

Father, the Son and the Spirit - will do all this freely for us, without demanding that we do anything special, or be anyone special.

God will help us, just as Eleanor Roosevelt helped Fred Collier - in many and various ways - sometimes through others, sometimes directly within our hearts, and always without expectation of return or repayment. After he helps those who have had the faith to turn to him for help, Jesus almost always says, as he said to Bartimaeus, *“Go, your faith has made you well.”* (52)

What a wonderful thing it is if when we have faith to ask, we also have the faith to follow and to learn to do for others what has been done for us. Like Bartimaeus, we can recognize – even in our blindest and most broken moments – the presence of God in Jesus Christ. We can trust in the power of Jesus to give us new visions and strengthen our weak knees as we get up from our fallen places to continue our journey on the Way.

Let us not be afraid to ask for help. Turn to your friends and your neighbors and share your needs. Turn to God who can help us when no one can. Let us ask. And after asking - in perfect freedom - pass on what we have received, and follow the one who gives all that he has for us. Praise be to God for the salvation he grants us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

### Questions for Reflection

1. When you feel trapped in life or in relationships or in body, like Bartimaeus, have you reached out for help from your friends or to God? Or were you afraid to ask for help or did not want to be a burden to others?
2. Have you experienced Christ reaching out and touching you when you called upon Him. When did you recognize the presence of God in Jesus Christ?

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### The Faith to Ask, The Faith to Follow

Mark 10: 46-52

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We are living in a radically changing society. How do we know and see those changes? We get a lot of information and news from mass media, such as TV, newspapers, books, and recently from the internet. We know what’s going on around the world every day. One single news or event in a country can become a concern for the world. Sometimes we get the information from the limited views of reporters; and sometimes we get the wrong information. Even though we know many things around the nation and the world, we don’t know the facts behind the story of the happenings. We know what’s going on in Iran, Palestine, and North Korea, but we don’t know what’s really going on there. In this perspective, we are all blind people. Even though we have the eyes to see the objects, we don’t have the eyes to see the truth. We don’t see the people exactly as they are in our relationship with them. We don’t see the community and the world exactly as it is in our life. We need help to see our friends, family, and society correctly.

In today’s text we find a blind man called Bartimaeus who really wants to see. When Jesus met Bartimaeus, he sat in the shadows of life as well as beside the road. Bartimaeus was blind, but he was much more disabled by the lack of proper understanding and help. And yet, as a result of this single encounter, Bartimaeus left the roadside and claimed his place in the mainstream of life.

He insisted on attracting attention to himself: *“Son of David, have mercy on me!”* (47) Almost immediately, many people rebuked him and told him to be quiet. *“Be quiet! The Master is too busy for the likes of you!”* They tried to silence Bartimaeus. He was not important. He was not useful. He did not fit in.

However, Bartimaeus was not quiet. He cried out, *"Son of David, have mercy on me!"* (48) Jesus stopped and let Bartimaeus come to him. Jesus asked him, *"What do you want me to do for you?"* (51)

Like Bartimaeus, many of us feel trapped in life, in the job, in relationships, and in the body, so we are unable to break free, unable to change things, and unable to do anything. How many of us reach out to our friends and neighbors and confide in them our feelings, our needs? How many of us actually ask our family members for help when we need it? How many of us even think to reach out to God and ask that he help?

Sometimes we are afraid to ask for help and we do not want to be a burden to others. Or perhaps we do not want to seem weak to others or to our own selves. There are times when we all need help. Times when if we are to survive, if we are to live, if we are to go grow, that we must turn to other people and to God and ask for what we need.

Doctor Fred Collier, a retired physician tells his story when he was a medical student in the Army Specialized Training Corps in 1945. He didn't have the kind of money he needed to complete medical school on his own. And so, when he was discharged from the army, he had no idea how he'd ever finish school.

One day he happened to pick up a copy of a magazine in a barber shop. One of the articles talked about the kindness and compassion of Eleanor Roosevelt, whose husband, President Franklin Roosevelt had died just a few months before. That article planted a seed in Fred's mind. He went to the local library and with the help of the librarian found Mrs. Roosevelt's home address. Then he sat down and wrote a letter telling her about his difficulty.

To Fred's amazement, Mrs. Roosevelt agreed to meet him. When the meeting ended, she promised to help him. In the months and years ahead Fred got checks through Mrs. Roosevelt from a variety of sources, including her own personal checks. Fred, in turn, kept her informed of his progress and sent her copies of all his term papers.

Her secretary said later that she always read them with great interest. Later Mrs. Roosevelt visited the couple in their small apartment.

When Fred finished Medical School he told Mrs. Roosevelt that he didn't know how he would ever be able to repay her. She said that repayment wasn't necessary nor desired. Then she added *"I will be adequately repaid if, when you are financially secure someday, you help out someone else who is truly deserving, as you were."* Doctor Fred Collier reached out for help and he received it, as did blind Bartimaeus.

It is a hard thing to do, this asking, a difficult thing, a humbling thing, but there are times when we all need help, times when we must turn to other people and to God or perish. The good news is that there is someone who can help us improve our miserable situation, and who can help us to overcome it and to bear it with a hope and a strength that transforms it completely. And when we cannot go to someone else for that help, there is no situation where we cannot go to God for help and find the help we need.

God does not always answer our prayers in the way we have in mind. But God does answer them in a way that is appropriate. God always gives us what we need. *"Come unto me all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28) *"Seek and you shall find."* (Matthew 7:7) *"Knock and the door shall be opened to you."* (Matthew 7:7) *"Ask and you shall receive."* (Matthew 7:7) These are the promises of Christ, promises that he kept time and time again in his walk upon this earth, promises that he still keeps from heaven as he intercedes for us before the throne of God.

God can and will help us with our problem., His word will give us the wisdom and the insight that we need when we feel lost. Christ will reach out and touch us when we call upon him. He will give us rest when we seek it. The Spirit will give us strength when we wait upon him and guide and lead us when we turn to him. And God - the