

Matins, Oct. 28 2018. Jer. 31.7-9, Ps. 126, Heb. 7. 23-28, Mk. 10. 46-52. John Peters

Meditation. "Call him here". "What do you want me to do for you?" Mk. 10. 49, 51

Hymn. #499 (Blue Book) Lord, speak to me. v. 1, 5, 6.

Here is the setting for Mark, the first gospel written, but not the first NT book written. Paul wrote the book of Galatians, a short time before Mark's gospel. Mark is brief in his writing, and relatively clear. Bible translators, commonly choose this book as the first to be translated among people who have no part of Scriptures. About 90% of Mark is repeated in the book of Matthew. One third of Mark is written of Jesus last week before his death.

The story of Bar- Timaeus, or son of Timeaus is also recorded in the book of Matt 20:29-34 and Luke 18. 35-37. The message of the story is identical, but there are some detail differences. Matt. has two blind people. Only Mark identifies the name of this blind person. Luke has the event happening upon entering Jericho, while the other two writers have it when they are leaving the city. Luke has the blind man asking the crowd, "What is this commotion all about?" They respond with, "Jesus the Nazorean is going by". Timeaus son's voice is not silenced.

These different reports should not divert us from the lesson. Much of what I have said so far is academic. Maybe it teases our brain a bit. Now let us look for **soul food**. Interestingly, Mark seemed to recognize that ONLY after the suffering and death and resurrection of Jesus, can one grasp the truth, power and mystery of this life God is offering us!

This story takes place near Jericho among a crowd of people. The blind man creates a disturbance. He creates disorder. The crowd tells this blind man, so in need, to shut-up. Jesus senses this disturbance, gives priority and time to the blind person, this lonely man. Jesus interrupts, and Calls him to come. The crowd then reverses their stance, and says, "Come, come, the Lord wants to see you", and they make way, and make time and make place for this person. Meeting Jesus is a profound event. Though it does not always mean a boisterous visible emotional excitement, it often does among people of the south. Let us be tolerant

of such excitement among fellow Canadians and peoples of other cultures. Our guarded emotions and education etiquette may blind us to the movement of God.

Who am I in this story? Am I in the crowd, saying nothing. Am I in the crowd first saying to the blind person, “Don’t bother this Holy ONE that only we righteous folk know?” then, after the welcome of Jesus, we reverse our voice for persons in very desperate need, “Yes, hurry, push ahead of us and see Jesus. You are important to us.” I must ponder that. Or, just maybe, could you place yourself in the role of the son of Timaeus, the blind man: desperately in need, crying, begging, pleading for help from The Healer.

Jesus asks the obvious question. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asks the same question of us today. It is not a question we heard 40 or 55 year ago in the context of making an initial response to follow Jesus. This blind man responded with “Rabbouini, (teacher), I want to see again.” The request came without hesitation. It was clear.

On another occasion two of Jesus’ disciples also had a wish of Jesus. It was James and John who initiated the WANT or need with Jesus. They wanted to sit beside Jesus in His future kingdom and rule with Jesus. James and John did not know what they were talking about. This blind man, who really did not know much about Jesus, knew what he wanted. He believed this person, Jesus could do one thing, give him sight. His FAITH heals him. He follows Jesus along the path that Jesus was walking. I am struck with that. He did not want to go back and see all the sites his friends had described to him- stuff he had missed because he was blind: Niagara Falls and the CN Tower. It was Jesus. It was only Jesus. Can I do this- Jesus, with all personal pleasures and wishes as secondary!

This morning we find two reasons for this story in the Bible. First, it is a MIRACLE. Second it is a CALL. Let us reflect how both apply to us. Miracles show us the power and presence of God to help us in our need. Our age of science and technology have not removed us from the miracle working of Jesus. Our miracle working request from Jesus, “What do you want me to do for you?” may not be the call to take our first steps to walk Jesus’ path. I fear my response, at times, to be, “I have no needs, Jesus. You may go on to someone else.” This miracle call to

us may be a request for healing, removal of pain, the removal of anxiety, for joy, for guidance in decision making, for guidance in relationships with one or several persons. Jesus wants to help, and offers his help.

The second lesson from the text is Calling. Mark and the other Gospel writers tell us of Jesus calling people, at times an individual, or groups of people: disciples to follow him, to leave the fishing nets, to pull the net of fish from the right side of the boat, Zachaeus down from a tree, Peter to walk on water, disciples to feed 5,000 people, Martha to leave the kitchen and simply sit/hear and feel the presence of Christ, to tell others of God's purpose. In fact, Jesus says to his disciples, in the last chapter of John, and after His crucifixion, FOLLOW ME. These are mature people, and AFTER three years of teaching, and after His resurrection. Live and speak my life. That is the message. This is a voice to hear the CALL to place priority above all else, upon God. Absolutely nothing else.

Luke ends the blind man story with, and "all who SAW him gave praise to God." That is a most suitable closing.