

Faith Like Bartimaeus

Mark 10:46-52

We laugh and cry based upon the circumstances in our life. If the circumstances surrounding our life are hard and difficult, we will live with suffering and pain in our mind. However if the circumstance surrounding our life are peaceful and happy, we will live with joy in our mind. Especially for Christians like us, church is a very important experience for our life. It can also contribute to making our life happy or sad. But the problem is that we cannot control the circumstances as we wish so we are driven to despair and trouble.

Today's scripture tells a beautiful story about Bartimaeus who God gave a very painful life but he changed his life from suffering to hope. Bartimaeus in today's scripture is a blind man and was sitting by the roadside begging. One day Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving Jericho. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

How poor is this blind man? Nobody had the heart to take care of him. Many criticize him saying, "What kind of sin has made him to become blind?" Have you thought about people who are blind? Helen Keller, was blind, dumb and, deaf, yet wrote a book titled, "If I Could Open My Eyes For 3 Days." Helen Keller had lived with unhappiness in her life because since she was very young she couldn't see or hear, so finally she was unable to talk. It took three months for her tutor to teach her the word water. However, she never gave up learning and continually worked very hard until she eventually earned her doctoral degree. She inspired the disable with great courage and achieved even more than most healthy people. Helen Keller imagined in her book "If I Could Open My Eyes For 3 Days" things that she was able to see. "On the first day, I want to see friends, a simple and innocent baby, the beautiful nature in a forest and a western red sky. On the second day, I want to see night changing to day, a work of art at an art gallery, and a movie at night. On the third day, I want to see the sun rise, people walking down the street back and forth, a slum, a factory and a park full of children playing." Then she left this sentence to the readers. "Please use your eyes to see as if tomorrow is the last day. Please use your ears to listen to the sounds of horses, birds, and strong melody of orchestra as if tomorrow is the last day. However I am sure what is better than all the senses, which is being joyful."

The greatest desire of a blind man is to see. An earnest desire of Bartimaeus in today's scripture was to see as well. So when Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus then said, "Rabbi, I want to see." I want you to compare what kind of attitude of faith that we have against the faith of Bartimaeus.

First, Bartimaeus' faith is a faith wanting to meet Jesus. Maybe Bartimaeus didn't have any dreams for his life because he was sitting by the roadside begging everyday. However somebody gave a dream to Bartimaeus. "There is a man who's name is Jesus, son of David, he performs signs and wonders. He saved the life of Lazarus and daughter of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus. He fed the 5,000 with five loaves and the two fish and left twelve basketfuls of broken

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pieces of bread and fish. He cured people who had been suffered for thirty eight years and twelve years. He has sent us to proclaim recovery of hearing for the deaf and sight for the blind.” This was good news for him. He is full of hope and anxious to meet him. Just at that time, he heard that Jesus is passing by the place that he lives so he couldn’t wait without doing anything. He was burning with the desire to meet Jesus. I am sure we should have the same thoughts as Bartimaeus. We should have a desire to see and meet Jesus our Lord. At the time of Jesus, many followed Him. They saw Jesus with their own eyes. We must know that following and seeing Jesus does not necessarily mean that you meet Jesus. Today, our faith allows us to meet Jesus, not just see Him.

Bartimaeus is filled with expectation. He has an opportunity to meet Jesus. As he was sitting by the roadside, he heard many come in crowds. His heart began pumping. The one who he wanted to meet for such a long time, the one that can exceed your demands and solve your problems, is coming his way. And then he began to shout. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Even today we should ask Jesus for help when we meet Him. Today our faith should be changed from wanting to see Jesus to wanting to meet Jesus. Everyday we can see Jesus. However, an even important part of our faith is actually meeting Jesus. We should meet Jesus today, tomorrow, and forever. When we meet Jesus, His miracle and power will be there. I pray that our faith will be like this: that we meet Jesus everyday, not just pass by Him.

Second, Bartimaeus’ faith is a shouting faith. Bartimaeus, who always wanted to meet Jesus, began to shout as he heard that He was passing by. Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet because he began shouting even more loudly. Of course, because he shouted all the more, many blocked him to be quiet. However, their rebuke and interruption could not be a barrier between Jesus and Bartimaeus. His desire ensured that he was not going to miss a great opportunity like this. Even though many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Indeed he overcame all the obstacles – from restraint, to blame and the rebuke of others.

Barclay, the famous Scottish scholar, said, “Nothing could forbid Bartimaeus to shout for his desire to meet Jesus.” Bartimaeus could meet Jesus because he overcame all the obstacles that were placed in front of him. If he gave up all on the obstacles that were placed in front of him by others, he would have been discouraged from achieving his expectations and hopes. We are the same even today. If we want to meet the Lord our Christ, we should overcome all obstacles between Jesus and us. There will be many obstacles in our faith between us and Jesus. Nevertheless, we should overcome any obstacles of our faith. Even though many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, he shouted all the more so that Jesus stopped. That’s right! The prayer that shouts continuous has power to stop Jesus’ in His path. If the blind man didn’t pray to Jesus, He would have probably just passed the town. How many times have we missed God’s help because we didn’t pray for it? The prayer that made Jesus stop was not by a famous or an important person. He was only a beggar and a blind man. God is there for the weak. God is there for the shouting prayer. I hope that we should have the conviction of God’s answer.

Third, Bartimaeus’ faith was a faith that left his belongings when he went to Jesus. When Bartimaeus heard Jesus calling him, he threw his cloak aside, jumped to his feet, and came to Jesus. He might have come to Jesus with his cloak. However, his cloak would have been an

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obstacle when he jumped and came to Him. So he didn't hesitate to throw off his cloak. In many cases, most of us would fail at this moment. We always hope to meet Jesus our Lord. Jesus also always wants to call us and meet us. But we hesitate to throw off our belongings; to not to throw away what we should throw away. Sometimes we do not give up what we should give up. Sometimes we miss God's grace and power by not throwing away what we should give up. What kind of cloak should we take off? We should take off our habit of giving birth to sin. Are there any obstacles between God and us when we kneel down before Him to pray? We should take them off. Sometimes our hobbies, reputation, entertainment and friendships can be obstacles for our Christian life. We have to take those off too.

Jesus wants us have our thoughts focused on the appropriate priorities. We should have a Christ-Centered mind so that we can willingly give up those things that are obstacles in our faith. If you really want to meet Jesus, you have to remove those obstacles in your Christian life. Jesus asked Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" When He who can solve any problems asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" we probably would give him one answer or another. But Bartimaeus' was consistent. "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." and immediately he received his sight. How sincerely are we looking for Jesus? Do we have an ardent passion toward Jesus in our mind? What are the things that separate us from the love of God? Like Bartimaeus' faith, I pray that you become a mature Christian by looking for Jesus sincerely, shouting to Jesus and taking off whatever gets in the way of God.