

Sunday Thought

24th October 2021 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings

Job 42: 1 – 6, 10 – 17

Psalm 34: 1 – 8, 19 – 22

Hebrews 7: 23 – 28

Mark 10: 46 – 52

Believe Big, Shout Louder



The world's in a mess! I have heard the comment several times in recent weeks. Many people trying to make ends meet, fearful of effects of climate change, or overstretched medical services and even of walking safely along the street, will add their voices to the statement. Never forget though, all the beautiful things happening in the world and all the good people trying to sort out the

muddle! It appears that the pandemic has brought to light many issues and attitudes which had already been bubbling below our life-surface. It is not only our care of the planet, vital as that is, which requires a change. We need to look for personal, moral and spiritual changes too.

Bartimaeus, in the gospel reading today probably used the phrase about his personal situation – *My world's in a mess!* I wish we knew more detail of individuals in the gospel story. I imagine that in the prosperous, fashionable trading city of Jericho Bartimaeus' father could have been a well-to-do citizen of some standing but the birth of a blind son may have changed all that. It was common among *righteous* people to suggest there was something dreadfully sinful about Timaeus' life, or the boy's, which caused the tragedy. Now a man, Bartimaeus was reduced to a life of dependence, supplemented by begging near the city gates. All dreams of better things were literally behind dark closed curtains. That was until recently when new hopes had been stirred for him. He had been challenged to think and believe BIG! Maybe it was connected to the conversion of a neighbour called *Zachaeus*. If Jesus was the true Christ, of the line of king David, and could change the life of a corrupt wealthy taxman then surely he could heal a blind man. He had already done that here for another man not long ago.



Now Jesus was visiting the city again. Bartimaeus, in desperate hope, shouts louder and louder for the Master's attention until someone gets Jesus Davidson to take notice. With his sight restored, Jesus confirms it to be Bartimaeus' faith in him which has helped bring about the healing.

It was one more instance of getting life into perspective with God to allow big things to happen. The end of the story of Job is a similar illustration of that. Life ceases to be a mess when Job listens to God and has a wide-eyed vision of an 'all is possible' Lord. He says, *I know now, Lord. You are all powerful. You can do anything you want. Previously I only listened to what others said. Now I've seen you with my own eyes I have life in perspective.* Job had been greatly blessed in his past. Even greater blessings lay stored up for his future.

There is much more for us yet today. In the letter to Hebrews the writer continues to use the illustration of the High Priest to speak about Jesus and the nature of his ministry. The High Priest was chosen as God's representative for his people, speaking to God on their behalf and offering sacrifice for their redemption from sin. *High Priests live and die, he says, but Jesus lives for ever! He is Lord, God's Son, and his priestly work goes on and on and on. He rose from the dead and is alive!* Jesus is holy, saving us, changing us and able to speak as God to us and for us. He is able to meet all our needs. He makes us right with God, not by offering sacrifices. He IS the sacrifice. His Cross gives us sure hope of God's gracious forgiving, life-changing power for sinners and saints alike. Wow! That's getting life in perspective. That's our hope for getting the world out of a mess.

So, we are given a challenge. Sorting out the world today still begins with the gospel – the 'good news'. It begins with his people, the living church, believing big about Jesus and shouting louder for him in worship, service and witness. For one man a bigger faith and a louder voice opened his eyes to the love and power of God. It got him on his feet to follow Jesus on his road. From Jericho that road was leading to Jerusalem – the Cross, Resurrection, Pentecost, and a whole new world! It still is!

A Prayer (with Psalm 34 in mind)

Lord God, I look back over many days and remember how good you have been to us. You have been with me, providing my needs and quieting fears and anxieties. It all makes me want to praise you and share your goodness with others. You have not always answered my prayers as I wished or expected, but have given me confidence to trust you for your best answers. I feel safe when I am close to you. Let my praise keep you in view, assuring me of your presence in the darkest times.

