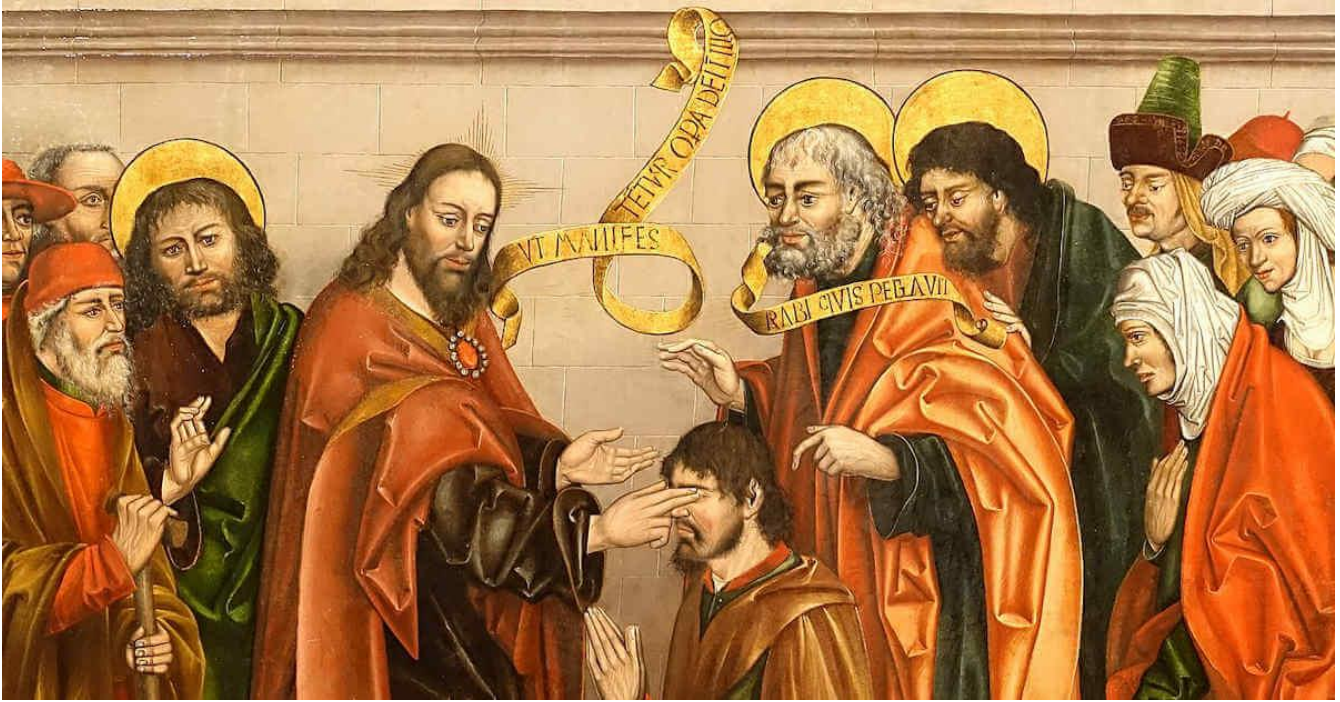


WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT.
PENTECOST 23
Sunday, October 27th, 2024
10:45am



The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus, Fernando Gallego workshop, detail, 1480-1488, oil on panel - University of Arizona Museum of Art.

This Sunday the readings from Job, the psalms, Hebrews and the Gospel of Mark continue. Job concludes with today's reading, where Job repents his 'apparent stubbornness' – see the comment on Job later in this liturgy. The psalm, as part of the wisdom literature, focuses upon the theme that is typical of this school of thought: that God punishes the wicked and affirms the good – the very view that the Book of Job questions as being both shallow and inadequate. The Gospel of Mark continues Jesus' response to the victims, the shamed, the crucified of Hebrew society, as he brings Bartimaeus down from his cross.

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude Ricercare (Bernardo Pasquini, 1637-1710)

Introit Look Toward the Lord Roger Petrich © 2013

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
Look toward the Lord.

