

The title for today's message is: **Your faith is stronger than you think**

Jesus said: **Go your way, your faith has made you well.**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Aman.

This morning we are going to look at a miracle that Jesus had performed.
Which is important to re-mind us of the purpose of Jesus' miracles.

The underlining purpose of every miracle of Jesus was to re-veal to the people who were gathered there that, indeed, he was the very Son of God.

Our text takes place just before Palm Sunday. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city of Jericho.

Now as they walked, they ran across a man named Bartimaeus, a blind man and beggar, sitting along the roadside begging.

Bartimaeus heard it was Jesus walking by so he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

"Many in the crowd re-buked him and told him to be quiet." They didn't want this beggar to disturb Jesus.

But he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me, he didn't give up.

This is a good model for us knowing we can say "Have mercy, Son of David! Help us," and our loving Lord listens.

Look, we live in a world that is very wicked and there seems to be no concerns at all for what is acceptable or not acceptable in our society.

Anything and everything goes. Evil is okay. We have an important task to look at what is good and right and act upon it.

What the Lord looks at what is good and right, and what the world looks at what is good and right, are not the same.

We must ask for help to distinguish the wickedness, and help us to see, seek and pursue that which is good."

Isaiah said in chapter 55: ***"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon"***.

The Lord invites us back day after day and says, "Come. I forgive you." The Lord invites us to turn from our wicked ways and see in him forgiveness.

The difficulty is to be persistent in pleading to God for mercy. Persistence is closely connected with prayer, of course.

We see the beggar Bartimaeus on the road without high standing, socially. When he cries out, the crowd tries to make him be quiet.

He doesn't, because he knows Jesus can help. Sometimes we ask God for mercy; and if we don't get the answer, we might forget and blame him for not hearing us.

The Lord says we need to come back and ask for mercy every day. We need to come back and see the Lord is merciful and compassionate.

We have examples in Scripture. We think of Abraham pleading for the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah.

He started out with a high number, if there were fifty righteous people to spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then it was forty and then less and less until finally he realizes that there were less than ten in Sodom and Gomorrah who were righteous.

We think of Moses pleading for the Children of Israel every time they rebelled. Moses came and asked for mercy over and over.

These are examples for us. Jesus himself, when he came to the most difficult point in his life is the greatest example of all.

Look, in the moments before his betrayal, Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying in the dark

Where he could have easily walked off and not carried out his plan of salvation.

Remember Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and three times returning to the disciples, and found them sleeping.

Jesus could have left them sleeping and left the Garden. But instead Jesus asked God for mercy.

Jesus asked, he who was the very Son of God and knew God's will and was God himself. Yet, Jesus came to pray for God's mercy earnestly.

Luke said in chapter 22: ***"And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground"***.

Sometimes we don't have mercy, because we do not ask. And there's no doubt that at times we are not very persistent.

The Lord says to us, we can cry out anytime, many times, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" We can cry out for help, for sight.

Then the promise, the blessing we have is the miracle that we see here that the Lord Jesus Himself provides us with divine healing.

The blind man probably never, ever thought that he would see again. Yet when Jesus was near he couldn't stop crying out for help even when the crowd tried to stop him.

We look at what happens: "Jesus stopped and said, '**Call him,**'." Jesus had heard him, and he wasn't going to pass him by.

We can see in the next part of this verse that the crowd already has an inkling of what is going to happen.

The crowd called to the blind man saying, Take heart, get up, He is calling you.

Now this is the same crowd that moments before told the blind man to be silent.

Why the change of heart, probably because they thought; if Jesus is willing to stop for this blind man, he must be going to do something.

Now what do you think the blind man does? Of course, he gets up. **"Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus."**

His cloak was his outer covering that kept him warm. It probably was like his home, too.

But he knows he has Jesus in front of him. There was a simple exchange: Jesus asked him **"What do you want me to do for you?"**

These are the same words Jesus spoke earlier to James and John in verse 36 when James and John asked Jesus what is considered to be a bad request.

Answering Jesus the blind man said, **"Rabbi, let me recover my sight."** Jesus then said: **"Go, your faith has healed you."**

The blind man immediately received his sight back and followed Jesus along the way.

Now the blind man could see he didn't have to sit at the side of the road anymore, he could now walk the road.

Now because he could see, he could follow Jesus. All simply because he called out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Can you imagine, here we have Jesus, the very Son of God, and the Savior of the world, asking him what he wants.

When we started out in this world, we were just as blind and poverty stricken as the blind man in our text was.

We are born into this world, though cute and cuddly infants; but inside we are born as enemies of God, full of sin.

It is sin inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve, and passed down to every generation unto the very end of time.

So it is that by a miracle just as astounding as this, the Lord Jesus through the power of his Word and the Sacrament of Baptism changes us.

The water with the God's word changes us from being blind and a beggar and changes us into seeing believers who are filled with the riches of God's grace.

He who is the Creator of the world performs this divine healing for and on and in every believer.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 4: ***"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"***

That's awesome, you and I who were born as enemies of God, that you and I who were born blind; now purely and only by God's divine grace, are now made God's children.

Our lives are drastically changed. We were all like the blind man in our text. Yes we were blind, but now we see.

It is true that we might not always see the same reaction as the blind man in our life today.

It was a long time ago that we were baptized at an early age. Yet, should our reaction be any different? Yes our reaction in the present is different.

Sometimes that miracle which happened to some of us many, many years ago, we may not remember as well in the here and now.

Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 5: ***For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),***

That is the power of God in his miracles, isn't it? That miracle of faith causes you and I and believers throughout the world to live lives as children of light in goodness, righteousness and truth.

As we live and dwell in this world and look around us, there are many who do not live in goodness. There are many who do not care about righteousness.

And truth is sometimes very hard to find. So it is up to us, as believers who once sat in darkness, who now sit in the light of the glory of God to live in goodness, righteousness and truth.

Like the blind man we jump up and throw away the cloak of earthly security to follow Jesus and his heavenly promises.

Jesus has healed us. He has provided divine healing. It is true that as we age and as we grow in years, what happens?

Our parts get used up. We don't hear as well, see as well, we have more aches and pains. This is part of aging, part of living and dying here on earth.

Day after day the Lord renews us. Day after day the Lord provides us with what we really need.

Our loving Lord has bought us back from the sin and the power of death to live with Him forever.

We realize that without God we have no mercy; without God we have no future. We are like blind beggars who have been given sight. "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.