

## Imaginative Prayer - Bartimaeus

Read Luke 18:35-43 out loud to yourself.....you may like to read it a few times, so you can fully immerse yourself in the story.

### Jesus heals a blind beggar near Jericho:

As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth<sup>[a]</sup> is passing by." Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

### When you are ready read this meditation out or if you are able to record it? Play it back.....once you are still.

Close your eyes... take a second to register the darkness... the absence of movement, the absence of colour... now imagine you can't open them again... This darkness, this absence, is all that is ever before your eyes, and is all you will ever see, for you are blind.

You are sitting on the ground, beside the road into Jericho... What is it like on the road today? ... Is the sun shining? ... What is the air like? ... Is it windy or still? ... What can you smell? ... the dust of the road ... animals ... What is passing by on the road today? ... you can tell from the sounds and the smell alone ... is it spice traders? ... livestock being herded to market? ... Pilgrims?

What do you hear? ...the foot-fall of travellers... the sound of hooves in the gravel... ...the rattle of clink of packs shifting on donkeys' backs... hushed conversations... And occasionally the approach of a stranger... a few words of greeting... the welcome chink of coins and the cold smoothness of money in your outstretched palm ... and then onwards, the comings and goings on the city passing you by.

But now there's something happening ... a commotion ... now what do you hear? Someone is coming down the road ... what's happening around you now? ... people are shouting ... what are they saying? ... there seems to be a crowd forming, moving ... you can make out a name in all the excitement ... do you hear it?

It's Jesus! ... where have you heard it before? ... what have you heard about him? Remember the stories they told you ... Jesus ... Jesus the teacher ... the storyteller ... the miracle worker ... the healer! He's the one everyone has been talking about ...the one your neighbours had told you about ... and now here he is, passing through your village, walking down your street.

You're on your feet now, shouting.

People are pushing past you... he is so close ... Now you're hurrying, stumbling, hands outstretched – your hands are on the backs, the shoulders of strangers in front of you, feeling for a gap in the crowd. And you're shouting at the top of your voice, desperate, so desperate you hardly know what you're saying –

Do you find a gap? ... do you get through onto the road? ... as you blunder into people in the crowd, what do they say? ... where's Jesus now in that swirl of noise and darkness? ... can you make out his voice? ... how close are you now?

Now there's a hand in your face and you're pushed away... "Be quiet! What does the king want with you, beggar?" ...

Unneeded ... unwanted ... unwelcome.

And the man is right – what does the king want with your blind eyes and your shabby clothes, your bare feet and your dirty hands? ...

Now he is passing.

Like the travellers, like the city, like the opportunity to work ... He is passing... Your blindness has denied you.

But now something is happening in the crowd ... There's a ripple of silence moving through the people ... Jesus has stopped... He is standing in the road...

Now someone approaches you ... feel the pressure of their fingers around your arm ... the warmth of their touch ... they're leading you now, back into the road ... and now that voice ... what is it like? ... and what is it he's saying?

"What do you want me to do for you?" ... is he speaking to you?

Now you're blurting it out ... "Lord, I want to see!" ... what are the crowd doing? ... are they silent? Whispering? Laughing? ... what do you expect Jesus to say?

"Look and you will see! Your eyes are healed because of your faith."

See

See that darkness slide away ... see the road ... the sky ... the sunshine ... the crowds – what are they doing now? How are they looking at you? What are they saying? ... See their faces ... see their eyes as they stare at you ... their hands as they raise them to their faces ... and there in the middle of it all ... see Jesus.

What does he look like? ... Where is he looking? what is the expression on his face as he looks at you? ... What do you say? ... What will you do now?

As the crowd begins to move now, onwards towards the city, what do you do? ... Do you return to your begging mat? ... Do you go with Jesus?

Take your time as you watch him ... take some time in silence as you think now ... as you see now ... what will you do now?

How will your life change?