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ORDINARY 30B

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A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

As you sit here in this space you call your own ready to meet the living God remember...

You are connected to people of faith worshipping in different ways and places.

You are part of a community of saints that have worshipped for generations.

You are joined with others across the world choosing to do the same.

Here in this special space where God has been for all time you are free to worship.

So take a moment and give thanks in the quiet places of your heart.

For all you have,

All you are,

And all you might be.

Pause

If you feel able speak the following aloud:

All I have, all I am and all I might be I offer to you as I worship – today and always.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: Mark 10:46-52 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

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.

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.

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.

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.

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... 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. 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.

Responding in music

You may wish to listen to either or both of these hymns, and join in if you feel so inclined, as you reflect and pray about how you respond this week.

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven – [YouTube](#)

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me – [YouTube](#)

Responding in prayer (based on Psalm 34:1-8)

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

Heavenly Father, I approach you giving thanks and praise for all you have done for me, and for each of us in this community. I thank you for every blessing I enjoy and answered prayer.

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

May my prayers glorify you and your creation. May every created being know what joy there is to dwell in your presence. I 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 me, deliver all of us.

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

May I serve you with joy, 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, I pray. Deliver me from my burdens and set me on a right path with you.

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

May I know your presence surrounding me each day and night, each dark and light. Now and forever.

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

Lord, I make my home with you this day, for you are all that is good.

Amen.

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.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 28th October

- Today, go looking for resurrections
The divine corrections
To the misconceptions
That God is dead or somehow uninterested.
Notice the new life
Emerging from amongst strife
And see that the world is rife
With everyday glimpses of glory.

Tuesday 29th October

- The German theologian Meister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you", that will be enough'.
- Today, throughout the day (or whatever is left of the day), simply look for opportunities to pray the words 'thank you' to God.
- Thank you for the sunrise. Thank you for that I have enough food for the day. Thank you for my health, such as it is. Thank you for that lovely conversation with a friend. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Wednesday 30th October

- Gracious God, show me how to love without borders or restrictions, how to radically live out your calling on my life and your challenge to all of us to live in the way of love.
- Show me how to be the kind of shepherd who would always go in search of the one most in need, how to reach out to the lost sheep in my life and community.
- Show me how to love as you love, O Christ.

Thursday 31st October

- Gracious God, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world.
- Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love.
- In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Friday 1st November

- Today, Lord God, I thank you for your tenderness;
For providing rest when needed,
Strength when called upon,
Resilience when pressed,
Compassion when moved,
Constant companionship whilst I navigate life,
Encouragement when disappointments arrive,
Direction when I stumble,
Hope when I despair,
Joy after grief,
Forgiveness and redemption.
Amen.

Saturday 2nd November

- Is there a social issue in your area that is particularly noticeable? Perhaps something that is talked about in local media outlets, local community groups, or in your church?
- Pray about this issue, or list of issues, during the day. Is there something you could do to get involved in working out a locally-appropriate solution?