

**Mark 10:46-52**  
**October 28, '18**

**“ON THE WAY”**

**IT’S JUST A TINY 3-WORD PHRASE.**

**THEY ARE THE FINAL WORDS OF THIS PASSAGE.**

**NOW, AS YOU READ THROUGH THE BOOK OF MARK, YOU MIGHT THINK IT’S JUST A RATHER INSIGNIFICANT PHRASE THAT ENDS THIS PASSAGE AND ALSO HAPPENS TO END THIS 10<sup>TH</sup> CHAPTER.**

**IT’S MORE THAN THAT, THOUGH.**

**FAR MORE.**

**THIS PASSAGE & THIS CHAPTER ENDS AN ENTIRE SECTION IN MARK.**

**IT’S KNOWN AS THE “DISCIPLESHIP” SECTION & COVERS TWO & A HALF CHAPTERS – CHAPTERS THAT ARE BOOKENDED BY HEALINGS OF THE BLIND.**

**IN CHAPTER 8, THE SECTION BEGINS WITH JESUS HEALING ANOTHER BLIND MAN & IT ENDS HERE WITH THE HEALING OF BLIND BARTIMAEUS – THE FINAL MIRACLE OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.**

**THE VERY NEXT VERSE MARKS THE BEGINNING OF CHAPTER 11 & ALSO THE BEGINNING OF THE PASSION NARRATIVE.**

***“WHEN THEY WERE APPROACHING JERUSALEM, AT BETHPHAGE AND BETHANY, NEAR THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, HE SENT TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES...”***

**YOU RECOGNIZE THAT AS THE BEGINNING OF THE PALM SUNDAY PASSAGE – THE DAY JESUS ENTERED JERUSALEM AT THE BEGINNING OF HOLY WEEK – JUST 5 DAYS BEFORE THE CRUCIFIXION & EXACTLY ONE WEEK BEFORE THE RESURRECTION.**

**SO NOW LET’S GO BACK TO THAT LITTLE 3-WORD PHRASE THAT CONCLUDES THE “DISCIPLESHIP” SECTION OF MARK & PROVIDES THE SEGUE INTO PALM SUNDAY & THE PASSION NARRATIVE.**

***“IMMEDIATELY HE REGAINED HIS SIGHT & FOLLOWED HIM ON THE WAY.”***

***“ON THE WAY.”***

**IT’S A SIMPLE PHRASE – A SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS THREE WORDS THAT CAN EASILY BE OVERLOOKED.**

**BUT THINK ABOUT THOSE THREE WORDS & HOW OFTEN WE USE THEM.**

**YOU LISTEN TO THOSE “ONSTAR” COMMERCIALS WITH SOMEONE BEING CONTACTED WHEN THEY’VE BEEN INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT.**

**THE CALM, REASSURING VOICE ALWAYS ENDS BY SAYING, “*HELP IS ON THE WAY.*”**

**A HUSBAND CALLS HIS WIFE LATE IN THE AFTERNOON & SAYS, “*HONEY, WHEN YOU LEAVE THE OFFICE WOULD YOU STOP & PICK UP A GALLON OF MILK ON THE WAY?”*”**

**IN THEIR WEATHER REPORT, JEFF LYONS OR WAYNE HART INFORM US THAT “*RAIN IS ON THE WAY.”*”**

**LISTENING TO A BASEBALL GAME, YOU HEAR THE ANNOUNCER SAY “...*AND THE 3-2 DELIVERY IS ON THE WAY.”*”**

**JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, PEOPLE SAW U OF E’S RAMI MALEK WITH A BIT PART IN NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM AND SAID, “*HE’S ON THE WAY TO STARDOM.*”**

**THIS WEEK, THAT PROPHETIC WORD COMES TRUE AS BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY OPENS WITH RAMI MALEK IN THE STARRING ROLE OF FREDDIE MERCURY.**

**“*ON THE WAY*” IS A VERY COMMON, EVERYDAY PHRASE THAT WE USE WITHOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT.**

