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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Suggested Starter Question

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why?**

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- Read Mark 10:46-52. Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Duh! What do beggars typically want? Does Jesus' question strike you as a bit strange? Why or why not?
- Take a moment to compare these three gospel accounts of the healing of Bartimaeus: Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, and Luke 18:35-43. What similarities and differences do you find?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- Look up the word "prayer" at Dictionary.com. Summarize the first two definitions you read there. Compare that to what Bartimaeus did in Mark 10:47-51. Was Bartimaeus **praying?** Why or why not?
- Think back to the first Observation question ("Duh! What do beggars typically want?"). In what ways does Bartimaeus' response to Jesus' question reflect stunning boldness and faith?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- When you pray, you don't see God. When Bartimaeus spoke to Jesus, he didn't see him either. What aspects of Bartimaeus' interaction (aka "prayer") do you find most encouraging?
...challenging?
...instructive?
 - Most beggars ask for enough money for one meal. Bartimaeus asked to be healed of total blindness! How many of your prayers are of that magnitude? What conclusions do you draw from that?
- What's the boldest request you've ever made of God? What was the result?
- What "aids" to prayer have you found helpful?
What can we as a Community Group do to help each other grow in bold, persistent prayer?

Sermon Summary Mark 10:46-52

Mark 10:46-52 continues the account of Jesus' journey to the cross; he is walking to his death. If I were in Jesus' place I would have been preoccupied—yet Jesus stopped to speak with a blind beggar who called out to him from beside the road. Jesus often stopped. If we want to be used greatly by God, we must be willing to be interrupted. Most of the miracles Jesus performed occurred as a result of interruptions. Do we allow ourselves to be interrupted? John Wesley—a man used greatly by God—said: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, by all the ways you can, in all the places you can, and at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you can.” But to do that, we must be available. We must be willing to say, “OK, God, I’m out of my comfort zone—this is not convenient—but what do you want me to do?” But self-centeredness (Philippians 2:4) and busyness (Ephesians 5:15-17) often keep us from being available to God. I’ve got my agenda, my plans, my dreams, my goals, my ambitions, and I don’t have time to help anyone else! If we are going to be used by God we have to allow ourselves to be interrupted. We must place God’s agenda above our own. Despite knowing that he would soon face death, Jesus wasn’t preoccupied with his own needs. He stopped to meet the needs of a blind beggar.

The account of Blind Bartimaeus appears in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; and Luke 18:35-43). Only Mark supplies his name; perhaps Bartimaeus was known by Mark and/or the recipients of his gospel. All of this happened just outside a city called Jericho, a town located about seventeen miles northeast of Jerusalem, a wealthy place with a lot of foot traffic—a great place for a beggar! (In fact, Matthew mentions two beggars; apparently Bartimaeus was the more vocal of the two.) Jesus healed a lot of people. Why does Mark place this incident where he does in his gospel? In addition to being chronologically placed, might it also serve a thematic purpose? In many ways Jesus’ disciples needed their spiritual eyes opened. They still weren’t getting it! But Bartimaeus—despite being physically blind—displayed great spiritual insight.

1. Bartimaeus recognized Jesus as Israel’s Savior-Messiah. Bartimaeus used a messianic title when he called him the “Son of David” (v. 47-48). Once when the Pharisees disputed with Jesus, he asked them, “What do you think about the Christ/Messiah—whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42). They instantly replied that the Messiah would be David’s son. What they didn’t know is that he also would be divine. So Jesus pressed: “Then how does David in the Spirit call him ‘Lord’?” (quoting Psalm 110:1; see Matthew 22:43). The Messiah both descended from David, and was David’s Lord. The Messiah had to be both human and divine! Bartimaeus recognized this. He also was aware that the Messiah would give sight to the blind (see Isaiah 61:18)! Bartimaeus embraced Jesus as the Messiah, the great God-man, and with that affirmation, his entire life was altered.

2. Bartimaeus displayed great courage and didn’t allow peer pressure to keep him from Jesus.

When he cried out, many sternly told him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more (v. 48). Bartimaeus wasn’t about to let other people dictate his response to Jesus; the more they told him to be quiet, the louder he shouted. That’s how we should be! The more our culture seeks to exclude biblical truth from the public square, the more intense our efforts should be to challenge the prevailing naturalistic worldview. Don’t allow peer pressure and political correctness and the fear of being canceled to privatize your faith.

3. Bartimaeus demonstrated persistence and faith. Too often we quickly give up praying. We assume that if God doesn’t answer our prayers in our preferred time frame He is either unconcerned, or he has refused our request. Jesus praised persistence and faith in prayer (cf. Luke 18:1-8).

4. Bartimaeus modeled specificity in prayer. When Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted, he replied specifically and concretely. For thirty years I prayed for the salvation of a high school friend. We need to patiently persist in our requests until we are convinced God has given us his will on the matter. Persistence in prayer is a sign of a mature faith.

