

Rev. Julie U. Riley
“The Beggar’s Coat”
Mark 10:46-52
October 25, 2009

course, the crowd opened up for him. I remember thinking how odd it was, all these people passed by this man with I don’t know what made me join the crowd that day. I don’t know, I guess I just didn’t want to be left out. I had heard of Jesus, who hadn’t? Some thought he was the savior of the world, some thought he was the world’s biggest scam artist. Me? I don’t know. I mean, I’ve heard about all those miracles, but I don’t know if I believed them or not. It’s pretty amazing stuff: healing people, walking on water, feeding this huge crowd with only 5 loaves and 2 fishes. I guess that’s why I joined the crowd, to see if it was true, to see if he was real. He looked pretty normal to me, at least from what I could see, I couldn’t get very close.

As I was pushing through the crowd, I trip over this man, a beggar, I think he was blind. He should know better than to go out into the street, he should have stayed in his place; I mean, it would have been safer for him, and me. I started to tell him to get out to the way, but I lost sight of Jesus, and I didn’t want to waste any more time with the man, so I picked up myself and hurried off. But then the blind man started to yell. At first I thought he was yelling at me, but then I realized that he was yelling for Jesus. I told him to be quiet, but he didn’t listen to me. He just kept yelling and yelling, urgently, frantically, like his life depended on Jesus.

There he was, yelling like a madman. He didn’t even realize it when the crowd started calling for him. Finally someone shook him and got down into his face and said, “Jesus is calling you.” He didn’t hesitate a minute, he just threw off his coat, got to his feet and started running. I can’t say I’ve ever seen a blind man run, usually they are so careful, but this man ran as if though he could care less about the obstacles, as if nothing could get in the way of him getting to Jesus. Of course, the crowd opened up for him. I remember thinking how odd it was, all these people passed by this man with I don’t know what made me join the crowd that day. I don’t know, I guess I just didn’t want to be left out. I had heard of Jesus, who hadn’t? Some thought he was the savior of the world, some thought he was the world’s biggest scam artist. Me? I don’t know. I mean, I’ve heard about all those miracles, but I don’t know if I believed them or not. It’s pretty amazing stuff: healing people, walking on water, feeding this huge crowd with only 5 loaves and 2 fishes. I guess that’s why I joined the crowd, to see if it was true, to see if he was real. He looked pretty normal to me, at least from what I could see, I couldn’t get very close.

hout noticing him, and now they are patting him on the back, cheering him on, removing obstacles from in front of him and making a clear path to Jesus. hout noticing him, and now they are patting him on the back, cheering him on, removing obstacles from in front of him and making a clear path to Jesus.

I looked down and realize that the blind man's coat landed at my feet. Looking at the coat, I realize it was probably his only possession. It was a bit tattered, but I'm sure it's the only thing that kept him warm at night. A warm coat can mean the difference between life and death for a person living on the streets. When I saw the little bit of bread in its pocket, I realized that was probably his breakfast, lunch and dinner. I grabbed the coat and began to follow after the man, I needed to return it to him; it must have been the most important thing in his life. I'm not one to get involved, normally, but I knew this man would never be able to find his coat again. I mean, how could he? He was blind.

Just as I came up behind the man, I heard Jesus ask him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Wow, what a question. You always imagine what you might say if you ever find one of those magic lamps and the genie says you get three wishes. I always figured I'd ask for gold, lots of gold, and for power, like maybe the Emperor of Rome, right? I don't know how I would use the third wish, maybe immortality? Jesus was no genie, but that question, he said it with such authority, it was as if he really could give anything. Then I heard the blind man's answer, "My teacher, let me see again." And he did. Just like that he could see. The man danced around pointing out all the different colors of the world "Look!" he say, "isn't it beautiful? I can see it. It is beautiful!" Over and over and over again he repeated the same thing, "Look! I can see!" While the man was still running around pointing out every bright bit of earth, Jesus began to move along the road again. But as soon as Jesus began to walk away, the man fell right into step. I tried to give him his coat, but he never turned back.

I still have his coat. I keep it on a hook in my home. I take it down often and think about that day. It's funny, that man may have been blind, but he saw so much more than I did. He saw who Jesus was. He saw what was most important in life and he refused to let anything, not even me, get in the way of following Jesus. I was so distracted. There I had two perfectly good eyes and I couldn't see what was in front of me. I wasn't even trying to look. I was just following along, letting everyone else tell me what was important. If anything, I think I was the blind man that day. I still remember the question Jesus asked the blind man that day, "What do you want me to do for you?" Sometimes I can feel he is standing in front of me, asking me that question. I've had a long time to think about this now. Now I wouldn't ask for power or wealth. If I could ask Jesus for anything, I'd ask him for the same thing that man did all those years ago, I'd ask to be able to see.

I want to see...

I want to see each person through God's eyes.

I want to see Jesus, not for who others say he is, but for who he is in my life.

I want to see the things that have lasting value.

I want to see joy, and hope and possibilities when none are visible.

I want to see a way, God's way, free from obstacles.

I want to see my life in God's hands.

I want to see.