

MAY 28, 2026 FATHER PETER JAE CHOI

There was once a small farming community that was experiencing severe drought. They were in desperate need of rain. So the parish priest asked all the townspeople to come to the church parking lot on Sunday evening to pray for rain. And he asked them to bring something that represented their faith. As you can imagine, hundreds of people gathered together to pray for rain while holding up their crucifixes, rosaries, statues of the Blessed Mother, and other saints. Then the priest spotted a young girl who was holding an umbrella. Curious, the priest asked the girl why she brought a non-religious item. She replied, “Because when God sends us the rain I don’t want to get wet!” Out of all the people, who do you think really had faith?

Of course God always listens to our prayers. But God doesn’t always answer when and how we want Him to respond. So in the meantime, when we are being impatient we turn to quick and easy band-aid solutions instead. We want to take a pill to help us lose weight, rather than changing our lifestyle like going on a diet and exercising. We want to say one prayer that will make our problems disappear, rather than working through our problems. Unfortunately, life doesn't quite work like that. It takes time to learn, to grow and to heal. The gospel doesn’t give us much detail about Bartimaeus. How old was he? How long had he been sitting by the road blind, and begging for alms? Maybe months or even years? Did you notice that there was a whole crowd of people, in need of healing, and the only person that got healed was Bartimaeus? He was the last person Jesus healed before He entered Jerusalem to face His passion and death on the Cross.

Over the years I’ve seen quite a number of religious paintings, and one that I like is the painting of blind Bartimaeus. In the painting, Bartimaeus is seen walking towards Jesus with a cloak already on the ground. As he is taking a step forward towards Jesus, Bartimaeus is throwing away his walking stick. The painting portrayed a man who was

filled with confident faith and hope that Jesus would heal him, and that he was not going to need his walking stick anymore! It's been said, the day the blind man sees, the first thing he throws away is the stick that helped him all his life, and that is exactly what Bartimaeus does. Often we too are holding onto the walking sticks of our life because we depend on them. And that dependence is often what prevents us from seeking God.

When Jesus asked Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" He immediately responded, "My teacher, let me see again." Interestingly, Jesus said, "Go, your faith has made you well." This saying appears only twice in St. Mark's gospel. Once when a woman who suffered with hemorrhages for 12 years. When she touched just a fringe of Jesus' cloak, she was instantly healed. Jesus praised her for her faith. In today's gospel, Jesus praised Bartimaeus for his faith: "Your faith has made you well."

If you had been blind and you regained your sight. What would you do? Where would you go? I am thinking, family, friends, and places. But that is not what Bartimaeus did. After regaining his sight, when Jesus told him he could go, he didn't go anywhere. He stayed with Jesus and followed Him.

It's hard to imagine that I've been a priest for 20 years. And one of the most intriguing things I find is a wedding interview. Over the years I've asked the same question to every single couple whose wedding I've officiated at. You would think there would be a variety of answers. But it's always the same answer. So what is the question that I ask, you may wonder. When I ask couples, how did you know if he or she was the one? They always answer with smiles on their faces, "We just knew." It's one of those things if you know, you know, and if you don't, you don't. No one can teach you that. Our life can be like that. If you don't know where to find happiness, you can spend your entire life looking for it. You work hard to achieve your goals and dreams and one day you will

realize that you can't find happiness in your career. You look for happiness in things and it's not there either. Sometimes you look for happiness in relationships, expecting your partner to make you happy, only to be disappointed. That is because we are made for God and eternal happiness only God can provide. So we make a full circle back to God, and God is where we find our life's purpose, happiness and meaning. Just like the married couples I've interviewed, when they found the one, their search came to an end. I am sure it was similar to Bartimaeus. He's experienced God's love, and all he ever wanted to do from that moment on was to follow Jesus.

Going back to the gospel. There were some who were trying to silence Bartimaeus, telling him to be quiet. But then there were others who were listening to Jesus and encouraging him to get up and go to Jesus. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, "the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being." There isn't a neat division of people, the good people over here and the evil people over there. Everyone of us is capable of doing good and evil. Every one of us is capable of judging others based on their social status. We can easily silence the voice or dismiss the needs of someone like Bartimaeus in our own lives, because they do not seem important. But, every one of us is also capable of seeing those who are broken and are suffering with the eyes of Jesus. We can take notice and do something. We can lead them to God, or as St. Teresa of Avila said, we can be the hands and the feet of Christ and bring God's love to them.