

THIRTIETH SUNDAY - B - OCTOBER 25, 2015

***I'VE KNOWN FOR A LONG TIME THAT I REALLY LOVE THIS STORY WE
HAVE TODAY ABOUT BARTIMAEUS, THE BLIND BEGGAR,
THIS PAST WEEK, IT FINALLY CAME TO ME WHY I LOVE THIS STORY...
WHY I HAVE THESE WARM FEELINGS FOR THIS MAN, BARTIMAEUS
I BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT IS THE SAME REASON WHY I WAS ROOTING, IN
VAIN, FOR THE CHICAGO CUBS TO BEAT THE NEW YORK METS AND WIN
THE NATIONAL LEAGUE PENNANT ON THEIR WAY TO WINNING THE
WORLD SERIES FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN 100 YEARS...
IT IS BECAUSE I LOVE TO ROOT FOR THE UNDERDOG...
DOESN'T EVERYONE LOVE TO ROOT FOR THE UNDERDOG....???
UNLESS, OF COURSE, IT'S YOUR TEAM THE UNDERDOG IS PLAYING...
E.G. YOU HAPPEN TO BE A NY METS FAN.
BUT, USUALLY, WE ROOT FOR THE UNDERDOG.....
ESP. IF THEY ARE REALLY, REALLY THE UNDERDOG AND HAVE LITTLE
CHANCE OF WINNING...
I GUESS HERE, WE ARE THINKING NOT ONLY THE CUBS BUT ROCKY...
OR THE "MIRACLE ON ICE" WHEN THE USA AMATUER TEAM UPSET THE
RUSSIAN PROFESSIONALS...
THAT IS BARTIMAEUS' SITUATION....BARTIMAEUS FROM JERICHO...
THE BLIND BEGGAR ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD...
TRYING TO GET JESUS' ATTENTION.....***

CRYING OUT, WHILE MANY WERE TELLING HIM TO SHUT UP.....

HE IS THE UNDERDOG, THE OUTSIDER....

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONTRAST HIM WITH THE ELITE APOSTLES, THE INSIDERS - JESUS' CLOSEST FOLLOWERS.....

AND WE NEED TO DO THAT BECAUSE, AS ROGER KARBAN SAYS IN A COMMENTARY ON THIS GOSPEL, JESUS ASK THE SAME QUESTION OF THIS BLIND BEGGAR THAT HE ASK OF JAMES AND JOHN LAST SUNDAY... THE QUESTION, WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK - EXCEPT THESE TWO PLACES....

THE QUESTION IS A VERY IMPORTANT ONE WHICH JESUS ASKS LAST WEEK OF JAMES AND JOHN AND TODAY OF THE BLIND BEGGAR IS: WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?

JAMES AND JOHN, THE ULTIMATE INSIDERS, AMONG JESUS' CLOSEST FOLLOWERS PRESUMABLY FOR SOME TIME....

THEY ASK FOR SPECIAL SEATING FOR THEMSELVES IN THE KINGDOM..... THEY ASK FOR STATUS AND PRESTIGE.....

FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION....

IF YOU'LL RECALL JESUS WASN'T REAL HAPPY WITH THEIR REQUEST.... HE USED IT AS A TEACHABLE MOMENT, AS WE WOULD SAY....

WENT INTO A MINI SERMON ABOUT WHAT GREATNESS MEANS TO HIM....

IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING NUMBER ONE AND LORDING OVER OTHERS...

TO BE NUMBER ONE IS TO SERVE....

WHOEVER WISHES TO BE GREAT AMONG YOU NEEDS TO BE THE

SERVANT OF OTHERS....

SO THIS WEEK WE HAVE THE DISCIPLES WITH JESUS AND WE HAVE HIM

ASKING THE SAME EXACT QUESTION OF THIS BLIND BEGGAR -

THEY ARE RIGHT THERE AND HEAR HIM AS THE SAME QUESTION....

HE OBVIOUSLY IS CONTINUING HIS TEACHABLE MOMENT -

AND FROM THE BEGINNING OF THIS PASSAGE WE HAVE MARK

DEPICTING THE BLIND BEGGAR AS DOING WHAT INDIVIDUALS CALLED

BY JESUS SHOULD DO....

