of everyone, yet he chose to follow. He had received spiritual insight. His heart, as well as his eyes, had been opened to the Master. Jesus didn't have to ask him to follow. He couldn't do otherwise.

Bartimaeus's story tells us there is a place in the Kingdom of God for everyone. He was a blind beggar, but Jesus found time to help him. Now

his life is changed as he becomes a follower of Jesus. He realized he was always valuable to God.

When we receive forgiveness from sins, when we receive new life, we need to respond by following him. If you have received that wonderful gift of salvation from God, your response should be that now you follow him. When we cry out to God he hears us and knows our heart and what we are going through. Like Bartimaeus we can cry out to God in the midst of our suffering and in the midst of our trials and God will notice us and bring light to our darkness and hope to our heart.

Let us throw off our cloaks and follow our Savior. When Bartimaeus opened his eyes he came face to face with his Savior and Lord. May we all have faith enough to cry out to God and when we look up we also will come face to face with our Savior.

God wants you to depend on Him, because He can and WILL help you, IF you ask Him to. If you're in a difficult condition right now, come just as you are, just as Bartimaeus did and let God heal and touch your life. This is speaking spiritually as well as physically. Bartimaeus humbled himself and sought after God because he wanted VISION, and that's what we need.

Perhaps some of you have given or are on the verge of giving up. God wants to instill a vision in you that lasts. This will only come if you let Him do this. This is our choice, and OUR call. Bartimaeus didn't give up and look how he was rewarded. God allows you to go through things to refine your faith. God wants people who trust in HIM to be visionaries.

Bartimaeus wasn't just crying out for anyone in general He cried out for the Savior, for Jesus, the one who saves, and the one who hears our cry.

Jesus asks all of us the exact same question he asked Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" Instead of asking for power and position, Bartimaeus asks to be healed, to see. It's symbolic of what the disciples and the crowd and all of us really need, to see Jesus as the Savior he actually is.

May we all say, "I once was blind but now I see!"

Cry out to the Lord for he knows your heart and wants you to see him face to face.