

SERMON FOR OCTOBER 24, 2021

TEXT: MARK 10: 46-52

THEME: THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. **47** And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **48** And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" **49** And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." **50** And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **51** And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." **52** And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

In the name of Jesus:

Paul McCartney of the Beatles wrote a song inspired by the roads and hills of Scotland, you might have heard of it, "The Long and Winding Road." Having traveled through the highlands of Scotland by car, I can vouch for the fact that the hills of Scotland are indeed long and winding roads. They seemingly go on off into the distance with no known destination in sight.

In our text for today, Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem. The road from Jericho, where He is in our text, has a long and winding road to Jerusalem. It winds through deserts and valleys, small cities and towns, farms and forests, with the final destination being the city of Jerusalem, the city on a hill. As

Jesus travels this LONG AND WINDING ROAD, He meets all sorts of people, people who are hurting emotionally, socially, psychologically, spiritually, and physically. One such man is a man named Bartimaeus. He is a blind beggar, no place to go home to, no loved ones waiting for him at the door. He not only can't see physically but he can't see an end in sight to his predicament. He sits hopelessly on the street corner, ears tuned to a passerby where he might get their attention and possibly some help in his time of need.

Suddenly his antenna goes up as he hears that Jesus is approaching. Jesus is the Healer and Helper he so desperately needs. And so, as he hears the footsteps of Jesus, Bartimaeus calls out: "Jesus, have mercy on me." The noise of the crowd in the street, though, drowns him out so the beggar cries out all the louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" By this time the people watching all of this unfold get a little nervous. Bartimaeus is making a scene, so the bystanders tell him to pipe down, but he cries out all the more: "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

And now, he has Jesus' attention. Jesus stops, and tells the crowd to call the blind man to Him. All excited, Bartimaeus throws off his outer coat and he springs up from his begging place and comes to Jesus. Jesus asks what it is that he exactly wants. The blind man replies that he wants to recover his sight. It seems from his request that he at one time in his life was able to see,

and now he is asking Jesus to give him the ability to see again. ” **52** And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.” What way? The way of THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD TO JERUSALEM.

You are, so to speak, a modern day Bartemaus. You have been born spiritually blind, an enemy of God. You have been and are in continuing need of God’s mercy and grace. And Jesus has heard your cries for mercy. He has come to you and helped you in your time of need. Many times we get on our knees,, a helpless position, and ask God for forgiveness. And Jesus forgives! You have been set free! And soon you will taste this forgiveness in the Supper, your faith will be strengthened and you will be filled for the journey ahead, the journey of following Jesus, along the path of THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD.

Jesus traveled that LONG AND WINDING ROAD to Jerusalem. To the cross and eventually to the empty tomb. Jesus foretold of His trip to Jerusalem earlier in the Gospel of Mark: “And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.” (Mark 8). And Jesus was on that road from the town of Jericho when He met the blind beggar. Even though there was a detour, so to speak, and He didn’t plan on stopping, Jesus stopped, for His purpose was to save sinners. The Son of Man came not

to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. For Bartimaeus, for the people of His day and age, for you, and for those whom you know and associate with today.

Look at the long and winding road you travel in your life. You have been baptized into Christ, meaning that you have put on Christ and Christ is shown to other people in your life. People put into your path, filled with heartache, broken promises and shattered dreams. Their lives are filled with misery and they seemingly have no hope. God has placed these people on the path you travel, so that they might know mercy and love of Jesus. Christ has risen from the grave to give you new life, a life that shows the resurrected and living Christ.

He calls you and empowers you this morning inviting you again to walk that long and winding road that God has placed you on. None of us know what the future holds, and many times it looks as if we don't know where we are going. One of the prayers that are used in our church expresses that sentiment, that each of us are traveling on a long and winding road in life not knowing where we are going. But that prayer also places trust in the Lord to lead and guide. Just listen to this wonderful prayer: " Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we can not see the ending, by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown. (talk about a long and winding road,

but listen to this). Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This is exactly the Lord Jesus does. He has shown mercy and showered you with His loving kindness. You have been baptized into the name of Jesus and you have now put on Christ, so that you might follow Jesus on the long and winding road of faith. And on that long and winding road, you have met and will continue to meet the feeble and frail, those who are slow to believe and those who have been broken in by sin and power. And as you meet them Christ calls them through you to lead and bless them. For Jesus continues to call, continues to heal, continues to give sight to those who can't see or won't know of His love, and He continues to show mercy to everyone in your path.

For the LONG AND WINDING ROAD GOES THROUGH THIS CONGREGATION THIS MORNING, and in following Jesus He calls you and me, as He did Bartimaeus, James, and John, and all the company of saints, to pick up our crosses and follow Him. And so you and I follow, blessed by Jesus, to go through our church doors back into our community, into our homes, classrooms, and neighborhoods, through the hills and valleys of our lives, following Jesus to that place that He has prepared for us in heaven. And in that place, that LONG AND WINDING ROAD will be turned into the golden streets of

heaven, where there will be no more weeping, only joy and praise for we will be with Jesus. And we will see Him face to face.

But until that time, we follow Him in faith. And in faith He gives us eyes not only to see Him but also to see the needs of those around us, those who are broken and troubled, and empowers us to invite all to follow Him to eternal life, for He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

To the glory of God and in Jesus' name.

Amen