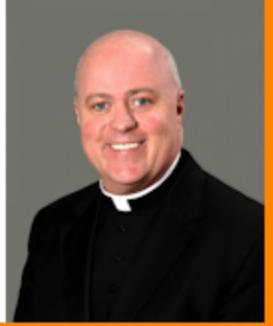


Father Chapin's Homily



October 28, 2018 – BARTIMAEUS

So today we have a Gospel that I have to say is one of my favorites.

It is hard to pick your favorite Gospel.

It is like picking your favorite kid.

Plus, scriptures kind of change over the years.

Well that is not right.

Scripture does not change.

It is immutable.

But WE change.

And so often scriptures speak to us WHERE WE ARE AT,

In the season we find ourselves living.

Am I making any sense?

But I have to say I have always have had a fondness for Blind Bartimaeus.

Which, by the way, is the very last healing that appears in the Gospel of Mark.

Think of it as THE CRESCENDO as Mark saves the BEST for last.

The ULTIMATE exclamation point.

It might not be the most spectacular of all miracles,

Like the Raising of Lazarus, or the Healing of the 10 lepers, or the Syrophenician Woman who touched his cloak.

But I think this healing kind of sums up the zeitgeist of what Jesus is all about and why he came.

Which by the way was to save us from ourselves.

One thing that sets this miracle apart from the others is that it is the **ONLY** person healed that is identified by name in the entire Gospel of Mark.

Bartimaeus son of [Timaeus](#).

Which is what his name means

BART of TIMEOUS or Son of [Timaeus](#).

Now as you know if you have been watching this show for any length of time that we are all about digging for the deeper meaning.

So, let's get to it.

If you grew up in church, then over the years you have heard the story.

In BITS and PIECES.

If I was to ask most people, have you heard the story of Blind Bartimaeus, many would say sure.

If I was to press most people and say, "OK what is it about?" I imagine I would get an account of Jesus healing a blind man who was crying out to him."

Now if I was to ask WHY,

I think the consensus would be because he is a loving and compassionate guy.

But I think it might be more.

And it seems to me that Jesus never healed ANYBODY without a deeper purpose.

So where do we even start?

Well, let me just start by saying there is clearly MORE than one blind man in this story.

And speaking of blind men, if you go back a couple chapters to 8, you will find ANOTHER blind man.

The Blind man from Bethsaida.

And these two blind men serve as bookends.

Theologians refer to the section between them as the Section of Discipleship.

And it has everything to do with SEEING.

Jesus, again and again will ask his disciples CAN YOU SEE ME?

And of course, they respond YES. We can see you clearly.

But he keeps asking the question repeatedly?

Can you really see me?

And that really IS the question.

Can you see me?

Do you see him?

“As Jesus is leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, the blind man, Son of [Timaeus](#), sat by the road side begging. On hearing that it was Jesus he began to cry out and say Jesus Son of David have pity on me.”

So, they are leaving Jericho.

Now Jericho is not a small town.

Herod had one of his castles there.

In fact, Herod died in Jericho.

As we ALL will.

Do you see him?

And as they are leaving the city they came to the front gate.

These ancient cities were often walled off and had front gate to enter and exit. Now we have talked about this a few times but the THEOLOGY of the Jews at the time taught that if you were crippled or lame or deformed in any way it was due to sin and you were considered unclean.

You were an untouchable.

You were banned from your family, the synagogue, and even the city itself.

You had to live OUTSIDE the camp.

So, these beggars would often stand just outside the city gate hoping someone will throw a coin their way from time to time, so they could eat.

They were cursed by God.

The sinners,

The unclean,

THEM.

A practicing Jew can't even brush up against one of these people without defiling themselves and becoming ritually unclean.

Like I said they were cursed.

The theology of the day taught that the reason for the curse was that someone in your family must have done something wrong to make God mad.

Remember when Jesus healed the man born blind?

They asked him WHO sinned, this man or his parents.

They believed that when a child was born with a defect they had someone sinned in utero.

So here are these beggars.

A motley crew for sure.

But even among the beggars I imagine there is a hierarchy.

Who gets the preferred spot to stand and so on?

My guess is that being BLIND pretty much puts you at the bottom of that totem pole.

