

TITLE: "SHOW UP Prayer"

TEXT: Mark 10:46-52 (NT p. 47)

⁴⁶...As [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.

The text reads: "As [Jesus] and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside."

Many people do not believe the miracles of Jesus. However, the Gospel of Mark was written twenty to thirty years after these events happened. Here we have the actual NAME of a man Jesus healed AND the name of his father. When this account was written, there were people AROUND who could VERIFY that these miracles happened.

John Rippon wrote these words in 1787 and they are just as true today:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can [God] say than to you he hath said,
to you that for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell shall endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

You can stake your eternal life on the fact that God's Word is TRUE and you can stake your life on the fact that in LIFE and in DEATH, Jesus will never, no never, no NEVER forsake you.

The text goes on: ⁴⁷“When [Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar sitting by the roadside] heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth [passing by], he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

One of my cousins has an autoimmune disease something like rheumatoid arthritis. She is a couple years younger than I, so she should be in the prime of life. However, she is often in terrible pain and some days she cannot even get around. A couple years ago she was in St. Joseph’s Hospital in Syracuse and there was some doubt that she would ever leave.

I was praying one morning and the Lord told me to visit her that day. It was NOT what I had planned to do on that particular day off. I have, however, learned what Lee Trevino the professional golfer learned. Lee was struck by lightning during a tournament while waiting under a tree for a storm to pass. He was rushed to the hospital. While recovering a reporter asked if he had learned anything from the experience. Lee thought for a moment and said, “When God wants to play through ...let Him.” When God wants to use you to DO something ...let Him.

Not that I always do. A week ago Saturday, I woke up and prayed and God told me some things I should do that day. I was OK in the morning, but in the afternoon, I got involved in a project that I wanted to do and neglected to go where I was supposed to go. The project went terribly and I did not get it finished. If life is not going well, maybe it’s time to start listening to what GOD wants you do. If you DO, you will find that the other things in your life will begin to fall into place.

Anyway, that day a couple years ago I knew I was supposed to visit my cousin Ann at St. Joseph’s Hospital. After we talked for an hour or so, I asked her if I could pray for her and she said, “I was hoping someone would come and pray with me today because I need a SHOW UP prayer.” When I asked her what that was, she said it was from Mother Theresa who said that there are times when there is no hope unless Jesus SHOWS UP in a special way. She said, “I need Jesus to SHOW UP right now.”

I asked what she wanted me to pray for. She said, “That I will get well enough to go home.” SHOW UP prayers should get directly to the point. I prayed. There was no immediate healing, no emotional response in Ann or in me. But as the weeks went by, she DID recover and after a stay at the Community Hospital, she DID go home. She is still with us, by the way.

The text then says: “⁴⁸Many sternly ordered [Bartimaeus] to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Don't let people sush YOU up. If you are visiting someone in the hospital, and you don't know their beliefs, simply ask if you can pray for them. I usually ask what she or he would like me to pray for. Then I pray for whatever it is and also ask for God to heal the person, guide the doctors and nurses and draw the person to the Lord. People who are not believers often are more open to faith when they are ill or hurt and God may use YOU to lead that person to faith.

Many people tell me that they are uncomfortable sharing their faith, or asking someone if they can pray. ...Too bad. BE uncomfortable. ...Some people tell me that they don't want to make other people uncomfortable. ...Too bad. MAKE people uncomfortable. ...Jesus did. And Jesus says: “Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

You would not be ashamed to tell someone about a medication that has eased your pain or a doctor who has made you feel better, so how much MORE important is it to tell people about Jesus Christ who will decide where that person will spend all eternity?

The text goes on: “⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, [Jesus] is calling you.” ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

Picture this. The sun is beating down. The air is filled with the smell of dust and sweat. There is a huge crowd following Jesus on the dirt road. These people are talking, shouting, trying to get the attention of Jesus so he will heal them of a disease or cast out an evil spirit. Blind Bartimaeus is on the fringe of the crowd and he asks what all the commotion is. Someone tells him that JESUS the famous teacher is walking by.

[Bartimaeus] had obviously HEARD about Jesus, because he calls him son of David. Jesus was from the family of David, and the Messiah was to COME from the House of David so he was calling out to Jesus using one of the titles for the Messiah, the Christ. Jesus heard him and then we have these two verses where Jesus calls [Bartimaeus] to come to him.

Now, this seemed odd to me at first. Jesus, who was very compassionate, expected this blind person to fight his way through the crowd and somehow FIND Jesus? I mean, why didn't Jesus just go to HIM? ...It was because each and every person has to decide if he or she is going to go to Jesus. Many people I know are waiting for JESUS to come to them. They want Jesus to PROVE his existence. They want JESUS to DO something that will CONVINCED them, once and for all, that Jesus is real. ...NOT gonna' happen.

