

In Mark's Gospel, discipleship, is often described using the term, "The Way". If you were an authentic disciple you would join Jesus on his journey; you would follow him on the Way.

After he is healed of his physical blindness, Bartimaeus joins Jesus on the road. As Mark accounts for us, "Immediately the man regained his sight and followed Jesus on the Way."

Now if we are going to find our way correctly, what do we need to do? Now I know this can be hard for us men, but you have to ask for directions; you have to stop and look at the map, don't ignore that annoying voice on the GPS. Although, sometimes the GPS doesn't know what it's talking about either.

And so maybe we can look at Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, of today's Gospel to help us with directions for, "The Way".

To begin I would like to put Bartimaeus in the context of the Scriptures that we have heard over the last couple of weeks. Two weeks ago we heard about the rich young man who wanted to follow Christ. Give your money to the poor says Jesus and come follow me. However, he was saddened by this answer, following Jesus on the Way was going to cost too much so he walks away.

Last week we had the apostles James and John, the sons of Zebedee; they thought they were following Jesus on the Way, but interpreted it in such a manner that there were seats of power to be had. Grant us to sit on your left and right in your kingdom Jesus. Woops these two needed some correction about what "The Way" was really about.

So, if we were actually sitting down and reading the Gospel of Mark right through we would discover that Bartimaeus is a true disciple. There is something about him that will help us read the map, get directions, to follow Jesus on the Way.

First, we see in Bartimaeus a boldness despite his poverty. This insignificant beggar who was hushed by the crowds but as Jesus approaches he cries out, "Son of David have mercy on me" And his boldness is directed towards Christ; he cries out to Jesus I need your help, save me, heal me, and forgive me.

And above all he trusts the call of Jesus. When the crowds tell him that Jesus is calling him what does he do? He throws off his cloak and runs to Jesus. For a poor beggar his cloak was his most important material possession, his protection from the elements, his shelter, his bed. In the Old Testament the law of Moses forbade the holding of a poor person's cloak in pawn, as collateral for a loan. It had to be returned to him each night, because it was so necessary for their wellbeing.

But Bartimaeus trusts Jesus so much that he throws off his cloak, his most valuable possession, his security blanket and he goes to Jesus.

And finally he asks for healing, healing of his blindness. "Lord let me see again"

Heal me of the blindness that prevents me from seeing your grace; heal me of the blindness that prevents me from seeing you Lord.

So in terms of following Jesus on, "The Way" Bartimaeus gets it right. He has the map, he has the directions. So what can we learn?

Boldness in poverty, boldness in need and that boldness cries out first for mercy. Jesus mercy, Son of David have mercy.

Trust, let go of our security blankets, as important as they may be, let go.

Healing of blindness. I can't see; I am not seeing correctly. Lord let me see again.

Bartimaeus what do you have to teach me so that I can better follow Jesus on the Way?