

**What would you shout?** The blind man Bartimaeus calls out, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" In the gospels, others will cry out during the events of Holy Week, "Hosanna" and "Crucify him!" What I noticed this week that someone always was trying to quiet those doing the shouting. Here it was those around "Bart." Maybe they did not want Jesus to look too closely in their direction. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday, the crowds shouted "Hosanna!" or "Save Us!" and the Jewish leaders tried to get Jesus to quiet them. When Pontius Pilate asked the crowd what he should do with Jesus they shouted, "Crucify him!" He seemed to try to quiet them but they shouted all the more. So, let me ask again, what would you shout? Bart didn't tell Jesus to heal him. He shouted asking Jesus to have mercy on him. Today, what are you shouting for, crying for, asking for? Speak up, speak out.

Back before I retired, it wasn't a shout, but it was a slap upside the head! I went to a district gathering to welcome the new bishop to the Upper NY Annual Conference. Bishop Webb shared a word which he hoped would become a prayer we all might pray. It went like this, "**God, have your way with your Church...and if I get in the way, remove me.**" Are we in need of healing, in need of realigning, in need of refocusing? Are we in need of moving so that God can move God's church forward, so that God will do God's will? Perhaps we need to cry out for healing of our own blindedness and our self-centeredness and ask for God's guidance to lead us forward.

**How would Jesus reply?** If Jesus were to come by today, what would you ask of him? Not only did Bart shout for Jesus' attention, but when he was called he knew what he wanted. Stop and think for a moment. Let me see if this helps. Did you ever dream of being Aladdin and having the lamp with the genie? You know the one you rub it, the genie comes out, and you get three wishes. Did you think of what you would wish for? Over the years the first two would change, but the last was always the same for me – to wish for three more wishes! Here there are not three, but just one. So, what one thing would you ask of Jesus? Bart knew what he wanted from Jesus. He was specific in his request. He wanted to see. King Solomon asked for Wisdom. What do you want? Be honest can you speak it to Jesus? Can you share it with others? Are you bold enough to name it and claim it? Suppose Jesus is asking this of you today, "***What do you want me to do for you?***" What would you say?

**Now what?** We do not know what the rest of the story was for Bart except that it says, *At once he was able to see, and he began to follow Jesus on the way.* We can only assume that he continued to follow Jesus and also to tell people about his experience of meeting Jesus. Do you think that Bart began each day asking the same question that Jesus had asked him? "***What do you want me to do for you?***" What if we were to ask that question of Jesus each day and have the faith to faithfully reply to his request of us? Might that help us *to follow Jesus on the way?* In one of the memorable sayings of Jesus in the fourth gospel we read, *Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6) Like the bishop asked us to pray how might we

get out of the way (to get out of our old ways) and start to follow the Way where Jesus leads us. What if we had that kind of faith? Did you hear what Jesus said in reply to Bart's request. He acknowledged Bart's faith – he said, "*Your faith has healed you.*"

In the 1700's there occurred a rather remarkable change in the life of an Austrian Count named Nikolaus Zinzendorf. Born into nobility, Zinzendorf had recently completed his training in law and was sent off to complete his education by touring European cities. In an art gallery in Dusseldorf, he came upon a masterly painting of Jesus on the cross. The eyes of the Master seemed to penetrate the Count's heart. Beneath the painting were these words: "**This I did for you; what are you doing for me?**" Count Zinzendorf was never able to forget those haunting words. Within a few years he had retreated from public life to devote himself to a Christian community he had started for religious fugitives from Moravia. (The Moravians and Count Zinzendorf had a profound influence on the faith development of John Wesley and the early Methodist movement.)

Bart might have been haunted by the same words: "This I did for you; what are you doing for me?" There are a thousand things he might have done after receiving his sight. We only know one. He followed Jesus. That is what faith is all about. It is a response to who Jesus is and what he has already done for us. It's not about WWJD but WWYD - "What Will You Do?" Just do it. Alleluia and Amen.

### **We Come before the Lord in Prayer**

Jeffrey B. Childs 10/28/2024

We come before the Lord in prayer.  
Upon the Lord we wait.  
For we believe the Lord will share,  
The healing power of faith.

Thinking of all that Christ has done,  
What might you ask today?  
Which of your needs is number one?  
Come before God and pray.

For all that God has done for you,  
What will you do today?  
May faith in God come shining through,  
All that you do and say.