

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 30B

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Ordinary 30 - Year B
27th October 2024



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven OR

364 STF – O for a thousand tongues to sing

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

89 STF – Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord OR

451 STF – Open the eyes of my heart, Lord

Readings: Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Psalm 34:1-8; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

Hymn:

186 STF – Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! OR

303 STF – I know that my Redeemer lives

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

390 STF – My God! I know, I feel thee mine OR

638 STF – Through all the changing scenes of life

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove

Blessing

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Call to worship

Amongst the joy and the brokenness, here we are Lord.
Amongst the celebrations and the pain of our world, here we are Lord.
Believing in hope and resurrection, here we are Lord.
Trusting in you and seeking to love you more, here we are Lord.
We have come, come Lord Jesus.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven OR
364 STF – O for a thousand tongues to sing

Opening Prayers

We join together in prayer.

We bring ourselves, just as we are, with all our baggage.

Our worries, our doubts, our fears, our regrets.

Our worries of not being enough, not doing enough.

We are lovingly made in Your image and we are loved.

Unconditionally loved.

Help us look outward.

We are sorry we get so much wrong, sometimes saying or doing the wrong thing.

Sometimes not saying or doing things that could help someone else...

Sometimes not saying or doing the things that would help ourselves.

Help us lay our baggage down,

Help us, like Bartimaeus, to have the courage to reach out, ask for help.

Help us, like Bartimaeus, to have the faith to believe.

So we too can look out into the world with a new sight,

With gratitude and love for You, the world... and ourselves.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

There is much that is not 'right' about the world, isn't there? What do you feel when you turn on the news or pick up a newspaper, or click to a news website?

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Lorna Dobson

Usually, the headlines and pictures are full of pain and sorrow from around the world. War, poverty, climate change, people fleeing for their lives and seeking refuge in other countries. And in all that we have a sense of how lucky we are – I'd like us to try this next activity together as a church, to see if it helps us understand how we fit into the world.

Firstly, can we all stand, please (if that is something you are comfortable doing). I invite you to remain standing if you have food in your fridge, clothes on your back and a roof over your head (or somewhere to sleep tonight)... If we have all three of those things, we are already wealthier than 75% of the world's population.

And please remain standing if you've got those three things and you also have some money in the bank, or some cash in your wallet/purse... If you have access to money as well as food, clothes and shelter, you are now in the richest 8% of the world's population.

And please stand up if you have access to a working toilet. 1/3 of the world's population (over 2 billion people) don't have that, with all of the issues around disease and ill health caused by poor sanitation.

And finally, the richest 18 people on earth have the same combined wealth as the poorest 3.5 billion (i.e. half of the world's population). Now I doubt any of us are in the top 26 most wealthy people in the world so, at this point, you can sit down!

What these numbers show us, however, is that we live in an unequal world, an unequal society. So many of these things that we take for granted are enjoyed by very few people on the planet. There are large sections of our world population that battle against poverty and injustice every day. I wonder if one of those numbers particularly strikes you: that might be God's way of calling you into action. 'Be careful of what makes you angry', the saying goes, as it might just be the divine inviting you to do something about it...

If you are looking for something to do, then you might like to find out more about our partner charity, the Methodist international development agency, All We Can, which is working in some of the world's poorest communities to help people overcome the barriers to fulfilling their potential. This movement is working to help people to be 'all that they can', even if they have been born in some of the poorest parts of the world, or have suffered at the hands of conflict or natural disaster. Their invitation is to us to do 'all we can' to help respond to the needs of God's world. This week, perhaps you'd like to take up their invitation – do have a look at the All We Can website for ideas of how you could be part of making a change: allwecan.org.uk

There are many ways God is calling us to respond to injustice, to inequality, this week, let's look at how we can be part of creating the world we want to see. Amen.³

Hymn:

89 STF – Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord OR

451 STF – Open the eyes of my heart, Lord

Readings: Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Psalm 34:1-8; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Hymn:

186 STF – Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! OR

303 STF – I know that my Redeemer lives

Reflections on the readings

Today's Gospel reading is a simple story. I mean, as simple as stories of miraculous healings can ever be! That also, I think makes it a dangerous story. Dangerous because it can, I worry, be used in isolation to justify potentially damaging theological views.