News and Notices

Acknowledgement of First Nation's People

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,
Traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today.
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

A Safe Space

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God, and so we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit

Amen

Collect (inspired from the Gospel story of Blind Bartimaeus)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8B8GQFbEoM>

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu: "I was born blind"

I was born blind and I don't know why
God knows why because he love me so
As I grew up, my spirit knew
Then I learnt to read the world of destruction

United we stand, divided we fall
Together we'll stand, in solidarity

Narranydja dhuwala Batumanj
Narranydja dhuwala Djarrami
Narranydja dhuwala Djejarra'
Narranydja dhuwala Gurrumulja

United we stand, divided we fall
Together we'll stand, in solidarity

N̄arranydja dhuwala Barrupa
 N̄arranydja dhuwala Dhukulul
 N̄arranydja dhuwala Maralitja
 N̄arranydja dhuwala Nunbununbu

Y, e, wo w̄aŋawu Garrapala
 Dhamutjpirr, Dhamuŋura

Gathering Meditation

One voice: Jesus is in our midst. Jesus, our healer, deliverer, and friend, is here.

Many voices: We have heard so many good things about him, but we long to meet him, to encounter him ourselves.

One voice: Call out to him, and do not be silent. Like Bartimaeus, shout to him and do not allow anyone to silence your voice. Cry out and tell Jesus what you need!

Many voices: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! We need a touch from you! Touch me; touch us in our need.

One Voice: In this time of worship, celebrate God's goodness! In this time celebration of worship, know that Jesus touched your place of need.

Hallelujah! Amen!

Adapted from Lillian C. Smith, The Africana Worship Book, Year B (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), 72.

Lighting the Community Candle from the Christ candle

Hymn 210 O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing Thomas Jarman (1776-1861), words by Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Holy Trinity

We celebrate you as the One who meets our needs,
 who grants our daily bread,
 who restores our humanity.

**We celebrate you as the One who knows human anxiety,
want, thirst and humiliation.**

We celebrate you in a compromised world
where wealth and poverty coexist;
where many have all they need – and much more –
but don't know how to share.

**So, open our hearts.
Not only that we learn sad facts about the world.
But that we may feel our place in this world, as your people.**

Where there is injustice,
teach us to learn the causes and help us to resist.
Where there is brokenness,
teach us to learn of our own brokenness and help us to bring wholeness.

**Help us to bring you down from the cross through bringing others
down from theirs.**

Contemplative Silence

When we want to be a church ever-reforming,
yet cling to comfortable ways:
Jesus, have mercy on us!

When we want to honour your “still speaking voice,”
but are fearful of insights which challenge old assumptions:
Christ, have mercy on us!

When we want to give expression to Jesus' dream of oneness,
but fail to listen to voices of difference:
Jesus, have mercy on us!

Declaration of Forgiveness

Our needs exceed our grasp.
We question but our reason is never enough.

Confident in ourselves we are aware of our vulnerability.
Resilient, we are restless and anxious.

And yet the good news stands as a rock amid shifting sands.
We are forgiven even before we ask.

Thanks be to God.

Gloria 698 Ludwing van Beethoven (1770-1827), *arr.* Edward Hodges (1796-1867),
words by Shirley Ludgater (b. 1937)
The pronouns 'their' and 'them' refers to people of all genders.

Praise the Father, Love eternal,
ever ready to forgive;
praise the Son and Holy Spirit,
giving faith and hope to live;
gifts of love to guard their union,
guide their venture all lifelong.
Lord inspire them with your vision;
fill their living with your song.

Peace

We greet each other with the words, "The peace of the Lord be with you" with the response "And also with you", or if from a distance, the hand over the heart, or the hands clasped.

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

For the Young at Heart: Ann

Job 42:1-6, 10-17, pew bibles p. 424

A short explanation: The theology of Job is part of the so-called Wisdom literature. In a nutshell, it deals with the question of innocent suffering. This reading is the last in the lectionary rhythm. It is about the reconciliation of God and Job, and Job's restoration. The readers interpretation of the ending varies. Some find it altogether satisfactory. The line, ⁵"I 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.", is seen as proof of Job's sincere retreat from his earlier robustness. However, the interpretation of the Hebrew is also capable of an alternative reading: "I repent of dust and ashes: suggesting that Job is tired of hitting his head against the wall of suffering and questioning. Edwin Good takes this line, in his post-modern reading, *In Turns of Tempest*. In this view, Job is cowed by God's power, but never foregoes his integrity.

