*I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together.*

*I sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Look to Him, and be radiant, so your faces shall never be ashamed. This poor soul cried and was heard by the Lord and was saved from every trouble. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in Him.* *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord rescues them from them all. He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken. Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems the life of His servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.*

Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22

*They came to Jericho. As He and His disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly: “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stood still and said: “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him: “Take heart; get up, He is calling you.” So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then 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.” Jesus said to him: “Go, your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed Him on the way.*

Mark 10:46-52

*A teacher was trying to get each of her fifth-grade students to buy a copy of the class picture. She said: “Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, ‘There’s Jennifer, she’s a lawyer,’ or ‘That’s Michael, he’s a doctor.’*

*A small voice at the back of the room rang out: “And there’s the teacher, she’s dead.”*

It’s true, the kids indeed say the darndest things.

Restored to Wholeness.

1. This man was desperate, unable to see and because of his handicap, totally disabled in the times he lived. Today blindness, although tragic, does not prevent people from living a relatively full life. For this man, the son of Timaeus, as Mark indicates, the only way of making a living however, was to beg, or as we would call it today *“panhandle,”* hoping that someone would give him some money or some food maybe to make through another day. Most likely, he saw himself as a burden, a hopeless wreck of a man, desperately hoping to be miraculously healed someday. We do not know since when he was blind, since his childhood or since sight later on in life, but what we know that once upon the time he was able to see, and that he desperately wanted to be able to see again: *“My teacher, let me see again.”* Calling on and asking Jesus was the last resort he might have had, and though told to be quiet by the others, he continues to ask Jesus because he believes that Jesus is able to help him.

2. In recalling of this miracle of healing, Apostle Mark indicates that this man knew something important about Jesus. He not only calls Him a *“Teacher,”* but what is more important, he calls Him the *“Son of David.”* By calling Jesus the *“Son of David”* Bartimaeus indicates that he saw Jesus as not only of the *“royal blood,”* of the *“line of David,”* but that He was the Messiah, God’s *“Anointed One.”* He turned to Jesus in his greatest time of need and Jesus responded to him. Unlike at the *“Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem,”* this time Jesus however does not make mud and physically places it on the eyes of Bartimaeus, but simply says: *“Go, your faith has made you well.”* Why would Jesus say so, why would He indicate the importance of Bartimaeus’ faith? He might have been physically blind, but with striking clarity Bartimaeus is able to see that what many others, even Jesus’ own disciples, were unable to see. Only faith might allow one to have such pure clarity; to be able to clearly see who Jesus truly is.

3. Whenever I read of the miracles of healing in the Scriptures, I always see clear indication that Jesus was concerned with the wholeness person, not only their physical, but also their spiritual well-being. I spend enough time in various medical setting, to recognize that even the modern medical science apprehends the importance of the spiritual health and that some illnesses are caused not by the physical ailments within the human body, but by the spiritual ones. Today, about 11% of the licensed Physicians in the US carry a degree of the *“Doctors of Osteopathy.”* These physicians are trained to look beyond the symptoms of the disease, and to understand how the lifestyle and environmental factors impact human’s well-being. This is exactly how Jesus perceived all the people who approached Him and asked for healing. The New Testament is filled with the examples of people being healed by Jesus, or in the name of Jesus and the Early Church was certainly very strong on healing. Apostle Paul indicated that one of the *“gifts of the Holy Spirit”* is indeed the gift of healing. Even people from the outside of the church reported miraculous healings within the Early Church. In the way Jesus approached everyone who would come to Him asking for the miracle of healing, He would embrace the spiritual needs as well and the physical ones of that person, thus the blind would see, the lame would walk, the deaf would hear and the lepers would be restored to health. Every time the miracle of healing would take place, Jesus also included the words of forgiveness and faith. The physical part of healing was always connected to the spiritual one.

