

## Mark 10.46-52



I had been sitting by the roadside outside Jericho all day wrapped in my outer garment against the dust and the dirt as the people and animals came and went, holding out my hands and begging for alms. The sun was hot on my face and my mouth was dry. I was one of a group of beggars hoping for some charity from those coming in and out of the town of Jericho in the business of trading and meeting. Because I could not see, I strained my ears for news and stories and picked up little things that people often miss. Although I was grateful for whatever was pressed into my palm or dropped into my cup, I was eager too to know more about the world around me, news from afar.

Jericho was buzzing because somebody extraordinary was in town. There was a crowd all talking among themselves and hoping to get close to the spectacle. I could feel the excitement, curiosity, tension, even fear. This man was a controversial figure. People were saying that he performed signs and wonders, that he could heal, that he was here to overthrow the old regime and make us holy once again, that he was certain to bring trouble and get himself killed as a revolutionary. Sitting day after day, dependent on the kindness and charity of strangers, I felt hope and desire flame in me, to see this holy one of God and to be part of his following. But I was blind. I would never see him, never be able to follow him anywhere, never do anything to help his cause. Yet the idea burned in me: if I could see, then my eyes would look upon the person the prophets spoke of, the Messiah.

The murmurs around me swelled to excited clamour. People gathered around us, the beggars, their clothes swishing in my face, dust getting into my mouth. 'He's coming! He's coming!' they told each other excitedly. 'It is Jesus, Jesus from Nazareth'. I knew then that Jesus would go right by me, with all his followers and the crowd going after them, to see what he would do next. Jesus would never notice me, sitting on the ground and obscured by all the people. He was as blind to me as I was to him.

So I did the only thing I could. I shouted as loudly as I could manage: 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' That did it. Immediately those in the crowd rounded on me hissing 'Shut up! Shut up! You can't call him that!' For I had named him the Messiah by calling him Son of David. Somebody kicked me and pushed me roughly. They wanted me to stay out of sight. After all, I was a beggar, a nobody. But I wasn't going to give up so I shouted out to him even more loudly 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Some people around me were panicking and saying over me 'He's mad! Don't take any notice.' But suddenly people were standing still. Something was happening. The voices changed. Someone was putting their hands under my elbows and helping me up, saying 'He wants you. Go to him.' I couldn't believe it. I had been crouched in a corner, ignored and told to be quiet, but now I was standing up and I could feel the eyes of everyone on me. Suddenly everyone was looking at me, the blind man.

They brought me to Jesus who said to me 'What do you want me to do for you?' It was odd the fact that he said it like that, like I was in charge and he was my servant. I said at once that I wanted to be able to see again, to look on him and see my salvation. Jesus seemed to understand that I wanted so much more than just to be able to use my eyes. I wanted to be made complete, to be whole and to be capable of following him and serving him. He touched my eyes with his fingers and said 'your faith has made you whole'. I was able to see again, suddenly the world cleared and was focussed and I was filled with gratitude and the desire to praise the goodness and mercy of God. So I did what anyone would do, having been given such a gift, I followed Jesus and told my story to others.

**Some questions to think about:**

*Why did Jesus respond to Bartimaeus?*

*What do you think Jesus meant by 'your faith has made you whole?'*

*What other people can you think of in scripture who are in danger of being 'overlooked' but noticed by Jesus? Why does he notice them?*