

Rev. Beth J. Costlow
22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Mark 10:46-52
October 24, 2021
Prepared for: Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Greenville SC

- Names matter.
 - Story of my name: Beth, because Grandma read *Little Women* when she was expecting my mom, and wanted to use that name for my mother.
 - Grandpa nixed it because Beth dies during childhood in the book.
 - My mom grew up hearing that story, and she chose it for me.
 - Jason's name: I decided that I wanted to honor my grandfather, so his middle name is Andrew. We chose Jason as his first name because it means "healer" and we liked the flow of it: Jason Andrew.
 - Don's name: His parents chose rhyming names for the twins: Donald and Ronald. Their middle names are biblical: James and David.
 - You probably know the story of your own name, too.
- Bartimaeus name matters, too.
 - He is the son of Timaeus, making it easy to assume that he is simply named after his father.
 - Biblical days: Jesus Bar Joseph (Jesus, son of Joseph)
 - Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus.
 - But Mark's author's use of both the name Bartimaeus *and* the identifier that he is the son of Timaeus suggests otherwise.
 - This is no accident.
 - Bartimaeus is a name that means: Son of shame.
- Why would you give your child such a name?
 - *We* probably wouldn't!
 - We view every child as a precious and unique gift, and we treasure them no matter what their unique set of gifts and challenges.
 - In 21st century America, few (if any) people assume that a child's disability is the result of parental sin.
 - Obviously, there are some exceptions like babies born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and/or addicted to drugs.
 - Even then, though, the child is cherished and loved.
 - In the first century culture that surrounded Jesus, though, it was understood born with a disability was punishment for some parental or ancestral sin.

- Bartimaeus' blindness, obviously, was a source of shame and so his name was chosen.
- Son of Shame, Bartimaeus, sits begging as the parade led by the Savior and the disciples pass by.
 - "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"
 - Significant: Son of David. Bartimaeus becomes the first one to use this title in Mark's gospel.
 - It is a Messianic title. Bartimaeus knows who Jesus is!
 - And, as is Jesus' habit, he gives Bartimaeus what he asks. He makes him well.
 - Significant: Bartimaeus' sight is restored, but the word Jesus uses here is less about that than it is about a restoration to community, a restoration to wholeness, a restoration to a full life.
- Remember that I told you Names Matter?
 - Here's where I tell you that the name Bartimaeus can also mean "Son of fame."
 - With Jesus' act of mercy, Bartimaeus moves from being the Son of Shame to being the Son of Fame.
 - And how does the Son of Fame respond? He throws aside his cloak, springs up, leaps up—this is a Greek word connoting a fast and joyful response—to follow Jesus!
- Let's talk reality: Not all of us who call out for Jesus' mercy find ourselves experiencing the miraculous recovery of sight that often takes central focus in lessons like today's Gospel.
 - Some of us still battle cancer or other physical infirmities, despite fervent and faithful pleas for relief.
 - Some of us still live with depression, anxiety or other mental illnesses, despite fervent and faithful pleas for reprieve.
 - Some of us still live in the grief that comes from broken relationships, despite fervent and faithful pleas for restoration.
- Good News: Jesus calls us to community, Jesus makes us God's own, and Jesus brings us into eternity.
 - There is hope in this story.
 - Not because Bartimaeus sees, but because he experiences the fullness of community. Amen.