**BUT HERE, IN MARK’S GOSPEL, IT SAYS A BUNDLE.**

**REMEMBER THE PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS JESUS HAD IN THIS DISCIPLESHIP SECTION OF MARK?**

**TWO WEEKS AGO, WE LOOKED AT A MAN WHO CAME TO HIM WANTING TO KNOW HOW TO FIND ETERNAL LIFE.**

**LAST WEEK, WE LOOKED AT JAMES & JOHN WHO WANTED PLACES OF HONOR, POWER & AUTHORITY IN HIS KINGDOM.**

**BUT HERE – HERE WE HAVE A MAN WHO JUST WANTS TO BE ABLE TO SEE.**

**BARTIMAEUS SAYS, “I’M NOT LOOKING FOR ETERNAL LIFE. I DON’T CARE ABOUT POWER. I’M NOT CONCERNED ABOUT POSITION OR HONOR OR AUTHORITY. NONE OF THOSE THINGS MATTER TO ME. I JUST WANT TO BE ABLE TO SEE!”**

**WHEN JESUS HEALS BARTIMAEUS OF HIS BLINDNESS, HE TELLS HIM TO “GO.”**

**“GO. YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WELL.”**

**HE’D GOTTEN WHAT HE WANTED & HE WAS FREE TO LEAVE.**

**HE WAS FREE TO GO BACK HOME & LIVE THE NEW LIFE THAT JESUS HAD GIVEN HIM WITH HIS RESTORED SIGHT.**

**BUT HE DIDN’T DO IT.**

**HE DIDN’T TURN AROUND & WALK AWAY.**

**HE WASN’T LIKE THE RICH MAN WHO COULDN’T BRING HIMSELF TO MAKE THE SACRIFICE JESUS WAS ASKING OF HIM.**

**HE WASN’T LIKE THE DISCIPLES, WHOSE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS KEPT THEM FROM UNDERSTANDING THE PATH JESUS WAS ASKING THEM TO FOLLOW.**

**NO, BARTIMAEUS CAN FINALLY SEE – REALLY SEE.**

**NOT ONLY HAS HE BEEN GIVEN PHYSICAL SIGHT BUT HE'S ALSO BEEN GIVEN THE SPIRITUAL SIGHT TO SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS ON THE WAY.**

**HE'S NOW ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS.**

**HE'S NOW ON THE WAY TO DISCIPLESHIP.**

**HE'S NOW ON THE WAY TO SERVICE & COMMITMENT.**

**HE *"FOLLOWED HIM ON THE WAY."***

***"ON THE WAY,"* THOUGH, DOESN'T SIGNIFY ARRIVAL.**

**YES, HE ENCOUNTERED JESUS.**

**YES, HIS SIGHT WAS RESTORED.**

**BUT THAT DIDN'T COMPLETE HIS JOURNEY.**

**HE WAS SIMPLY *"ON THE WAY"* TO WHOLENESS.**

**THIS, TO ME, IS ONE OF THE MOST PROFOUND LESSONS WE CAN ALL LEARN FROM THE STORY OF BARTIMAEUS.**

**WE WANT LIFE TO BE NEAT & TIDY.**

**WE WANT OUR FAITH TO BE NEAT & TIDY.**

**WE WANT THE PEOPLE AROUND US IN CHURCH TO LIVE LIVES THAT ARE NEAT & TIDY.**

**THAT'S NOT THE WAY REAL LIFE WORKS, THOUGH, IS IT?**

**OH, WE PRETEND THAT IT DOES.**

**YOU PRETEND THAT EVERYTHING IS FINE IN YOUR LIFE BECAUSE, AS YOU LOOK AROUND, EVERYBODY ELSE IS FINE**

**& SO YOU CONCLUDE THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S OUT OF STEP.**

**DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS PRETENDING, JUST AS YOU ARE?**

**LOOK AGAIN AT BARTIMAEUS.**

**HE STANDS AT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AS JESUS GOES BY.**

**HERE, HE'S NOT "*ON THE WAY*" BUT MORE "*ON THE SIDEWAY.*"**

**HE CRIES OUT TO JESUS – OUR TRANSLATION SAYS HE "*SHOUTED.*"**

**THE PEOPLE ARE APPALLED.**

**MARK SAYS, "*MANY STERNLY ORDERED HIM TO BE QUIET.*"**

***"SHHH! HUSH UP! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE REVERENT & RESERVED IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS GREAT MAN.***

