

Blind faith

 **Mark 10.46-52**

On his journey south to Jerusalem, Jesus is leaving Jericho when he hears his name called by a blind beggar, Bartimaeus. While some try to keep the man quiet, Jesus responds to the plea of Bartimaeus and calls him over. When his sight is miraculously restored, he follows Jesus.

Now read **Mark 10.46-52** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

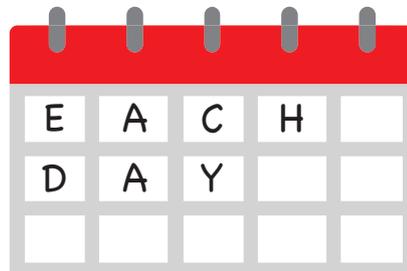
Bartimaeus appears to have heard of Jesus, and to have known something of his ministry, so he calls out to Jesus for mercy. No wonder he throws aside his cloak and puts aside the trappings of a beggar to go forwards in hope. He asks for just one thing, but that will change his life in every way. What would you ask of Jesus?



Ask yourself: What do you see – what is it? Can you think of a time when faith has helped you to see something differently?

W₄ **O**₁ **R**₁ **D**₂ **S**₄

Play a word game by adding another word in front of or after 'BLIND' e.g. blind faith, window blind. Are some of the results positive and others negative in their meaning? How might this change your understanding of 'blind' when applied to 'faith'? It might be fun to use Scrabble™ letters to help you to make your words.



It may seem a little surprising that Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he wants. When King Solomon had asked God for wisdom, he was also given wealth and long life, even though those had not been at the top of his list. The one change which would most affect our life will be different for each of us. In a quiet time each day, look back at a point in your life when you have had to make a decision, in faith. Make a note and, at the end of the week, look at those times as a map of your faith journey. If you can't identify such moments, read some chapters of the Acts of the Apostles to see how others acted in faith and how they were changed.

 **LISTEN**

When Bartimaeus shouted out, some ordered him to be quiet. Why did they try to silence him? Were they concerned for him or for Jesus? Were they worried that Jesus couldn't help him – or maybe that he could? When Jesus heard Bartimaeus, he called him over and listened to him. Despite the worldwide network of communication which we enjoy today, there are still some whose voice is not heard. Find out about the work of the Barnabas Fund which supports Christians who are persecuted for their faith and forbidden to speak out.

Plant

If you have ever enjoyed a walk in woodland, you will appreciate the special atmosphere of ancient trees. They also provide natural habitats and improve air quality. The 'Queen's Green Canopy' is a tree planting initiative to mark her Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Everyone in the UK is invited to plant trees from this month through to the end of 2022. Have faith in the future that you can't yet see, by helping to create new ancient forests. Take part now! Either pop down to your local Garden Centre or request a free tree pack for your school or community from the Woodland Trust. woodlandtrust.org.uk.

Believe



The phrase 'blind faith' is often used as an insult, yet it may be something we all practice every day. Take a tour round your home, noticing what you take for granted. Press a light switch; turn on a tap. Look outside at anything which is growing, or dying back in its natural cycle. You have faith that things happen, without any input from yourself. What was Bartimaeus expecting when he asked Jesus to have mercy on him? What do you have the faith to ask for?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus and his disciples were leaving the city of Jericho, followed by a large crowd. A blind beggar called Bartimaeus was sitting by the side of the road. When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was there, he cried out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

People scolded Bartimaeus and told him to keep quiet, thinking that Jesus was too important to be bothered by him; but he cried out all the louder, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

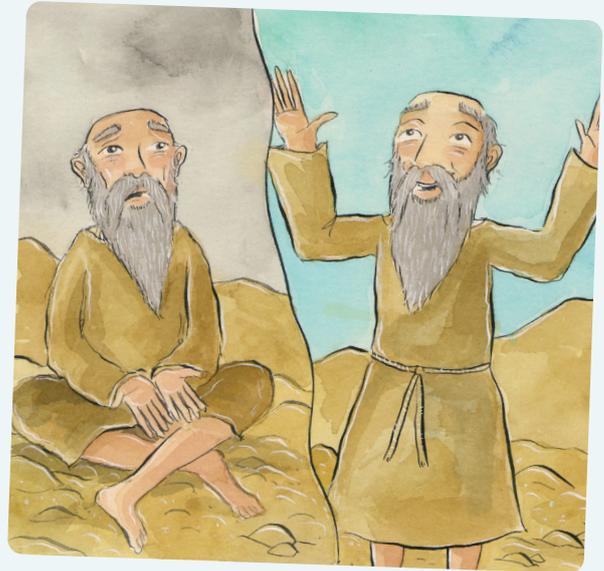
Jesus stood still and listened. 'Bring him over to me,' he said.

Some of the crowd called out to the blind man, 'Have courage! Get up! He is calling you.' Bartimaeus sprang up, throwing off his cloak, and came to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

'My teacher, let me see again,' Bartimaeus replied.

Jesus said to him, 'Go! Your faith has made you well.'



Immediately, his sight returned and Bartimaeus followed Jesus along the road.

Mark 10.46-52

Did you know?

- Son of David is a title used in connection with the return of David's kingdom, led by a new Messiah; when referring to Jesus, it suggests that he is the long-awaited Messiah.
- Bartimaeus is able to see in two ways – he is physically healed, but we also see him following Jesus; he is able to see spiritually.

Mark 10.46-52 (NRSV)

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get

up, he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.