



### Introduction

*Can we pray the way Bartimaeus prays? People try to hush him up because by addressing Jesus as “Son of David” he is making a politically dangerous claim that Jesus is the rightful king. Could our prayers ever be heard as a threat to unjust powers that be? Bartimaeus won’t give up or go away quietly, but repeats his call for help more loudly. Do we ask so boldly? And are our prayers an honest answer to Jesus’ question, “What do you want me to do for you?”*

### Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of ✙ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

**Opening Hymn ELW # 843**      *Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

**Prayer of the Day**

Eternal light, shine in our hearts. Eternal wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance. Eternal compassion, have mercy on us. Turn us to seek your face, and enable us to reflect your goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9**

*This passage speaks not only of the southern kingdom, Judah, and its homecoming from exile in Babylon, but also of the northern kingdom (“Israel” or “Ephraim”) and its restoration. The northern tribes of Israel had been lost in exile to Assyria more than a century before Jeremiah prophesied.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

**Psalm: Psalm 126**

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations,**

**“The LORD has done great things for them.”**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

<sup>4</sup>**Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

<sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**Second Reading: Hebrews 7:23-28**

*Human priests of old offered sacrifice for their own sins and served only until their death. In contrast, Jesus is God’s Son, the holy, sinless, resurrected high priest. Death did not terminate his priestly service, but through his death he has interceded for our sins.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## **Gospel: Mark 10:46-52**

*Bartimaeus comes to Jesus with faith, asking that he might see again. Recognizing Jesus' identity, Bartimaeus is the first person to call him "Son of David" in the Gospel of Mark.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

### **Reflection on the Text**

Some of you have heard me say before that our preaching professor in seminary used to tell us that preachers should both 'comfort the afflicted' and 'afflict the comfortable.' I suspect – or at least I hope - that I have accomplished both of those on various occasions. Bringing comfort to the grieving or those struggling in their faith is essential. And so is reminding all of us that we cannot remain too comfortable in what we believe, without examining our faith in light of situations around us in the world today.

As I studied the text from Hebrews for today, I was reminded by the work of one biblical scholar that, regardless of its title, this book was likely written more as a sermon than a letter. She went on to give two essential purposes for a sermon: First, "to encourage the faithful [and second] to influence others to embrace the faith." (Jennifer Kaalund, [workingpreacher.org](http://workingpreacher.org), 2018) It is clear in this passage that the unknown Preacher who was writing to early Jewish Christians has the first goal in mind. He is writing to encourage them in their faith, throughout difficult times.

After a long passage about how Jesus is similar to the priest and king, Melchizedek, the Preacher reminds the people of the priests who served in the temple, but goes on to tell them how superior Jesus is to those human priests:

- + His service as a priest did not end with his death – instead, Jesus remains our Great High Priest forever.
- + He does not need to make sacrifices again and again; each day, each week, or even each year – instead Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, offering himself one time for all of us throughout time.
- + His service to us is not weakened by his sin like the earlier priests – for Jesus, as the Son of God, has been made perfect forever.

Jesus was obviously a priest like no other.

We may not talk much about priests in our faith tradition, but we can be certain that the service of the high priest was central to those who came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God, after a lifetime of worshiping in the temple according to the ancient Jewish traditions. They did not immediately abandon their faith traditions. Instead, they continued to worship in the temple on the Sabbath and holy days, AND they began to gather to worship Jesus on Sunday – as they celebrated Jesus' resurrection from the dead on the first day of the week. That continued at least until the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

This encouragement to the faithful mattered then and it truly still matters to us now, even though we have moved on, leaving behind the Jewish traditions for traditions of our own that have evolved over the past 2000 years.

Remembering Jesus as the one and only Great High Priest is perhaps the best way for us to truly understand what Jesus accomplished for us not just during his life on earth, but also through his suffering and death. Jesus, who completed his sacrifice, was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he reigns eternally.

And yet we know that until he comes again, Jesus continues to intercede for us with the Father. That is why we so often close our prayers with words like “we pray in Jesus’ name.” Because we pray, trusting that Jesus’ work continues. He hears our prayers and continues to act on our behalf.

Even as we remember Jesus as the Great High Priest, and worship him as Lord, we are also reminded by passages like today’s gospel text, that Jesus was flesh and blood, a man who walked this earth, who certainly got hungry and tired and dirty. A man who was approachable.

We read recently that he insisted the disciples let small children come to him. And today, we read that while those around Bartimaeus would have shushed him when he called out to Jesus as he passed nearby, the blind man kept calling out for Jesus to help him.

Jesus called him closer. And when Bartimaeus drew near, Jesus asked him what he wanted Jesus to do for him. Bartimaeus was bold to ask; and Jesus was quick to grant his request.

Today, I speak to encourage the faithful, too, as the Preacher to the Hebrews did. That makes me ask:

- + How often are our pleas silenced or belittled by others?
- + How often do we fear to draw near to Jesus to ask boldly for what we seek?
- + How often do we not receive the blessings that God would grant, because we will not ask?

Friends, we can trust in both the power of Jesus, the great high priest AND the loving care of the Son of God who knows firsthand the struggles of being human.

That means we can call out in our moments of need, knowing that Jesus will draw near and listen to our prayers. And we can trust that Jesus has the power to provide what we truly need.

May knowing both comfort us and strengthen us in faith. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 793/WOV # 776**

***Be Thou My Vision***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Apostles' Creed

*We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## Prayers of Intercession

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

*A brief silence.*

Risen One, we give you thanks for congregations and ministries throughout the world that serve as centers of prayer and action. Empower missionaries, teachers, healers, evangelists, and all who are sent to share your song of joy.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, we give you thanks for generous land that produces abundant harvests. Strengthen and protect all soils, from rooftop gardens to prairie farmlands, to patio planters to fertile valleys, and bless all who lovingly tend them.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Ruling One, we give you thanks for leaders of nations who work to build up the common good. Strengthen efforts of reconciliation among all nations (*especially*), that peace extends in every direction. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing One, we give you thanks for all who labor for the health of others. Comfort and strengthen all who struggle with chronic pain. Send healing and relief to all who are sick, especially those we name now. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Providing One, we give you thanks for all who provide for others. Inspire generosity in your people, so that we carry out the work of making disciples of all nations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Living One, we give you thanks for the saints who have increased our faith. Give us courage to follow in hope until you gather us all around your table of abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life. **Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn ELW # ELW # 779 / LBW # 448      *Amazing Grace***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ruth Ann Sipe.