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Sermon

And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:46-52)

Grace, Mercy, and Peace unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The other day as I was reading the story of blind Bartimaeus. I started thinking, is sound real? As a Hard-of-Hearing Vicar who ministers to the Deaf, I sometimes ponder on that question. And I ask you my Deaf brothers and Sisters of Christ Jesus, is sound real? How do you know? How do you know if the hearing people are not just lying to you, tricking you. I myself remember when I first got Cochlear Implants to hear I remember the Audiologist turned them on for the first time about a month after the surgery. And people started asking me, what does it sound like? And I told them you sound like Wall-e if you ever seen that movie or if you were cool when you were a kid and you would talk through a fan that was another one of my examples of what people voices sounded like. Even today yes it seems peoples voices seem more clear but I still do not know if the way I hear your voice or Rev. Breights voice is the same way you hear it. I see your lips moving but sometimes the sound of your voice is not there. Which is why sometimes I think to myself is sound real? Or is it all just a lie created by a group of people to control others? And just so you know the philosophy of my words used to drive my professors and teachers and other people absolutely crazy if you have not figured that out yet. But any way the reason I bring up my story, that question of is sound real or just a lie made by others is because I wonder what was going through blind Bartimus' head when he heard the large crowd say that Jesus of Nazareth was near him.

Now Bartimus I know was not Deaf. He was blind as the scriptures tell us. I read this story and see such an amazement of blind Bartimus' Faith. We have a man. A blind man in fact who could not see Jesus physically. A man who could not see if Jesus was a stranger or a friend. A man who could not see if Jesus was in front of him, beside him or even behind him. This was a man who could not see if Jesus had a sword to kill him or a rose to gift him. And yet this blind man cries out, "Son of David, have mercy on me." As if the blind beggar had said, "My God I know it is you. My God I am an awful Sinner who does not deserve your grace, your mercy, or your love. My God please, only you have the ability, the authority to help the poor miserable sinner that I am, please help me LORD."

I read this story and I instantly thought, wow! How often do people question if there is a God or not? How often do people question if Jesus is the Messiah, our Savior or not? And more importantly this impossible idea that somehow the Law can save the sinner. We are in the time of the reformation. A time where we remember a church who believed that you must buy indulgences in order to free you from this place they called purgatory. Purgatory this kind of waiting period before you could enter heaven. A place where you would suffer to sweat out the last of your sins before enter Heaven where Gods throne is. This is one example of a church that believes that somehow you can help yourself by being a so called "good Christian" whatever that means. But we need to realize this is false. It is impossible for us to perfect Gods Law. The Law has one purpose to show us our sins. For us to be aware that we are sinners we need to go to Christ and repent of our Sins seeking His forgiveness. Forgiveness which He willingly gifts to the repentant sinner. We are saved by faith alone. As we can see here with our story of our blind beggar known as Bartimaeus. He is seen by the Jewish people of the time as a condemned Sinner, for as we read in John chapter nine, "And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2) So the Jewish people would see this mans disability as Sin same as if they would see me and see my Deafness as Sin. Which I am as was blind Bartimaeus. And yet He knew the LORD more than the Studiers of the Law known as the Pharisees. It is by His Faith blind Bartimaeus and by our faith we are saved. Faith Alone.

An Example of Faith Alone to give you a better understanding maybe is this. Do you know what the Word Sin means? The Word Sin is a Latin Word that means, "to miss." Back in the day with archers and bows and arrows if the archer would miss the target that was called sinning. So what I am going to do no is call (volunteer from the congregation) to come up with me. I have a dart board and some darts. So now (volunteer name) I want you to stand here and I want you to hit the bullseye. They throw and miss. You sinned. Try again. They throw and miss the bullseye. And I said, You sinned again. Try again. They throw and miss a third time. And of course I said, "You Sinned again." Now with Faith what happens? I will be Jesus. Take the dark. What am I going to do now? I am going to guide your hand and lead you to the bullseye. And I will do that each time. That is what is meant when we proclaim the Words, "I live by Faith Alone." I am saying I fully and solely rely, trust and depend only on Jesus to help me.

Now also when you open your Bibles and read this story you will see the title, "Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus." But being me I often journal and for this story right next to the title in parenthesis I wrote, "Blind Faith" Now understand you will read about the faith of this blind beggar named Bartimaeus who when he hears Jesus' voice, this poor blind beggar proclaimed Him as the prophesied messiah. A prophesied savior that we have been waiting for. But the reason I put the words "blind Faith" in Parenthesis next to our stories title is because it is more importantly about the blind faith of Christ. As I said before It would be right and justifying that the LORD strike us down with fire and destroy us but thanks be to God whose perfect faith offer us His mercy and grace that same perfect faith which allowed a blind beggar received his sight. It was by Christs faith you, me and all the other righteous Sinners can be called a holy people. We focus on blind Bartimaeus but what about the blind faith in Jesus. And the reason why Jesus' faith is so much better, so much more for us to try or hopefully focus on is because through Christs perfect faith we have Justification.

What is Justification. Here is my picture of Justification. You (the Sinner) is in a court room and your standing before the Judge (God) and your standing their and the Judge says, "You have been proclaimed innocent. What the Word innocent? Why not say the words, "Not guilty?" Understand when we say, "not guilty" it has a form of uncertainty. The evidence show they did not commit the crime but we really do not know. When we say innocent. When the judge calls you innocent that confirms or shows that you are one hundred percent guiltless. You are one hundred percent innocent from the crime. That is what it means to be Justified. God proclaims you innocent but we can only be proclaimed innocent through Faith in Christ Jesus.

And Realize people who have faith in Christ have been made Justified through Christ but those who do not stand alone. And when you stand alone that means you stand as the Sinner you are and when you stand as a sinner you stand as a guilty person. But thanks be to God that he has sent down His Holy Spirit to each of us, why? Because through the power of the Holy Spirit we receive those two words, "Faith Alone." We were a people once stuck and condemned by the Law but now because of the blood which was shed the body which was broken on the cross now saves you. The very same body and blood which we consume through the bread and wine in Holy Communion this day. Today, yesterday, tomorrow and forever we as fellowship of believers can proclaim everyday "I am saved by faith and faith alone." Amen.