Then Job 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. ⁴Hear, 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 Keren-happuch. 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) pew bibles pp.441: A Responsive Reading

A short explanation: These first eight verses fit the reading from Job 42 very well, especially if one reads that text in the first way mentioned above in the explanation of Job: as Job capitulating before God. In the psalm, the psalmist blesses the Lord who has appeared to him. Job sought the Lord and the Lord answered him. However, whether we would imagine Job going so far as to say that the Lord ‘delivered me from all my fears’ (4b), or that he had been ‘saved from every trouble (6b) is open to question.

¹I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

²**My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.**

³O magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt his name together.

⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.

⁵Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.

⁶This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble.

⁷The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.

⁸O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him

¹⁹Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD rescues them from them all.

²⁰He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken.

²¹Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

²²The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Hymn 732 v. 1-3 Lift Up Your Hearts unto the Lord

Linda Strassen-Benjamin (b. 1951)

The Gospel of Mark 10: 46-52 p. 823

A short explanation: There is a span of material in Mark's gospel, reaching from 8:27 to 10:45, which is bound together by a loose thread and a common movement. The movement is from north to south, more particularly, from the northern borders of Galilee to the beginning of the steep ascent from Jericho to Jerusalem. It is the way to the cross. Three times threaded through the passage Jesus announces that as Son of Man he will suffer and be rejected (8:31; 9:31; 10:33). Three times the disciples fail to understand. They show themselves blind to his purpose and to his values. Mark has set on either side of this span of material two accounts of Jesus' healing of blind men (8:22-26 and 10:46-52). The intention is doubtless symbolic. The disciples are blind. That is a primary function of today's passage in Mark's gospel.

But what about Bartimaeus? He is twice named (10:46): 'son of Timaeus' and 'Bartimaeus' - which also means 'son (Aramaic: bar) of Timaeus, meaning something like, son of the precious or

worthy one. Nonetheless Bartimaeus is a nobody. When he raises his voice (10:47), people are quick to remind him of the fact (10:48). With the persistence which can characterise the desperate, the man does not shy away from being a nuisance. Jesus responds, hears his request, healing him. A nobody in the world's eyes, a sidelined person, a blind beggar, becomes the hero of faith. This is Mark at his subversive best.

⁴⁶They 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. 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 Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Anthem Amazing Grace John Newton, arr. Iva Juras

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
 I once was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see.
 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
 Thro' many dangers, toils and snares I have already come;
 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun
 We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

Homily

Prayers for the Church and World

Today we pray for the peoples of Canada and the United States of America. We include the peoples of Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, Lebanon and Syria. We also remember ourselves in Australia as families struggle under economic pressures.

We offer the Bidding: God of Mercy...**Hear our prayers.**

Prayer for life in freedom

God of all hope;
hear our prayer.

When money becomes a prison:
free us to choose life.

Where wealth turns into addiction:
free us to choose life.

When income determines worth:
free us to choose life.

Where poverty equals invisibility:
free us to choose life.

When economies deepen injustice:
free us to choose life.

Where greed invents new oppressions:
free us to choose life.

when finance rules every decision:
free us to choose life.

where consumption replaces compassion:
free us to choose life.

Keri K. Wehlander; used with permission

We pray the prayer of all Christians

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

Offering Hymn 647 **Comfort, Comfort All My People**

Robin Mann (b. 1949), inspired by Isaiah 40. This hymn also alludes to the themes in our readings from Job and Psalm 34

We sing as the offering is received.

The congregation remains standing as the offering is received by the minister and prayers are offered over the gifts.

SENDING OUT

Hymn 90 **I'll Praise My Maker**

Gabriel Davis (c. 1768-1824), words by

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) *alt.*

Commission and Blessing

Friends, go now in the blessing of Christ's mercy.
 May God grant you persistence to cry out for help,
 an open heart to notice the cries of others,
 and the courage to listen and lend a loving hand
 to neighbours known and unknown. Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you;
 the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
 and be gracious to you;
 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
 and give you peace.

Our service has ended.
 Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Postlude: Fantasia in Eco (Adriano Banchieri, 1568-1634)

Liturgist & Preacher: Rev'd Dr. Geoff Dornan and Mrs. Ann Sutton

Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul

Organist: Lorraine Macknight

Wesley Music Scholars: Evangeline Osborne, Martin Magill, and Phoebe Bourke (choir)

Readers: Russ and Brenda Neal

Video & Sound: David Benger & Simon Cowling

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