I mean he would certainly be the most defenseless.

I imagine his cup got robbed often.

He is the lowest of the low.

Now let's contrast THAT with the OTHER side of that spectrum.

The Rich Young Ruler.

He follows the rules.

He enjoys a life of great wealth and ease and God is on his side.

This is what they believed.

Sadly, this theology continues till this day in what is known as the Gospel of Prosperity.

God wants you rich.

Look at the TV evangelist.

INVEST IN JESUS AND HE WILL INVEST IN YOU.

And I am the bank.

But you know what was the Sad part about this story is that, imagine as Bartimaeus sat by the road side that day, he had probably bought into this whole theology in his own mind that he WAS in fact untouchable.

And then someone tells him Jesus of Nazareth is coming this way.

So, he begins to cry out,

JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE PITY ON ME!

Now if you recall not too long ago these disciples were arguing among themselves who was the greatest.

Jesus sat them down and told them if they wanted to be first then they needed to be last and the SLAVE of all.

And so here they are on a mission to be the slave of all and look at how they react to Bartimaeus as he cries out.

They look at him and say BE QUIET!

Don't you see we are on mission?

We are heading for glory.

Don't interrupt us.

And just in passing, I must say that ministry has a habit of showing up in the form of an interruption.

You will be busy doing what you think is God's work and Jesus shows up.

It says he cried out **Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!**

That word CRIED OUT in Greek is a very strong word.

The only other time we see this word is with demonic possession with the demons.

It's a **SCREECHING**.

So, this guy is causing quite a scene.

Jesus son of David have pity on me.

AHHHHH!

Why such a strong reaction?

Well may I suggest it was because he **KNEW**?

He **KNEW** that this was it.

His **ONLY CHANCE**.

So, **THIS** was it.

THIS moment when Jesus was walking by.

And the crowd is yelling shut up.

Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!

If you consider that title, Son of David.

The Jews had a heightened messianic expectation in this day.

They were waiting on a Messiah.

The Coming Messiah was to come from the House of David.

That was to be his lineage.

So, Jesus, Son of David, is a **MESSIANIC TITLE**, **and** it is the first time we see it in MARK.

But here is MY question.

HOW does Bartimaeus know this?

Peter himself had only recently declared this in what we know as Peter's Confession.

How did he know?

How did he have eyes to see him?

Do YOU see him?

Bartimaeus calls Jesus the Son of David.

How does this blind man sitting at the side of the road, who has probably never been in a synagogue in his life, know that?

Jesus, Son of David.

Not only does this title have serious RELIGIOUS overtones it also has serious POLITICAL repercussions.

Many "wanna be" Messiahs had risen up only to be put to a violent end by the Romans.

So, this had DANGEROUS implications as well.

It certainly seems to stir up the crowds as they kept shouting out,

BE QUIET!

GO AWAY!

LEAVE THE MASTER ALONE!

Yet he cries out even more.

Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me! (BIG PAUSE)

My friends, you will **NEVER** know the **REALITY** of Jesus in your life until you first know the **NESCESSITY** of Jesus on your life.

A blind person knows that he is blind.

He cannot see, and he knows it.

He cannot make himself see.

He is lost, and he knows it.

He cannot find his way.

He needs a healer.

In **VERY** much the same way a sinner knows that he is a sinner.
He knows that he cannot **UNSIN** himself.

There is **NOTHING** he can do to save himself.

He knows that he is a broken computer and a broken computer can't fix itself.

He **KNOWS** that he is need of a Savior.

Many people of that day had a **MARGINAL** interest in Jesus.

Many people **TODAY** have a marginal interest in Jesus?

They had heard about him.

They had heard about the miracles.

And they might have even started to believe in him.

At the very least they have a **CURIOUS INTEREST**.

And Jesus was moving through that crowd.

But there was **ONE**.

Oh yeah.

There was **ONE**.

And he just **KNEW**

He **KNEW** this was it.

He **KNEW** this was his **ONE** big chance and he took it.

Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!

Now keep mind he had to **FIGHT** for his blessing.

He runs up against great resistance as **WE** will in this world.

If you recall up till this point this guy has been getting nothing but **STATIC** from the crowds.

And many rebuked him telling him to be silent.

But he kept calling out even more loudly.