Faith is NOT like looking out the second-story window of a burning house, seeing a safety net all set up 10 feet below and THEN jumping. Faith is looking out the second-story window of a burning house, seeing a lone person below who says, "I'll catch you," and you jump. Blind Bartimaeus HAD to go to Jesus to be healed and you, and I, HAVE to go to Jesus before Jesus will come into our hearts and our lives.

Lee Strobel was the award-winning editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and a religious skeptic until 1981 when he set out to prove, or disprove, the premise that Jesus was the Son of God. His book, *The Case for Christ*, records his search for facts, one way or the other, and we will be discussing that book in our adult Sunday school seminars Sunday mornings at 9:30 starting September 12th. Please plan to come and let me know if you will be attending, or if you want a book, so I can order enough.

The text goes on: ⁵¹Then Jesus said to [Bartimaeus], "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 [Bartimaeus] regained his sight and followed [Jesus] on the way.

One little word here says it all to me and that word is "my." Jesus was no longer "son of David," the Messiah" who had come for EVERYone. Jesus had called Bartimaeus, he WENT to Jesus, he gave himself TO Jesus, heart and soul and, to blind Bartimeaus, Jesus was now "MY Teacher."

Last week I quoted Jesus when he said we have to KNOW Jesus. We each NEED a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. At that point, Bartimeaus HAD that personal relationship. Once Jesus saw this he was able to say, "Go; your FAITH has made you well." It takes that FAITH to change our relationship with Jesus from teacher to MY teacher, from lord to MY Lord and from Jesus to MY Jesus.

...If you have faith in Jesus, you can HOPE for miracles. Why? Jesus is STILL here. All you need is FAITH, faith like Bartimeaus. How do you GET this faith? One day the disciples ASKED Jesus to increase their faith, and this is what he said:

“If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you” (Luke 17:5,6).

I thought about that this week and I wondered who WOULD have faith like that. The answer came to me when I read this true story by Ann Hasby (*Reader’s Digest* 3/01):

Visiting St. Patrick’s Cathedral on a tour of New York City, my daughter and her children were awed by the sight. The kids were especially curious about the candles, so my daughter asked if they’d each like to light one. She explained that it is customary to say a prayer before the candle was lit. “Do you have any questions?” she asked.

“No,” said her 5-year-old daughter. “But if there’s a pony on the steps outside, ...it’s mine!”

It’s children. CHILDREN are the ones that have faith like a mustard seed. Kids believe, really believe, that ANYthing can happen. Getting more faith is not complicated. To get more faith, we have to believe, really BELIEVE, that God can make ANYthing happen.

Now let me close with another true story. Catherine Reed has been in our prayer list for many weeks. A few weeks ago she had surgery to remove a benign brain tumor. We have been emailing and this is her latest email:

Remember that I wrote to you that I dreamed about Jesus' hand being on me and His showing me the nail hole.....well, like many instances in the Bible where God used dreams to reveal truths, Jesus actually was with me in pre-op. I could have lost my peace many times the morning of surgery, but I focused on John 14:27:

Jesus says: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

When Jack and I got to the hospital, somehow my pre-surgery records had all been deleted. I was to have a brain MRI before surgery, and they had no record of it, etc. Jack had me go back out to the waiting room while he sorted it out with the registration staff.

After the MRI, they took me to the surgery-waiting area and got me in a gown, etc. Jack was in the room, over in the corner, and I had asked him to read Psalm 116 over me. I was resting there, and felt a hand on my right shoulder and thought it was Jack, so I looked over with a smile and there he was, quietly reading with his head bowed, both hands on his Bible....and I looked down and once again, the hand turned outward so I could see the nail hole, then Jesus patted my shoulder several times, and I fell into a deep sleep.

When the doctor came in to mark my scalp for the incision, etc., she could not believe I was asleep, since no IVs had yet been started. She woke me up, and Jack and I prayed over her, then the next thing I knew, it was 6 hours later and I was looking into my husband's beautiful eyes and smiling face. I promised God I would share this witness with anyone and everyone and have done so since that day. I am taking time each day to write a bit more about the amazing, blessed journey we took with the tumor, and the victorious path God arranged for us. We are still humbled to the depths of our souls.

If you develop a personal relationship with the Jesus,
have faith like a child, and
pray SHOW UP prayers,
you will be as surprised as Bartimaeus that miracles can, and DO, still happen.

Amen.