

**Pastor Madelynne Lindsey**

**October 28, 2018**

**Sermon**

**What Do You Want Jesus To Do For You?**

Job 42:1-6, 10-17 and Mark 10:46-52

Let us pray: Dear Lord, help us to see, God. Help us to see--with open eyes and open hearts. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

What do you want Jesus to do for you? In a book by storyteller Michael Williams, there is an interesting answer to my question, and you might find it interesting as well. So here it is:

Betty stopped washing the breakfast dishes and turned down the radio. Did she hear something? She leaned forward and looked out the window over the sink. Standing on her front stoop was a man holding a bouquet of balloons.

Betty stared and muttered to herself, "What in the world?" As the man reached for the doorbell, she thought he looked familiar. Did she know him? He looked like...could it be? That guy from the clearinghouse sweepstakes! It had to be!! Betty ran to the front door and threw it open.

"Did I win? Aren't you the man from TV?" she squealed. The man smiled and said, "Betty, don't you recognize me?" Betty's hand flew to her mouth. The answer came from her heart, not her head. She heard herself say, "God?"

As soon as the name was out of her mouth she knew it was true. God said, "Yes, Betty. I am here to give you something. Tell me, what would you like from me?" Betty was stunned. She said, "What do I want from you? I thought I was supposed to want whatever you wanted me to want."

God chuckled and said, "Well, that works too. But let's try something new. Just for today, what can I do for you?" Betty wrapped her arms around her body to hold herself up. What did she want? From God? Anything at all? She shifted her weight and said, "I don't know.

I know what Jimmy would want. He'd say, 'Honey, choose money. Get enough money so I can retire. Get enough so we can buy a boat, maybe an RV. And enough so we can spend winters in Florida.'" God asked, "So that's what you want? Money?" Betty said quickly, "No. No. That isn't what I really want. Wait...let me think."

Betty started to chew on her nails. God waited. Then she said, "I don't know. I know what I used to want. When I was young I wanted to be a famous movie star. I wanted to go live in California and wear fancy clothes. I sing a little, you know." She looked up into God's kind eyes. "Oh, I guess you do know."

God smiled. He said, "So you want to be a famous movie star? That's what you want from me?" "No. Wait.... Wait." Betty started to sweat. She stammered, "I don't know what I want. I know what I should want. I should want my children to be safe and healthy."

I should want them to find partners to love and to give us lots of grandchildren...And I do want that. But..." "So, you want health and happiness for your children. Is that what you're asking for?" God said. "Yes. No. I mean, yes, it's what I want, but it's not what I want."

I mean what I want for me. I mean... I don't know what I mean." Betty started to cry. A deep sob shook her body and she clung to the screen door for support. God reached out and touched her shoulder. "It's OK, Betty. I tell you what, why don't we go inside and have a cup of tea."

We'll sit together while you figure out what you really want." (The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible, volume 9, pp. 133-135, story by Pam McGrath) What would we ask Jesus to fix? What do we want? What does God see that we do not see? What do we need to be restored, so that we can walk on the way with the One who calls our name, Jesus Christ?

Today's Hebrew scripture is similar to this story. Jesus asked the blind man, Bartimaeus, "What is it you want me to do for you?" Remember last week, James and John had wanted Jesus to give them the seats of privilege in the coming kingdom.

Jesus told them that they didn't understand what they were asking. They were blind to what his suffering and death was all about, his coming as a servant who would lay down his life for the sake of all people. But today, there was a blind man who wanted to see.

In today's lesson, just fifteen or so miles away from Jerusalem, with the disciples still competing for the best seats and still apparently unable to see what Jesus was trying to get them to understand, blind Bartimaeus called out to Jesus, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The crowd tried to shut Bartimaeus up when he called out to Jesus. But Bartimaeus called again, refusing to be thwarted. When Jesus heard him, Jesus told him to come to him. This apparently shocked the crowd, who said, "Hey, man, get up! He's calling you!"

