

In honor of the blind man Bartimeas in today's gospel
who had so much trust in Jesus that
he was willing to try something new,
I ask you to please *close your eyes* . . .
and imagine that you're sitting on the side of a dusty road in Jericho,
about 15 miles outside of Jerusalem,
as Jesus and his disciples are passing by.

Is this going to be like so much else in life that's passed you by?

No, this feels different.
You don't see yourself sitting on the sidelines anymore.
Even so, you're almost surprised to hear yourself call out,
"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

But you're not at all surprised to hear folks in the crowd
try to "shush" you,
try to silence you.
You've experienced that before, alright.
But this time you're not going to take it.

Something about being in the presence of Jesus
has shown you things they can't see.
Something about being in the presence of Jesus
has shown you that you're not invisible.

And this gives you the guts to cry out once again.
What the others think doesn't matter any more.
Now you know that *you* matter,
you matter to Jesus, the Son of David, who has mercy on you.

And so he does.

Your cry -- the cry of a blind beggar -- stops Jesus in his tracks.
He invites you to draw closer to him.
All your life you've felt that you didn't quite measure up,
that you're unworthy, empty-handed.

Come to think of it, Jesus doesn't seem to have much stuff either.
But you want whatever it is that he does have.
Suddenly you have a clear vision:
You want to follow Jesus.

So you throw off your cloak --
the cloak that's been your bed at night
and a place to collect alms during the day.
You cast off this security blanket.
You jump up, holding nothing back.

"What do you want me to do for you?" asks Jesus.

All your life people have tried to silence you or
misunderstood you or jumped to conclusions about you.
But not Jesus.
He knows that you have a story to tell,
that you have something uniquely all your own to contribute.

You're healed -- *even before* Jesus restores your physical sight.
You see yourself as Jesus sees you --
forgiven, loved and free.

Now you see exactly where this is going.
You see where you're going.
You're going to follow Jesus. You're going to *be like* Jesus.
Help others see what you've seen.

Whenever you're ready, take a deep breath.
Come back to this place, this time, this town of Wallingford.
Right here, right now,
let your eyes be opened to the healing love of Jesus.

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