***AND BESIDES, YOU'RE KIND OF A MESS WHILE THE REST OF US HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER.*"**

**SURE – THEY HAVE IT ALL TOGETHER.**

**THERE WERE PROBABLY A FEW MORE RICH, YOUNG RULERS NEARBY, LOOKING FOR AN EASY WAY TO GET TO HEAVEN.**

**AND THERE WERE THE DISCIPLES IN THEIR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.**

**BUT THEY COULDN'T LET ANYONE SEE THAT!  
THEY HAD TO AT LEAST *PRETEND* TO BE ON TOP OF  
THINGS.**

**A FEW WEEKS AGO, I WAS GETTING THE OIL CHANGED  
IN MY CAR.**

**I SAT BEHIND A CAR IN FRONT OF ME & LOOKED AT THE  
BIG SIGN THAT TOLD ME THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE.**

**I COULD GET THE STANDARD CHANGE OR FOR A FEW  
BUCKS MORE GET THE PREMIUM CHANGE THAT INCLUDED  
THE CAR BEING VACUUMED.**

**SO I BACKED UP & PULLED OVER TO A TRASH CAN TO  
CLEAN OUT ALL THE STUFF LYING ON THE FLOOR!**

**WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THAT DOESN'T MAKE A  
LOT OF SENSE, DOES IT?**

**I WAS CLEANING MY CAR – BECAUSE I WAS GETTING MY  
CAR CLEANED!**

**DO YOU FIND THAT YOU DO THE SAME THING WITH  
GOD?**

**YOUR LIFE IS A MESS & SO YOU WANT TO GET  
EVERYTHING CLEANED UP BEFORE ALLOWING GOD TO  
ENTER.**

**YOU KEEP YOUR DISTANCE IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE, IN  
YOUR READING OF THE BIBLE, IN YOUR PARTICIPATION IN  
THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.**

**YOU WANT TO GET IT ALL TOGETHER BEFORE YOU LET GOD INSIDE BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT GOD TO SEE WHAT A MESS YOUR LIFE REALLY IS.**

**IN A BOOK ENTITLED, MESSY SPIRITUALITY: GOD'S ANNOYING LOVE FOR IMPERFECT PEOPLE, MIKE YACONELLI SAYS:**

***"I OFTEN DREAM THAT I AM TAGGING ALONG BEHIND JESUS, LONGING FOR HIM TO CHOOSE ME AS ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES. WITHOUT WARNING, HE TURNS AROUND, LOOKS STRAIGHT INTO MY EYES, AND SAYS, 'FOLLOW ME!'***

***MY HEART RACES, AND I BEGIN TO RUN TOWARD HIM WHEN HE INTERRUPTS WITH, 'OH, NOT YOU; THE GUY BEHIND YOU. SORRY.'***

**HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE THAT – LIKE YOUR LIFE IS SUCH A COMPLETE MESS THAT JESUS WOULD NEVER REALLY CALL YOU – NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WISH HE WOULD?**

**WE'RE ALL SIMPLY "ON THE WAY" IN OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH & THE SOONER WE QUIT TRYING TO PRETEND THAT WE'VE ARRIVED, THE SOONER WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET ON WITH THE REST OF THE JOURNEY.**

**WHY DO WE ALWAYS TRY TO FAKE IT & MAKE IT SEEM LIKE LIFE IS SIMPLE & EASY & WE'VE GOT IT ALL TOGETHER?**



**WHY CAN'T WE JUST BE HONEST – HONEST WITH OURSELVES, HONEST WITH EACH OTHER & HONEST WITH GOD & SAY, “MY LIFE ISN'T WHAT I WISH IT WERE. IT'S NOT WHAT IT COULD BE. I'M NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE. MY LIFE IS A MESS & I'M JUST STUMBLING ON THE WAY.”**

**WE'RE ALL IMPERFECT PEOPLE – STUMBLING THROUGH LIFE, DESPERATELY CRYING OUT – OR SHOUTING OUT AS BARTIMAEUS DID – FOR JESUS TO TOUCH US & HEAL US & DELIVER US FROM WITH WHATEVER BLINDNESS AFFLICTS US.**

**THE LESSON WE CAN LEARN FROM BARTIMAEUS IS THAT IT'S OKAY TO BE BLIND.**

**IT'S OKAY TO BE IMPERFECT.**

**IT'S OKAY TO BE A MESS.**

**IN FACT, WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE STORIES OF JESUS IN THE GOSPELS, IT'S TO YOU WHO ARE BLIND, IMPERFECT & A MESS THAT HE IS PARTICULARLY DRAWN.**

**IT'S YOU THAT HE LONGS TO SEE JOIN HIM ON THE WAY.**

*The Reverend Dr. Dennis R. Davenport  
Eastminster Presbyterian Church  
Evansville, Indiana*