More on that in a little while, first let's take a look together at today's text and explore what is happening and why.

Mark sites this healing story directly between James and John's ridiculously entitled request to sit on Jesus right and left hand in glory (Mark 10:35-45) and then his account of the entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11)

In that sense this story sits at an important time in Jesus ministry, he is teaching the disciples a great deal about who he is and what his ministry will seek to achieve, 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' He tells James and John in, what I still think, is a quite measured response to a fairly daft and childish question. That's after he's explained exactly why his disciples can't do what he will do and after the other 10 disciples have, quite understandably, got pretty annoyed with the two sons of Zebedee!

So where this story is placed shows that it is of great importance, there is a lesson to be learnt here and it's an urgent one. Jesus is on the way to the cross, days are few and actions will have an impact.

The subject of this healing is also important. Important enough to actually be named. We know that isn't always the case with healing narratives in Mark's gospel. The paralysed man in Mark 2, the man with a withered hand in Mark 3 and the deaf mute in Mark 7 are just some of those who are not named directly. Yet, here in this story we are introduced to the blind man, Bartimaeus, as early as the first chapter. Not only are we given his name, but we are also told its meaning. Well, sort of!

Bartimaeus, we are told, means 'son of Timaeus'. Of course, being good Bible scholars we all know that names are important. From Abram and Sarai to Simon called Peter, we also know that changes to names are incredibly important. When you try to dig into the meaning of the name 'son of Timaeus' you are met with two very conflicting meanings.

'Bar' is the simple bit of the name. It means 'son-of'. A simple Aramaic naming convention not unlike the one used in modern Scandinavian counties. For example my team, Birmingham City's new Icelandic destroyer ready to wreak havoc on English Football League 1 defenders, Willum Willumson.

'Timaeus' however is much more complicated. It might mean 'honoured one' or it might mean 'unclean one'. Quite a difference!

So Bartimaeus' name means either 'son of the honoured one' or 'son of the unclean one'. Maybe it used to mean one and now means the other? A reversal of the Biblical re-naming convention? Does the encounter that Bartimaeus has with Jesus fundamentally change him so much as a person that the meaning of his name is changed by the miraculous healing he receives? No one actually knows and the text doesn't tell us but it's interesting to ask ourselves these questions and explore around the story together.

The text does tell us how the healing comes about. Bartimaeus is sitting by the roadside begging when he hears a crowd approaching. When it's confirmed that Jesus is with the crowd he shouts out, addressing Jesus as the Son of David and asking for mercy. The crowd try to silence him but Bartimaeus just shouts even louder, continuing to ask for mercy, until Jesus stops and tells the crowd to 'call him'.

This causes a change in the response from the crowd, moments ago they were trying to shush Bartimaeus, now they're telling him to be cheerful because Jesus wants to talk to him.

I always feel slightly uncomfortable when I read these few verses. The crowds reaction to the events happening around them isn't great, well I don't think it is anyway...

Bartimaeus is on the periphery of society. Due to his disability he had been pushed to the edge, having to beg to survive. Then when there's a chance for his life to be changed the crowd initially isn't interested, choosing to try and ignore his pleas and silence him. Maybe my discomfort comes from the way we as a church, to our shame, have often chosen to ignore those on the edges. Even worse, I can think of several times when legitimate access concerns have been raised and the one asking for help has been ignored, silenced, ridiculed or dismissed.

The crowds response to Jesus asking them to call Bartimaeus forward also raises issues for me. 'Cheer up, on your feet' they say. There's definite shades of the trite 'smile, Jesus loves you!' kind of reaction that I guess many people in difficulty will experience.

