

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SPARTA, NC  
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The Rev. J. Barry Kramer  
“Seeing into...”

The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." (Mark 10:51 NRSV)

The crowd hummed with excitement. Passover was approaching and the pilgrims jammed the roadways, chanting on their way to holy Jerusalem. Sitting alongside the pathway was another crowd of people watching, waiting and wishing that they also could joyfully journey to the holy city. They were the diseased, handicapped, and poor people who were not able to make the trip, but wanted to sense the excitement of the journey. The overall atmosphere was electric! Added to this busy scene was the news that the young rabbi who had challenged the religious establishment would be passing by.

Someone told a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, that Jesus was passing by his spot. He gambled that he would be heard as he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Ordinarily, Jesus might have moved on by, the cry being only one of many. But this was the first time anyone had publicly called him “Son of David”, a title that could only refer to the Messiah. It got his attention and Jesus stopped the procession and called the man to come forward.

Looking into the life of this man Bartimaeus, we discover some interesting facts. First, the name Bar – timaeus means “son” of Timaeus, and timaw, in Greek, means to “honor or trust.” Thus this man was the son of a trustworthy person. Second, although we don’t know the cause of his blindness, we do know that he wanted “to see *again*.” Bartimaeus had an idea of what life really looked like. Thus he boldly called out for help.

Boldness is something that we often take for granted. We walk into a church, look around, see a spot that looks comfortable, and boldly take our seat, even though others may look at us as if to say, “Oh oh, so and so usually sits there! A blind person cannot do that. He or she has to depend on others to help them find an empty seat, knowing that boldness might lead to injury or embarrassment. Bartimaeus overcame all of that when he cried out and came forward.

The third thing we learn about Bartimaeus is that he was a man of faith. He believed that this Jesus was a man of God, and most likely the Messiah. He believed that this Jesus was capable of showing him God’s mercy. He believed that this Jesus would give him an answer. He believed that the light of the world had come into his life!

The fourth thing we learn about Bartimaeus is that he was open to new possibilities in his life. He was open to the idea that God’s healing strength could give him sight again. He was ready to receive anything this Jesus could give him. He wanted a blessing.

We all have blind spots in our lives. To demonstrate this in a process called “Values Clarification”, I often used an exercise called the “Johari Window,” so named because the two guys who designed it were named “Joe” and “Harry.” The window has four panes in it. The upper left pane contains information that is “open,” information that we know about ourselves and that others know about us. The lower left pane is “hidden” information, stuff that we know about ourselves

but others do not know about us. The lower right pane is totally unknown information; no one knows it except maybe God. The upper right pane is our blind spot; information that others know about us but we do not know about ourselves.

For example, with the exception of visitors, I think I could point out a blind spot in each and every one of you, and after only nine months. Likewise I bet there is some stuff you would like to tell me of which I am not aware. Often these blind spots seem unimportant until we realize how much they can hinder our communication.

Blind spots are important to know about because they often block our reception of God's blessings. Bartimaeus had a physical blind spot and probably some emotional and spiritual blind spots that we couldn't know about. But old Bart had a way of getting around that. He had a formula that perhaps we can use. His formula was in the form of three B's: boldness, belief and blessing.

Bartimaeus was bold in his asking. He also expected or believed that an answer would be given. Finally he was open to the possibility of God's blessing. Bartimaeus had filled in his blind spots.

Therefore this sermon comes down to a question: what is your blindness...? What part of your life would you like to see into? What would using this model reveal to you and to the world around you?

In other words, clean the windowpanes: you might be surprised what you can see on the other side!