

From Darkness to Light

[Mark 10:46-52](#)

Today I would like to take us on a journey from darkness into light. Picture if you will a dark time in your life – a time when it seemed as if you would never see the sunrise again. We are accompanied on our journey by Bartimaeus – a blind beggar in Jericho. He too takes a literal journey from darkness into light. While our journey may be more spiritual, at times perhaps our darkness can wrap around us to the point where we struggle to see the path in front of us.

I.

Our starting point for the journey is a state of complete blindness. Perhaps we are like Bartimaeus in that we are sitting on the side of the road virtually unnoticed by those who seem to have their path clearly lit. I remember a feeling of total darkness when I lost my job. I also felt plunged into darkness after

experiencing my call to ministry, as nothing but confusion surrounded me. Perhaps there is a time in your life when you felt distanced from God – when the confusion of life and hardships shrouded your spiritual vision.

And so, we find Bartimaeus sitting on the side of the road as he probably did most days, hoping for the compassion of his neighbors so he could live to see another day. In spite of his blindness, Bartimaeus ventured to the market each day. Perhaps we too can find a glimmer of hope and continue on in spite of our feelings of despair. Think of the dark period you went through collectively as a church. You functioned without a pastor for eight months, yet you continued on as a congregation. Or perhaps you have found a time when your faith was shaken, yet you still held on to a strand of faith. A line from a song

written by folk singer Kate Wolfe seems to fit as she states,

“Sometimes the strongest love hangs by such a slender thread.”

II.

Sometimes in darkness, we find a heightened awareness of our other senses. This was most likely the case with Bartimaeus when he heard the commotion and realized it was none other than Jesus of Nazareth who was about to pass by. Talk about an opportunity to boost one’s faith! He was most certainly not letting this get away from him. Bartimaeus was able to call on his measure of faith and reach out to the one who could change his state of darkness. Maybe we, too, have found ourselves calling out to God in the midst of despair and confusion. I know I did. I could not understand why I would have lost my job at the peak of my career. Perhaps you have found yourself reaching out to God in the midst of a difficult trial, or a bout of illness, or

a time when you question why you believe in this whole Christian thing in the first place. Yet in spite of the darkness, perhaps we can sense the Son of God passing by – we hear Jesus as that still small voice. We make that critical decision to call out to God instead of letting the moment and opportunity pass us by.

III.

And so, Bartimaeus cries out to Jesus, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” And wouldn’t you know it; the naysayers are ever present ready to put a stop to his cries. This would be the part in the journey when you see the end – the triumph is within your grasp and there are those around you that tell you your quest is foolish. Perhaps they are telling you that God has abandoned you. These naysayers can be the forces of doubt or fear or confusion. In my case, I was my own naysayer as I tried

to tell God it was a crazy idea to call me to the ministry. While I had called out to God to use me more fully, I also cried out to God to say most assuredly, “You’ve got the wrong person!” Perhaps the doubts may have crept in during the time you were functioning in the absence of a pastor – “should we continue on?” “Is it worth it?” One thing we know is true – God can make a way when there is no way.

IV.

So in spite of those around him telling him to keep quiet, Bartimaeus cries out even louder – “Son of David, have mercy on me!” This time Jesus reacts – he stops, and calls Bartimaeus to him. I find it interesting how quickly the naysayers change their tune. They become Bartimaeus’ encouragers. They tell him, “Take heart; get up. He is calling you.” In other words, they are saying, “Hey, this is your lucky day!” Maybe we too

have felt this. Our doubts take a back seat when we dig in with our faith and continue on. When my husband told me, “I’m not calling you Reverend,” as his only comment to my confession of being called to the ministry, I knew I could continue on in spite of my doubts! I know we have felt this collectively when others see a small congregation, yet we have seen the power of God at work here as we assembled 26 shoe boxes of gifts for Samaritan’s Purse, and as we have been a part of the incredible generosity shown to needy families in our area every year.

V.

We find ourselves standing with Bartimaeus in the presence of Jesus, saying, “My Teacher, let me see again.” Many would say, “Why would Jesus need Bartimaeus to ask for his healing?” Perhaps we wonder why we need to pray when God should know everything anyway. This, too, seems to be our expression

of faith. We walk through the darkness, yet we keep walking. We question God through our doubts and fears, yet we keep walking. We arrive at a place of communion with the Holy One, yet we keep on until we have made our petition and requested the light. At times like these we may be gripping our threads of faith with more determination than ever. As a congregation we asked the questions, “God, what do you want us to do?” “What is our purpose?” The turning point for Bartimaeus is when Jesus says, “Go, your faith has made you well.” “*Your faith has made you well!*” **Your faith has made you well!** Bartimaeus completed his journey from darkness into light. We, too, have come into the light. We, too, are children of the light.

One of the most famous of all hymns is *Amazing Grace*. I believe you may be aware of the story of the author John

Newton who wrote the lyrics of this song, yet you may not know that the composer of the melody is unknown. Part of Newton's life was spent as a captain of a slave ship. Wintley Phipps shares some observations concerning this song. What we know as spirituals in general originated from African slaves coming to America. Spirituals are based on a unique scale of music which constitutes only 5 notes. What was born in the galleys of a slave ship became the foundation for the most powerful spiritual probably ever written. Most likely, the tune was sung or hummed by the slaves aboard Newton's ship. In my opinion, the most moving line in this song is, "Was blind but now I see." Our blindness is gone! Our differences are gone! Our doubts are gone! Our fears are gone! We are children of the light! God has taken away our blindness and now we see! Hallelujah!

So we have completed this journey from utter darkness into the light of God. As children of the light, we are challenged to walk in the light. We are challenged to ward off our doubts and fears and trust in almighty God to see us through the trials of life. Let us help others along their journey as we share God's light with those in need. And the church said, 'Amen.'