5. Bartimaeus responded to Jesus’ gift with worship and commitment. When he regained his sight, he began following Jesus, glorifying God (v. 52; cf. Luke 18:43). This is the response that God desires from all of us. If you are a Christian, you too have been healed of blindness. We all once were spiritually blind; God opened our eyes and we believed. Forgiveness should lead to a life of worship and a commitment to follow Jesus in discipleship. Armed with the truth of the Scriptures, disciples seek to be change agents in a rapidly deteriorating society. They are not on the defensive; they are on the offensive! They are courageous and bold. Courage is not the absence of fear, but doing the thing that you fear. Just wade on into conversations. Ask questions and really listen. Always be kind. Always be on mission! Always look for opportunities to advance the gospel by what you say and by how you live. And, when you stumble and fall, don’t stay down (Proverbs 24:16).

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Solving the Problem of Prayer

There's a problem: truly born-again people often do not pray simply because we do not **feel** like it. And when we do pray, we always pray about those things which are most important to us—our family or friends, finances, our future, our job, church and ministry responsibilities, and, often enough, a current crisis. So, **why** do we become bored when talking with glorious, infinite, Creator-God, especially when what we're talking about is important to us? We typically assume that the problem is **us**. But the problem almost certainly is **not** with us—it's our method. The method most of us use is to **pray the same old things about the same old things**. The problem is **not** that we pray about the same old things. It's normal to pray about the same old things because our lives tend to consist of the same old things. If we're going to pray about our lives, and the elements of our lives—family, finances, job, etc.—don't change dramatically very often, then it necessarily means that we're going to pray **about** the same old things most of the time. Our problem is that we **say the same old things** about the same old things—and that's boring. And when prayer is boring, we don't feel like praying. The solution is to change our method!

When we use the Psalms to shape our prayers, we never again **say** the same old things even though we're praying **about** the same old things. Here's how to do it: simply go through a passage, line by line, talking to God about whatever comes to mind as you read the text. Our goal is to use the words of the Bible to help us talk to God—and he wants us to talk to him about everything that's important to us (Philippians 4:6). And since God inspired a psalm for every sigh of the soul, you will never go through anything in life for which you cannot find the root emotions reflected in the Psalms: exhilaration, frustration, discouragement, guilt, forgiveness, joy, gratitude, dealing with enemies, contentment, discontentment. You name it—it's there!

So here's the method: read a psalm line by line, talking to God about whatever is important to you. If your mind wanders from the subject of the text, take **those** wandering thoughts Godward, then return to the text. If you come to a verse you don't understand—just skip it. If you do understand it but nothing comes to mind to pray about—just go on to the next verse. If sinful thoughts enter your mind, pray about them and then go on! It's even OK to pray, "Lord, what does this passage mean?" and "Please show me how I can pray from this passage." When we talk to God about the words we read in the Bible, we'll never again pray the same old things about the same old things. And, we won't pray the empty, repetitive phrases we might if we were "using our own words" to pray. Which psalm should you pray today? Since there are thirty days in most months, if you divide the Psalms up into thirty lists, you'll always know which psalms to select from for **today's** praying. Since there are 150 psalms, today's psalms are the psalms which correspond to today's date, plus 30, 60, 90, and 120. You can simply follow this chart (the date is in the black row, that day's five psalms are below each date):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119 ^s	120
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150

This plan is that it gives you direction and momentum. No matter how tired, sleepy, or distracted you might be when you begin to pray, with this method **you know** on any given day exactly which five psalms you will consider. Start by taking thirty seconds to quickly scan the five psalms for today's date and pick the one that best leads you to prayer in your present circumstances. Let's try it! Suppose today is the 23rd of the month. Quickly scan the list of psalms for the 23rd (23, 53, 83, 113, and 143), and choose one that strikes you. Today you chose Psalm 23, and read the first line: "The Lord is my shepherd"—and you pray something like this:

"Lord, I thank you that you are my shepherd. You're a good shepherd. You have shepherded me all my life. And, Great Shepherd, please shepherd my family today: guard them from the ways of the world; guide them into the ways of God. O Great Shepherd, I pray for my children; cause them to be your sheep. May they love you as their shepherd, as I do. And, Lord, please shepherd me in my decision about taking that new job. Do I make that move, that change, or not? I also pray for the pastor-shepherds at church. Please shepherd them as they shepherd us."

Continue praying anything else that comes to mind. When nothing else comes to mind, simply go to the next line: "I shall not want." And perhaps you pray:

"Lord, I thank you that I've never really been in want. I haven't missed too many meals. All that I am and all that I have has come from you. But I know it pleases you that I bring my desires to you, so would you please provide the finances we need for that transmission job our van needs and for next semester's tuition? ..."

Next you read, "He leads me beside still waters (v. 2b) and you begin to pray...

"Yes, Lord, do lead me in that decision about the job shift. I want to do what's wisest, but I don't know which choice to make. And since you lead me beside still waters in this, I ask you to quiet my soul in this situation. May the turbulence in my heart be stilled by trust in you and your sovereignty over all things and over all people..."

Then, simply continue through that psalm until you run out of time or you run out of psalm! That's it! Now, pick up your Bible, quickly scan the psalms for today's date, and talk to your Heavenly Father! (Because Psalm 119 is so long, you'll almost certainly not get through it all! So, for every month which has thirty-one days, simply use Psalm 119 again.)