FIRST, HE'S PERSISTENT IN DEMANDING THAT JESUS "TAKE PITY" ON

HIM....

EVEN IN THE FACE OF THE CROWD'S OBJECTIONS

SECOND, HE IMMEDIATELY RESPONDS TO JESUS' CALL BY THROWING

ASIDE HIS CLOAK - PROBABLY HIS ONLY POSSESSION

NOTHING STANDS IN HIS WAY - HE'S THERE IN A FLASH....

HE IS MARK'S EXAMPLE FOR THE DISCIPLES OF A PERFECT DISCIPLE -

THIS BLIND BEGGAR BY THE ROAD....

SOUNDS A LITTLE BIT LIKE FRANCIS ADMONISH US CLERGY FOR

PUTTING SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON HOW WE ARE DRESSED, OUR RANK AND

TELLING OTHERS WHO IS RIGHT AND WHO IS WRONG.....

TELLING US TO LOOK TO THE HOMELESS, THE PRISONER, THE SICK FOR

WISDOM, FAITH AND GUIDANCE FOR FOLLOWING JESUS MESSAGE...

SO THAT QUESTION WE HEAR JESUS ASKING US LAST WEEK AND THIS

WEEK IS AN INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT ONE....

*THE BEGGAR'S RESPONSE IS A SIMPLE ONE, "MASTER, I WANT TO SEE"
TRUE DISCIPLES DON'T ASK FOR SPECIAL SEATING OR AN EASY LIFE....
THEY JUST WANT TO SEE MORE CLEARLY WHAT THE RISEN JESUS IS
ASKING OF THEM.....*

*NOTICE ALSO THE ENCOUNTER ENDS WITH BARTIMAEUS "FOLLOWING
BEHIND HIM ON THE WAY"*

*MARK'S NEXT PASSAGE DESCRIBES JESUS' PALM SUNDAY ENTRANCE
INTO JERUSALEM....*

HE HAS LESS THAN A WEEK TO LIVE....

*THIS PARTICULAR "WAY" LEADS TO SUFFERING AND DEATH AND
ULTIMATELY RESURRECTION....*

*AND IT IS IMPLIED THAT ALL OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS ARE EXPECTED TO
FOLLOW THIS PATH....*

WE MUST BE WILLING TO GO DOWN BEFORE WE GO UP....

*WE MUST BE WILLING TO EXPERIENCE FAILURE, LOSS, SETBACKS, AND
EVEN OUR OWN SINFULNESS BEFORE WE EXPERIENCE NEW LIFE, NEW
GROWTH....THE RESURRECTION*

*OUR GOSPEL STORY TODAY INVITES US TO PLACE OURSELVES ALONG
THE WAY WITH BARTIMAEUS AND ADMIT OUR OWN BLIND SPOTS...*

*TO THE EXTENT THAT WE CAN RECOGNIZE OUR OWN BLINDNESS WE CAN
ALSO CALL OUT WITH BARTIMAEUS AND ASK FOR HELP, REPEATING THE
"LORD, HAVE MERCY, CHRIST, HAVE MERCY THAT THE LITURGY PUT ON
OUR LIPS AT THE BEGINNING...*

*THEN, IF WE CAN SCROUNGE UP THE COURAGE TO DO SO HONESTLY, WE
MAY REPEAT WITH BARTIMAEUS....*

MASTER, I WANT TO SEE....

*LET US ASK NOT ONLY TO BE ABLE TO SEE BUT ALSO TO HAVE THE
COURAGE TO FOLLOW BEHIND JESUS ON THE WAY THROUGH THE
SUFFERING AND DEATH TO THE RESURRECTION....*

*THE NEW LIFE, THE NEW GROWTH, THE NEW REALIZATIONS THAT ARE
POSSIBLE FOR US ON THE WAY....*

*OUR FAITH ASSURES US THAT THE SON OF GOD PRESENT IN WORD, IN
SACRAMENT AND IN OUR COMMUNITY WILL LEAD US BEYOND ANY
HORIZON WE HAVE YET ENVISIONED....*