There’s a Christian song from the 80’s that I love, perhaps a bit obscure. Gentle Healer by Michael Card. It’s worth a search on You Tube both for the lyrics and the harmonies.

The storyteller recounts of a Gentle Healer who came to his town today. He entered with followers listening to every word.
He touched blind eyes and the darkness goes away.
He spoke words and the dead rose up straight away.
He looked like an ordinary man but taught in ways that were anything but and as he left the town, he had more followers than when he began.

Imagine if you will that you lived in the time of Christ – and all of the news that you get is oral. Imagine now further that you are blind and dependent on the generosity of others not just for news but for your daily sustenance.

You hear just such a story as I recounted from Michael Card. There is this man who heals people when comes in to towns. And he teaches in such a way that confounds the religious leaders of the day. He teaches with authority that has not been seen since perhaps the prophets.

Now imagine that you’ve heard that he is passing through your town today as he makes his way from Galilee to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

What would you do?

This is just the situation Bartimaeus finds himself in. Bartimaeus is a blind beggar who lives in Jericho, the ancient city near the Jordan River that is on the north /south route between the Galilean villages and Jerusalem.

Every year Jews would pass through on their way to Jerusalem for the required celebration of Passover. It was a required pilgrimage but of course not all were physically or financially able to make the journey so they would line the streets to support those making the journey.

The priests who be serving in the Temple were part of the passing crowds. So were Pharisees and Sadducees and Scribes. And this year, so was Jesus.
This is nearing the end of Jesus’ ministry – this is his final trip to Jerusalem – a trip that will end in his death on the cross. Jesus is vividly aware of this fact. He has tried to explain this to his inner 12, not that they are grasping the reality of the cross yet – but the crowds will be completely oblivious. In fact, an indication of Jesus’ popularity at this point is that in Mark 11, the author tells us of Palm Sunday when the followers laid palm branches at his feet shouting Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Let’s read the account as recorded in Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. 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 said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. 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.

The Fearless Beggar

- Bartimaeus had nothing to lose; Jesus is here.
- Jesus! Have mercy on me!
- Hushed by the crowd but cried out all the more
  - Regular passers by might offer bread crumbs or alms.
  - Jesus can offer sight.

Helen Keller, once wrote a magazine article entitled: "Three Days to See.” In that article she outlined what things she would like to see if she were granted just three days of sight
Day One: she wanted to see friends.
Day two: she would spend seeing nature.
Day three: she would spend in her home city of New York watching the busy city and the workday of the present.

She concluded it with these words:
"I who am blind can give one hint to those who see: Use your eyes as if tomorrow you were stricken blind."

- It’s human nature to not recognize your advantages and be blind to the disadvantages of those around you – even when that disadvantage is as blatant as physical blindness.

- Bartimaeus was physically blind – but the multitude was spiritually blind. They were blind to the affliction of Bartimaeus.

NOTICE - The Fickle Crowd
- “Sternly telling him to be quiet.”
- Perhaps they started quietly. Hush Bartimaeus. But their persistence at rebuking Bartimaeus increased in intensity even as the beggar increased his cries for help.

- ILL: When I was a teenager, I loved deer hunting and going to the camp with family. The one catch that all of the sons knew was you must fall asleep before the dads. The reason was simple. They snore! Those of us who were in our late teen years were used to the drill but my younger cousin Josh was knew to the hunting camp. Night fall comes and sure enough within minutes of the lights going off the snoring commences. Josh’s dad was the first to begin the roar. It was more than Josh could take so he start’s whispering, “Dad, your snoring.” When that did no good he got louder and louder until finally, he yelled. “Dad, stop snoring. You’re embarrassing me!”

- Was the beggar an embarrassment and the crowd as shallow as a young boy embarrassed by his dad?

- Perhaps they thought he interfering with Jesus teaching?
  - I can’t hear. You’re disturbing the group.
- We don’t know their motivation. We do know their reaction to Bartimaeus’ cries.
- **Bartimaeus cried for mercy. The people gave him none.**

We’ve examined The Fearless Beggar and the Fickle Crowd, now let’s look at **The Humble Savior**

My seminary professors always warned that the third point is usually forced alliteration – so I won’t alliterate. That is true in this case but Jesus belongs in his own category anyway.

- Mark 12:35 (other reference to Son of David; Jesus downplays the term. NOT a political Messiah)
- Jesus responds: “What do you want me to do for you?”
- If you look back to 10:36 that Chaplain Burns preached last week, you will see the exact same question.
- Unlike with James and John, Jesus does not provide commentary on the cost of following him. He does heal with words not touch – and he ties healing to the man’s faith. For his audience, the words “Your faith has saved you – the literal translation of v 52 – saved would have been seen as from physical ailments not spiritual ones.
- He does live out his proclamation that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

  - Through the crowd, through the burden he’s carrying about his destination,
    - he hears the cry of a blind beggar,
    - he stops his journey,
    - he changes his agenda, and
    - he meets the need of the lowest of lowest in his society.

Back to Bartimaeus – the fearless beggar – his response to Jesus’ healing is to follow Jesus physically down the road and presumably as a disciple.

While Bartimaeus wasn’t warned of the cross at the end of this journey, he likely saw it for himself.

This account is the end of Jesus’ public ministry with the next passage transitioning to the Passion Week.
And passion week is what is was all about.
The destination was always the cross. The mission was always to serve – and ultimately to lay down his life for his followers, and his enemies. For his disciples and for those who would cry crucify him.

**APPLICATION:**

**Are you spiritually blind to those around you crying out for help?**
- Pray that God would open your eyes.

**Are you enabling others to come to Christ or are you hindering them?**
- Pray that God would keep you from being a stumbling block to others finding Christ.

**Are you following Christ’s example of servanthood?**
- Pray that God would enable you to put others first and yourself last.

**Are you following Christ with the cross in mind?**
- And to give his life as a ransom for many.
- Bartimaeus cried out for Christ with single minded purpose because he knew the Jesus had the answer for his physical blindness.
- Did he follow Christ with the same tenacity? We don’t know. Scripture doesn’t tell us.
- The question is are you Seeking and Following Christ with that tenacity?