

Sermon: *What's Your Need?*
Text: *Mark 10:46 – 52*
Date: *October 25, 2009 AM*
Place: *Jesup First UMC*

One day, after the fall of the Soviet Union, a Methodist preacher was sitting next to a communist in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia. And as they sat discussing the future of their homeland, a poor man walked by in clothes that were torn and tattered. And the communist pointed at the man and said: “*See there, communism would have put a new suit on that man.*” And the Methodist preacher said: “*Oh yes, my friend, but Christianity will put a new man in that suit.*”

I don't know if you've met Marty McLeod or not. Marty is the Associate Pastor at Trinity in Warner Robins and his partner is Trevor. No, Marty and Trevor aren't married, but they life together. You see, Marty was born blind and Trevor is his eyes. Everywhere Marty goes, Trevor goes. And everything Marty does, Trevor does. Now, I've known Marty for several years and for the last two years we've served together on the Conference Nurture Committee and I've come to appreciate his vision and his insight into the things of God. You see, it seems to me that what nature was unable to give Marty, God, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, has given in abundance.

I thought about Marty this week as I reflected on the story of Bar Timaeus. Bar Timaeus or the Son of Timaeus was a blind man who sat outside the city of Jericho. Now, in the latter part of Jesus' ministry, as he was on His way to Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus and the disciples passed through Jericho. And as He passed by, amid all the hustle and bustle of

people coming and going, the Son of Timaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And so, Bar Timaeus yelled out to Jesus: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” Now, some ignored him; others tried to quiet him; and Jesus didn’t seem to hear him at all. So, he cried out a little louder, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” And this time, Jesus stopped and called him over and said to him: “What would you have me do for you?” And Bar Timaeus said: “I want to see.” And Jesus said: “Go, your faith has healed you.” And immediately, Bar Timaeus received his sight and followed Jesus down the road toward Jerusalem.

Now, before we dive into this story, I can’t help but notice a very striking contrast between Bar Timaeus and Jesus’ disciples. Remember what happened just prior to this? James and John came to Jesus and asked Him for places of honor in His Kingdom and Jesus said: “Whoever wants to be greatest must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.”

On one hand, we have two disciples, James and John, who can see perfectly. They’ve seen the miracles; they’ve heard the teaching; and yet, they just don’t get it. They’re so self-centered that they’re complete blind to who Jesus is. They can’t see the forest for the trees. And on the other hand, we have Bar Timaeus, a blind beggar, whose seems to be able to see everything. He has never seen a miracle; he has never seen Jesus in the flesh; he has probably

never heard Jesus preach and yet, he sees with perfect 20/20 vision.

We can see the second part of this contrast in their requests. Jesus asked all three of them: “What would you have me do for you?” In arrogance, James and John responded: “Give us places of honor.” But in humility, Bar Timaeus says: “I want to see.” James and John are expressing a desire; Bar Timaeus is expressing a need. James and John are asking for something to give them an elevated status. Bar Timaeus is asking for something that will make him normal.

You know, brothers and sisters, I don't know exactly what you're facing this morning. But I know every time we come together there are many needs and I know this: God is present and God wants to meet us at the place of our greatest need. You don't have a need that Jesus can't reach. You don't have a hurt that Jesus can't heal.

And so, that's what I want us to think about this morning as we look at the story of Bar Timaeus. And there are several principles that we can learn from Bar Timaeus' story.

First, don't let your limitations hold you back. Verse 46 says: “They came to Jericho. As He and His disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bar Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.”

If anybody could tell you about limitations, it was Bar Timaeus. You know, Mark tells us a lot about this man in a very few words. ***For one thing, he was blind.*** Now, we don't know if he was born blind or lost his

sight somewhere along the way, but like many of his day, the Son of Timaeus couldn't see. ***Bar Timaeus was also a beggar.*** There were no seeing eye dogs in the first century. There was no Georgia School for the Blind to educate and train people with disabilities. Blind people begged in order to live.

But there was something else about Bar Timaeus that's worth pondering: what was his name? Others had names like Jesus bar Joseph, or James and John bar Zebedee, Peter bar Jonah, but we only know him by a title: Bar Timaeus or Son of Timaeus. This tells us he was one of those unknown, unwanted, marginalized people.

And yet, he didn't let his limitations hold him back. He took the initiative and turned to Jesus.

Second, his cry was persistent. Verse 47 says: "*When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'*" Now, our English translations don't do justice to this verse, but the Greek say Bar Timaeus kept crying out, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" Even when Jesus didn't hear him, he kept crying, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" Even when others tried to keep him quiet, he kept crying, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*" He was persistent and because of his persistence, Jesus heard his cry.

Friends, sometimes the greatest expression of faith we can make is to keep praying. In spite of the doctor's report ... keep praying. In spite of the bank statement ... keep praying. In spite of the nay-sayers

... keep praying. In spite of the lack of response ... keep praying. For friends, God truly rewards persistent faith.

Third, his cost was personal. Verse 50 says: “Throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.” The great German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer began his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, with these words: *“Cheap grace is the mortal enemy of our church. Our struggle today is for costly grace.”* Now, what he meant by that is this: there’s no doubt about it, God’s grace and love are free. Even if you could, you couldn’t buy God’s grace. It’s just not for sale. But ... God’s grace and love are not cheap. For one thing, God’s grace cost Jesus everything. It was Jesus who “emptied Himself” and took the form of a man and became a servant. And then, it is this same Jesus who said: “If anyone would come after me, let him first deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” Grace cost Jesus everything and grace demands everything we are as well.

That’s costly grace! And the cost is different for each of us. For Bar Timaeus, the cost was the one thing he owned, his cloak. What has it cost you? What sacrifices have you made? What price have you paid to follow Christ? The cost is personal.

Fourth, the course was pursued. Verse 52 says: “Immediately he regained his sight and followed Him on the way.” Now, like many others, Jesus tried to send Bar Timaeus on his way, but Bar Timaeus wanted to follow Jesus. What did Bar Timaeus have to go home to anyway? There was no job! He

couldn't go back to begging. Everything changed that day and the horizons were broadened tremendously.

You know, brothers and sisters, from time to time we all need to stop and reflect upon this. How is my life different because I'm a Christian? How are the standards of my life different because I follow Christ? You see, the course laid out for us is different and if we truly follow Jesus others will see that difference.

Now some may be content to put a new suit on the old blind beggar, but praise God Jesus is passing by this morning and he wants to put a new person in the old suit.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.