Imagine, a beggar, blind. No Social Security disability checks, no seeing eye dogs, so the only way he could survive was to sit on the road and beg for people to give him something. Day in, day out, that was who he was and what he did. When Jesus told Bartimaeus to come to him, Bartimaeus didn't just get up.

He threw off his cloak, which in that day was his protection, and went fully to this one who represented to Bartimaeus his only hope for real life. "What do you want me to do for you, Bartimaeus?" The same question Jesus had earlier asked James and John.

But Bartimaeus asked for something Jesus could do: I want to see. Fix my eyes, please. The ironic thing is that Bartimaeus in his blindness was already seeing a lot more clearly than the disciples who Jesus was and what Jesus was about.

There was no need for mud or spittle for this healing. Jesus simply spoke a word: Bartimaeus, your faith has made you well. Go on your way. Instantly, Bartimaeus could see. And he saw more than what his eyes could register, for he chose to walk with Jesus to Jerusalem. He became a follower, a disciple.

When Jesus comes, the temper's power is broken; When Jesus comes, the tears are wiped away. He takes the gloom and fills the life with glory. For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.

In the book of Job, Job's life had been totally ravaged, but was repaired to the point of overflowing with blessings again because he had enduring faith in God... I wonder if God asked him too, "What do you want me to do for you, Job?", and if so, if it was what Job asked for?

What about us, today? How are we doing in terms of "blindness" as following Jesus? Have we let ourselves see that God has a real claim on our lives? Have we understood that if we are followers of Jesus, we really are here to serve?

Do we dare SEE what serving in Christ's name might mean to us today? Have we asked Jesus to "fix" our hearts where we have trouble loving others or trusting God?

A new bride, just home from the honeymoon, was preparing a special meal with ham and lots of extras. The young husband was surprised when his wife cut off two good ends of the ham before it went into the oven. "Why did you do that?" he asked. "That's the way my mother always fixed a ham," she replied.

On a visit to her folks he asked his mother-in-law about it and heard, "That's the way my mother always cooked a ham." The young groom made

a special trip to grandmother's house to hear her explanation. "Son, that's the only way the ham will fit into my pan."

This new bride never questioned why she cut both ends of the ham, she just followed what her mother always did. That is blind faith. Do you trust your life in God's hands, or do you make your own decisions?

I asked that question at a bible class I conducted and much to my surprise, one of the members of the class said, "I don't trust God to make decisions for me, I make my own decisions." I guess I just couldn't imagine anyone trusting themselves.

But I realize that maybe some people only trust God because someone else said it, and perhaps you have to see it for yourself? Job's testimony reflects the tension between sound, sight, and faith.

Job acknowledged, "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you" (42:5). In the pilgrimage of faith, it can't be all hearing or all sight. Both are involved, and we must make a responsible decision to both.

Job accepted the responsibility for the word God spoke (vv. 3, 4), and for his own rash words. "I have uttered what I did not understand" (42:3). His personal encounter with God left him speechless at first (40:4-5).

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17, NKJV). When we respond by faith to God's word we begin to see God. The word spoken by Jesus will judge us at the last day (John 12:48).

The rich man, concerned about his sinful family, was told, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets (the word of God), neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

God has spoken through his word. Have you made a responsible decision and come to know him personally? Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (John 20:29).

Like Bartimaeus, we are to risk everything to proclaim the gospel, relying on God's promises rather than visible evidence. We are all blind or broken in some way, but by the grace of God we can be healed and used to the glory of Christ.

So, let me ask you again, what do you want Jesus to do for you? What do you need, so that your living will help others to see what God is like? By the grace of our God, may we dare to see, ask, and, act in faith. How do we people of faith survive seeing? We follow the example of Bartimaeus: We begin with Jesus.

*Let us pray.* Holy One, we do believe that your love extends to the whole world, to every person, and into every situation. We believe that you are everywhere present, working with all creation for its redemption. Help us to see the broken places of the world. And at the same time, help us to see--always--resurrection. Amen.