Thankfully, Bartimaeus seems so grateful to see Jesus that he can ignore the insensitivity of the crowd and approaches Jesus with expectation. 'What do you want me to do for you' Jesus asks the blind man. The man that is blind, is asked by Jesus what he wants. He's begging at the roadside to survive because he's blind and Jesus asks him what he wants him to do...

I mean, it seems fairly obvious, doesn't it? But Jesus invites Bartimaeus to ask for what he needs, to be specific in his request. When the request is then made 'I want to see', it's certainly something which will be specific and measurable.

And it's a request which is quickly granted. Bartimaeus has his sight restored and is told to 'go'.

It's now that we get to the dangerous bit I mentioned at the beginning of this reflection. Jesus says 'your faith has healed you.' Now, I have no problem with people being healed because of their faith. It seems that in this story, and in some of the other healing narratives throughout all our gospels, Jesus is making a special point of mentioning the part that the individuals faith plays in their healing. The danger comes when we begin to think or to express that the only way to be healed is through our own faith. If we hold fast to that theology we can end up doing a great deal of damage to those who are incredibly faithful people yet do not experience the kind of healing found in this passage. Indeed, the gospels are filled with accounts where the faith of the individual is not the trigger for healing. There are even accounts where it's clear that faith follows healing, such as in John 5:1-11 where the healed man doesn't even have any idea who Jesus is. It's also important to note that Jesus never asks anyone to prove their faith before healing them.

The healing narratives in our Gospels then, seem to me to say far more about who and what Jesus is rather than who we are. For us they may be a reflection of our faith or a means to grace. For Jesus they are always signs of his messiahship, part of the promise of the Lord's servant in Isaiah 42.

Bartimaeus responds to his healing by following Jesus on the road (or the way, depending on the translation you use). His life has been transformed and so he chooses to follow. Of

all the challenges presented to us by this story today, this is the simplest and easiest and at the same time the hardest and most complex. It's a reminder, once again, to give all that we have and all that we are into the care and service of the one who loves us and is our saviour. To call out and ask for what we require, to be blessed as we receive and, above all, to follow where he leads.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

390 STF – My God! I know, I feel thee mine OR

638 STF – Through all the changing scenes of life

Prayers of intercession

Today our prayers of intercession are based on Psalm 34:1-8

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

Heavenly Father, we approach you giving thanks and praise for all you have done for us. We thank you for every blessing we enjoy and answered prayer.

I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

May our prayers glorify you and your creation. May every created being know what joy there is to dwell in your presence. We pray for all who are sorrowful today. For those afflicted by illness, pain, grief or sorrow. May all those in need feel your comfort and healing and find reason to rejoice.

Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.

Glory to God who hears and answers our prayers. Who does more for us than we ever give credit for.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

May all who are in fear find peace. All who live in areas of our world wrecked by conflict, war and terror. All who suffer from natural disaster and the effects of climate change. Good Lord, deliver us.

Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

May we serve you with joy as your church in every land, proclaiming your goodness and mercy to all people.

This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

Be with all who are in poverty Lord, ease their burdens we pray. Deliver us all from our burdens and set us on a right path with you.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

May we know your presence surrounding us each day and night, each dark and light. Now and forever.

⁴ Reflection written by Graeme Dutton

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Lord we make our home with you. For you are all that is good.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

God of this day, we thank you for all the amazing gifts you have given us – and we return these gifts to you now: the gifts we have given here today, but also the gifts of our lives and all that we are.

God of every moment, in the days and weeks ahead, we commit ourselves to working for your kingdom, to build a better, fairer world.

In the name of the Creator, the Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.⁶

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove

Blessing

Amongst the pain, there is comfort. Amongst the suffering, there is hope. Amongst the brokenness, there is love. In a world of death, we are the people of resurrection. Go in peace and bring love to a world in need.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Graeme Dutton

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker