

Sunday, October 24, 2021 – Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

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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?”

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you turn your greatness into goodness for all the peoples on earth. Shape us into willing servants of your kingdom, and make us desire always and only your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Job 42:1-6, 10-17

After the glorious vision of creation contained in God’s speeches at the end of Job, the righteous sufferer proclaims that he has seen God and is humbled. The LORD restores Job’s fortunes, and Job dares to live again, fathering more children and giving his daughters an inheritance along with their brothers.

¹Job answered the LORD:

²“I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

³“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

⁴“Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.’

⁵I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;

⁶therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.”

¹⁰And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. ¹¹Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. ¹²The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. ¹³He also had seven sons and

three daughters. ¹⁴He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Kerenhappuch. ¹⁵In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. ¹⁶After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. ¹⁷And Job died, old and full of days.

Psalm 34:1-8 [19-22]

¹I will bless the LORD| at all times;
the praise of God shall ever be | in my mouth.

²**I will glory | in the LORD;**
let the lowly hear | and rejoice.

³Proclaim with me the greatness | of the LORD;
let us exalt God's | name together.

⁴**I sought the LORD, who | answered me**
and delivered me from | all my terrors.

⁵Look upon the LORD| and be radiant,
and let not your faces | be ashamed.

⁶**I called in my affliction, and | the LORD heard me**
and saved me from | all my troubles.

⁷The angel of the LORD encamps around those who | fear the LORD
and de- | livers them.

⁸**Taste and see that the | LORD is good;**
happy are they who take ref- | uge in God!

[¹⁹Many are the troubles | of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers them from | every one.

²⁰**God will keep safe | all their bones;**
not one of them | shall be broken.

²¹Evil will bring death | to the wicked
and those who hate the righteous | will be punished.

²²**O LORD, you redeem the life | of your servants,**
and those who put their trust in you will | not be punished.

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.

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

²⁵Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Gospel Reading: 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.

⁴⁶As [Jesus] and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

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, saying "Hear us, O God," and responding, "your mercy is great."

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*). 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.**

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.

A reflection for the Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost...

Restored by Grace

The word for today is *restoration*. Both the Old Testament reading and the psalm speak of God's restoration of the people of Israel, gathering them from sorrowful exile into joyful community. The gospel tells the story of Jesus healing Bartimaeus, restoring his sight in response to his faith. Today we do not have the same understanding of "clean" and "unclean" people; however, those who are sick still need restoration. There are people who are hospitalized for extended periods of time who need to be restored to the community. There are folks in nursing homes who long for the connections they once had to a worshiping community. There are people in prison who are cut off. There are even people who have been hurt or disappointed by the church who need restoration.

This same Jesus, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us, is our great high priest who continually restores us to right relationship with God. This hope of restoration is echoed in the reading from Jeremiah. Here God promises to gather and restore the people of Israel from their exile.

This promise of restoration is acted out through worship. Much of what happens in worship is concerned with restoration. In the word, in the meal, in confession and forgiveness, we are restored to wholeness (and *holiness*) with God and with one another. In the sharing of the peace we act out the restoration and reconciliation we all need. In the Lord's Prayer we ask, "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." What is this if not a plea for restoration? This restoration is not through our own merit, but through the love of Christ and the faith we have been given.

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