Jesus, Son of David, have Pity on me!

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

And **BOOM** EVERYTHING changes.

Now they are calling to the Blind Man.

Take courage, get up, Jesus is calling you.

Isn't it amazing how quickly the winds of change blow.

All of a sudden they are his friends.

People are like that.

He threw aside his cloak, sprang up and came to Jesus.

Remember the Rich Young Ruler?

He has a lot of things.

He likes his things

Those things kept him out of heaven.

Consider Blind Bartimaeus.

What does he have?

ONE thing.

A cloak.

Said he **THEW** his cloak aside and came to Jesus.

And I imagine someone snatched up in the crowd.

But **HE SPRANG UP AND CAME TO JESUS.**

WHY?

BECAUSE THIS WAS HIS MOMENT AND HE WAS TAKING IT.

You know a lot of moments pass by our lives.

Just sayin'.

Don't miss **YOUR** opportunity when Jesus walks by.

DO YOU SEE HIM?

But getting back to our fair weathered friends in the crowds.

First, they are like BE QUIET,

GO AWAY!

And now they are cheerleaders.

They are encouraging Bartimaeus

Take courage, get up Jesus is calling you.

The Master wants to see you.

Take courage, get up, of course WE CAN'T TOUCH YOU. Yahweh forbid, but HE IS CALLING YOU.

Now it is interesting to note that JESUS himself DOES not call Bartimaeus.

And he certainly could have.

Obviously, he had heard him crying out.

But he chooses not to.

He turns to his disciples to do it.

YOU CALL HIM.

I could do a whole show on just that ONE line.

YOU CALL HIM.

IF YOU WANT TO BE MY DISCIPLE, YOU CALL HIM.

You CALL THE OTHER.

YOU CALL the people you might not thin DESERVE to be saved.
We must not act like the Pharisees.

What if the church could just get THIS one?

YOU CALL HIM.

DO YOU SEE HIM?

Take courage, get up, he is calling you.

So, he SPRANG up.

Takes the ONLY possession that he has (HIS CLOAK) and throws it aside.

But that's OK.

Because when Bartimaeus leaped to his feet he had the EXPECTATION of leaving EVERYTHING behind because he had the EXPECTATION of seeing again.

He got off the ground with the EXPECTATION, and it was NOT a maybe, NO, he was getting his blessing.

THERE WAS NO PLAN B

Otherwise he would have brought that cloak just in case.

Jesus said to him in “What do you want me to do for you?”

I find it curious that he would ask that question.

I guess you got to NAME it before you CLAIM it.

Master I want to see.

Jesus says “Go on your way. Your faith has saved you” and IMMEDIATELY his sight is restored.

Jesus says YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU.

NOT healed you.

He was looking for a HEALING, but he found SALVATION.

Which is good because Jesus CAN and often does heal you but, in the end, we are all going to die of something because nobody gets out alive.

Life is a terminal disease.

Lazarus has a gravesite out there somewhere.

That is why we are in need of a Savior.

But Blind Bartimaeus has been saved.

And this is PRE-cross remember so it's kind of rare.

I can only speculate as to why Mark chose to name him.

My guess is that he was a prominent member of the early church.

This is the Son of Timeous salvation story.

I can see him leading the Hosannas in downtown Jerusalem "Look at what he has done for me!"

I can see him in the Upper Room with the 120 when the tongues of fire came.

I can see him reaching over to touch the Untouchables.

And telling them "You are NOT bound by sin."

And I can PROVE IT,

JESUS SAVES.

And finally, and most importantly I say to all my blind brothers and sisters out there watching today who are quite convinced they see clearly.

As Bartimaeus was sitting by the roadside that day, someone whispered in his ear
JESUS OF NAZARETH is passing by.

The healer.

And somewhere deep inside of him spoke to him a truth that he could have NEVER
known.

Jesus, Son of David.

This is my moment.

This is my chance.

And I'm going to take it.

What about YOU?

Jesus was calling Bartimaeus today.

And he continues to call YOU.

Please understand WE don't go find Jesus.

He puts his finger on your heart and finds YOU.

Do you see him?

He is passing by.

The only thing left is how YOU are going to respond?

Don't let this opportunity pass you by today.