

Coventry and Nuneaton Methodist Circuit Sunday 24th October 2021

Let the door of our hearts be always open to you, O Lord, that we may mark your entrance, embrace your presence, hear your voice, seek your strength and hold fast to you forever.

Paul (Henry) Heath (1599-1643)

Hymn H&P 744 O for a thousand tongues

Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwg_mK_c

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Let us pray together

Eternal God we worship you,
Creator and sustainer of the universe.
We praise you for your gifts of life, health and strength.
Lord Jesus, light of the world we worship you.
We praise you that you have found us,
welcomed us, washed us and given us a place in your church.
Holy Spirit we worship you.
Eternal energy and power from God.
We praise you that you have renewed us and blessed us with your gifts.

Lord, you have given us so much,
Yet we give you so little in return.
We confess that our words, thoughts and actions often deny our faith in you,
Yet you continue to love and forgive us.
Help us to follow you more faithfully,
To serve you more completely
And to let you live more completely within us,
directing all that we are.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: - Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that

it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him". So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Time to Reflect

Some years ago I had the chance to visit a cave system – not the sort where you wear helmets and boiler suits and crawl through narrow gaps (I don't think I could do that!), but a series of large caves open to the public. When we were deep in the cave system the guide told us to stand away from the walls of the cave and turned off all the lights. It was the most complete darkness that I have ever experienced. The only way we could identify other people and where they were was by the sound of their voices. I realised what a gift sight is.

I've been lucky to not experience sight loss, but I got an insight into what it must have been like for Bartimaeus. Sat by the roadside as he was each day he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was coming his way. He heard the excitement in peoples voices and probably knew of the miracles that Jesus performed and how (as Mark tells us in chapter 8) Jesus had healed a blind man at the pool of Bethesda.

So Bartimaeus called out "Son of David, have mercy on me!", maybe hoping for alms or for a blessing. Those around Bartimaeus told him to be quiet – he wasn't important enough to

trouble Jesus – but Bartimaeus cried out even more loudly and Jesus stopped. No-one is too unimportant for Jesus. He wants to stop and hear our needs – but we have to want to approach him. We have to make that first move as Bartimaeus did. Are you afraid to call out to Jesus in your need? Jesus is ready to meet you in your difficult places. If you call out to him he won't walk by.

Jesus asked Bartimaeus "What do you want me to do for you?" "Rabbi, I want to see" replied Bartimaeus. That was his deepest need and, in typical Mark style we hear that "Immediately he received his sight". Jesus wants to meet our deepest needs. If we will be honest and share those needs with him he will hear us and respond to them. So what are your deepest needs? What do you want Jesus to do for you?

This passage in Mark 10 is immediately prior to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and follows on from the request of James and John to sit on Jesus' right and left hands in his kingdom – a passage which showed that even his disciples were spiritually blind and needed to understand the true purpose of Jesus' mission and the true nature of Jesus' kingdom. But now as Jesus approaches Jerusalem the time has come for eyes to be opened. For people to finally see Jesus for who he truly is. For people to see God in a new way.

Many people are spiritually blind today. They don't see the need for God in their self-sufficient lives. They don't see Jesus for who he is. They see no reason to ask Jesus to meet them in their deepest needs, preferring to struggle on physically and mentally in their own strength. Has that ever been you? Are you ready for your eyes to be fully opened to who Jesus is and what he can do for you?

Maybe our prayer today needs to be that of the modern songwriter - "Open the eyes of my heart Lord, I want to see you", and just imagine what the one who brought sight to the blind can do for us.

A time of prayer

Lord Jesus Christ who meets our deepest needs,

We pray for all those who are spiritually blind today.

For those who are rich in the things of this world but poor in spirit.

For nations who have much but share little.

For leaders of nations who squander precious resources and for those who withhold aid from the most needy.

We pray for those affected in so many ways by the pandemic still raging throughout the world.

For those coming off furlough and looking for work.

For those torn apart by anguish, consumed by worry, numbed by grief, trapped in prisons of loneliness, straightjackets of fear.

For those waiting for diagnosis and for treatment, For those whose lives are constrained by caring for loved ones.

For all facing uncertainty or change in their lives. Lord of all hopefulness, be with these and with all who need you comfort, strength or healing today. That all may know and experience your presence and healing touch and have your true life within them.

In Jesus' name

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn StF 440 Amazing Grace

Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clYvT745alg>

John Newton (1725-1807)

A prayer of blessing

May God's blessing

rise with us in the morning;

dwell within us as we journey through the day
and abide with us as evening falls.

Amen

Elaine Hall