

□ Reading time: 3 min.

Reflection on Mk 10:46-52 – Blind Bartimaeus

The account of the healing of Bartimaeus, the man born blind, is not just the chronicle of a miracle, but a true and proper parable in action about the condition of the disciple. This encounter between Jesus and Bartimaeus is the last episode before the messianic entry into Jerusalem, the hinge between Jesus' ministry and his passion-resurrection.

Bartimaeus, the blind man who, once healed, sees and follows, is the luminous opposite of the disciples, who despite seeing have not yet understood. It is within this horizon full of contrasts that I would like to propose three brief thoughts.

Jesus takes the initiative

Even before the blind man cries out, Jesus is "leaving" Jericho (v. 46). The cry of the poor blind man changes everything. Jesus makes himself ready and close to him: "then Jesus stopped and said: 'Call him!'" (v. 49). The divine initiative directs its own movement to make itself present to the one crying out from the side of the road.

This is a constant trait of God's pedagogy: when we "cry out", we realise that He has already found us. This is the first gift, we could say the greatest we can receive. Within the journey of faith, the "blindness" we carry in its various forms is not a condemnation. Rather, it is like a wound that can be healed. When we bring it to Jesus, his action not only heals the sick person, but also changes the way of seeing of those close to him. Whether we are "blind" ourselves, or close to someone who is, the presence of Jesus always makes a difference. He makes everyone see their own "blindness", their own indifferences that are often hidden. Jesus changes each of us: he gives sight, arouses empathy, and invites us to recognise that in some way we all need "light"!

Humility in recognising one's own blindness and the willingness to be

healed

This first step arrives when we are honest with ourselves. Bartimaeus cannot see, but he has a voice. Even though he is silenced, he cries out even louder. His insistence is not arrogance, but the form that humility takes when it is authentic. Because humility does not remain silent in the face of the indifference of others. It knows its own need and is not ashamed to name it: "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (v. 48).

This cry contains two truths. The first is a confession of faith in the person of Christ, pronounced by one who does not see with the eyes of the body but "sees" clearly who is before him. The second is the unashamed recognition of his own misery, because he knows he is standing before the Son of God.

Called, Bartimaeus throws away his cloak, the only thing he had. Nothing must hold him back at the moment he is called. It is a powerful image for us today: true healing that leads to authentic light requires letting go of what we cling to for security, perhaps even out of fear.

Then Jesus' question to Bartimaeus is the same question that Jesus asks each of us today: "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 51)

Bartimaeus asks for the only thing that is needed: he asks to "see". True humility is the ability to name one's own poverty precisely before God, without replacing it with desires for power or superficial gratification.

The stubbornness of remaining blind in the face of a broader vision

A thought on the crowd that initially wanted to silence poor Bartimaeus. It makes us wonder who was truly "blind" and perhaps even "deaf"? The crowd with its indifference represents a "blindness" different from Bartimaeus' physical one. It is the blindness of those who see perfectly well, but do not want to be disturbed in their own narrow vision of things. It is the same blindness that still accompanies us today in the face of poverty that we do not want to "name", much less encounter.

This is perhaps the most urgent lesson for us today: there are forms of blindness that can be cured, like that of Bartimaeus. But there are forms of blindness that stubbornly resist the light, because God's light is always broader, more freely given,

and more destabilising than our categories are willing to accept.

The healing that God offers is infinite and free. It does not respond to the logic of merit, of social order, of who has the right to be heard. Precisely for this reason, the temptation to “silence” those who cry out from the margins – the poor, the young person in crisis, those who pose uncomfortable questions to our established practices – is always lurking even in our communities.

Recognising this stubbornness in ourselves is not a reason for discouragement, but the beginning of a new and liberating journey. May Bartimaeus’ frankness be a gift to us, may his cry find a “home” in our hearts, not just once, but as the permanent cry of one who knows that their own vision always needs to be refocused by grace. Only then, like Bartimaeus, will we truly be able to “follow Jesus along the road” (v. 52): true and authentic disciples, no longer healed spectators, but followers who have learnt to see what matters.