4. Jesus still heals people today and when we are sick we not only seek the medical help but we also turn to God in prayer. Some churches even hold special services dedicated to the miracles of healing. These are important because we cannot separate between the spiritual and the physical elements of the human body. Jesus knew that we, the humans, often forget about this becoming so much preoccupied with the well-being of our bodies that we do not pay too much attention to the spiritual needs. This is especially true today, when so many people indicate their *“modernity and sophistication,”* to the point that they deny the importance of the *“spiritual”* in life. Ironically, as I said so many times before, in the popular culture these people embrace the *“spirituality,”* and the *“supernaturality,”* while denying God’s presence and influence. Responding with the words of comfort, Jesus would soothe the pain and would restore the broken spirits healing not only the *“physical,”* but also the *“spiritual”* portions of our existence, for He knew that we are the *“spiritual beings,”* even if and when we deny it.

5. Apostle John writes that *“Jesus knows the heart of a man”* and He knows what our needs are and responds with what is the most important for us as individuals. For Him the spiritual need requires immediate attention since internally, spiritually, we reflect the outward, the physical existence. Jesus saw forgiveness as crucial in restoring our relationship with God. Focusing on faith He also indicated that we all believe, even when we pretend to be the agnostics. Without God in whose image we were created we cannot fully exist, and we fall always short, thus we need faith, but sometimes faith becomes a hindrance to our way of life, so we pretend it is not important. Again, we may believe this to be true. And believing involves faith. Our faith comes to play the most important role in embracing God and being able to communicate with God. Bartimaeus had faith and based on that faith he was physically healed. As the Church, as the Body of Christ, we must encourage others to renew or to embrace their faith and we must do so because as God’s children, we care for one other, and because in reality we all need faith.

6. Many people today may feel trapped in life, in jobs, in relationships, unable to break free, unable to change things, yet they still refuse to accept what they so desperately need: “help.” The only true help in our lives may come only through restoring the broken relationship with God. As a Chaplain and a counselor I encouraged people to confide in those who are close to them, to share their feelings, their emotions, uncertainties, etc. especially when facing difficult times in life. I also encouraged people to confide in God, to reach out to Him and ask for help. People’s suffering is often created not because the problems in one’s life cannot be solved, but because people are afraid to ask for help, for whatsoever reason. In reality, those who have enough courage to share their burdens with others find that they are not alone and there is the *“light at the end of the life’s tunnel.”* In truth, those who place their faith in God and ask Him for help, find that He is there and is able to bring comfort in those difficult times. Through his faith and perseverance Bartimaeus shows us that the impossible is possible. His days of begging on the side of the road were over, just because he put his faith and trust in Jesus, the Messiah.

7. The modern, *“liberated, and sophisticated society*” does not need God, or so they claim, until they find themselves alone, behind the closed doors, alienated from everyone and everything, seeking escape in drugs or alcohol. As a young man I learned a poem by a Polish poet and loosely translated this poem says: *“We the people of the twentieth century, the ones who harnessed the nuclear power, who conquered the moon, who seem invincible, are ashamed to express our feelings, to convey our empathy, to be able to softly smile, until late at night, behind the closed doors and the blinds closed windows, we gnash in pain our teeth.”* We do not need God? We do not need faith? What a *“boloney.”* Bartimaeus was healed because he had faith, because he asked Jesus to be healed, and because of his faith, Jesus freely gave him what he needed.

8. There is the picture of Jesus standing by the door, knocking, and in sort of the revered role, I see Bartimaeus knocking at the door of Jesus asking to be embraced by God. Jesus, standing by the door indicates Him encouraging us to open the door of our heart to Him. At the same time, as Jesus knocks to the door of a human heart, He invites us to reach out to Him, to call Him, and like Bartimaeus, to be saved by faith, just as Bartimaeus did, and to be saved because of our faith. Our relationship with God is the two-way street. He will let us in, if we let Him in. May the example of Bartimaeus’ faith become the enlightening “jolt,” to the so called, modern *“enlightened”* people, living actually in total, spiritual darkness.