



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER 2021 – 21st Sunday after Trinity

COLLECT

Grant, we beseech you, merciful Lord,
to your faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Psalm 34: 1-8, 19-22

- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times; ♦
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 My soul shall glory in the Lord; ♦
let the humble hear and be glad.
- 3 O magnify the Lord with me; ♦
let us exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought the Lord and he answered me ♦
and delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 Look upon him and be radiant ♦
and your faces shall not be ashamed.
- 6 This poor soul cried, and the Lord heard me ♦
and saved me from all my troubles.
- 7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him ♦
and delivers them.
- 8 O taste and see that the Lord is gracious; ♦
blessed is the one who trusts in him.
- 19 Many are the troubles of the righteous; ♦
from them all will the Lord deliver them.
- 20 He keeps all their bones, ♦
so that not one of them is broken.
- 21 But evil shall slay the wicked ♦
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
- 22 The Lord ransoms the life of his servants ♦
and will condemn none who seek refuge in him.

Hebrews 7: 23-28

²³ Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. ²⁵ Consequently he is able for all time to save^(a) those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other^(a) high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

Mark 10: 46-52

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

⁴⁶ 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. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁹ 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.' ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher,^(a) let me see again.' ⁵² Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

A Reflection from Hannah...

'What do you want me to do for you?' Last week, Jesus asked this question of James and John, who then got rather more than they bargained for in the discussion that followed! This week, Jesus asks this question of Bartimaeus who, we learn, is sat by the roadside. It is the last healing miracle in Mark's Gospel, and it is both an account of a man who was healed, and an allegory for our pilgrimage too.

The story begins with Bartimaeus on the side of 'the way', and it ends with him right in it- following Jesus 'on the way'. Sometimes we can feel a bit on the side-lines- as though we are watching someone else's story play out, and are not part of it ourselves. And in this very personal account, Christ draws someone from the edges into the middle. But it's not without struggle, and it's not without dignity.

Those around Bartimaeus, as he yelled for all he was worth, tried to silence him. In doing so, they called into question the very idea that Jesus would be interested in him and his problems. Those voices are still with us and around us. Whether they come from the outside, or our own internal lack of confidence, we can be made to feel as though Christ wouldn't be interested in us and our worries. Well, the perseverance of Bartimaeus and the arrow-like attention of Jesus who stops in his tracks is an important reminder that those voices need have no power, and that Christ always desires our company and our questions.

There is also dignity in Jesus not assuming that he already knows what Bartimaeus needs. I have a condition that has the (rather sexist) name *Housewives' Hand Eczema*. For years people must have noticed it because I used to get heaps of hand-cream for my birthday! But I didn't need hand-cream. What I needed was rubber gloves- good, long-lasting ones. If people had asked me what I wanted, that would have been my answer! It may have seemed obvious to Christ that Bartimaeus wanted to be healed of his blindness, but he didn't assume that he knew best. Instead, he ascribed dignity to Bartimaeus and put the relationship on an equal footing by asking him to tell him. There's a lesson for life there, and a lesson for our relationship with God- real relationship, real interdependence isn't about doing things 'for' people without asking them if it's helpful or desired; it's about greeting another in their humanity and their own sense of need. And in doing that, blind Bartimaeus was given sight, and was brought from the roadside right into the way- following the footsteps of Jesus.