

How to Call for Help

Mark 10:46-52

Spirit of Hope 11/01/2015

Theme: Humility before God and each other

Some of us suffer from a condition that is very common yet treatable because it is a fear. Did you know there are whole bunch of clinical identifications for fears or 'phobias'?

There's Euphobia or fear of good news and many suffer from Metatesiophobia – the fear of change; it is a plague in many churches. Another related disease in many church communities is Optophobia – the fear of opening one's eyes (perhaps figuratively anyway), and the dreaded Holilophobia – the fear of sermons! Many suffer from Sesquipedalophobia – the fear of long words. There is also a rare condition, Walloonphobia the fear of the Walloon's a people from South Belgium (I'm certain they are really nice people). Then there's Epistemophobia the fear of knowledge which may account for this common malady affecting so many.

Recently I was looking for an extension pipe for our shower head, so it was off to Home Depot. I would have spent as long as it took to find that part even if it meant perusing every aisle in the store including the garden area (never know when you'll find that rose

food you forgot you needed) and if it takes two hours, then that's what it takes.

But, there was a problem; Valerie was with me. Three minutes! Three minutes later we were at the checkout counter! What kind of Home Depot trip is that? She actually goes in and asks for what she wants! Epistemophobia.

"Help! I've fallen and I can't get up!" Let's be honest now; most of you, if you've fallen would crawl to the street to get to your car just to avoid asking for help. We are an independent people; "I'd really rather do it myself" we say. The first time I actually paid someone else to change the oil on my car, I felt I had betrayed my masculinity.

The ethic of self-sufficiency has been handed down to us from our grandparents or great-grandparents as a precious heirloom that is engraved "Never call for help unless drowning in the ocean." It's so ingrained, we often don't even think about asking for help even if it means getting down on 200 degree asphalt to change a flat tire.

But, I think we're often simply afraid to ask, "quaerophobia" (Don't laugh, I just made that up from the Latin "to query"). We'd rather settle for mediocrity than demonstrate our weakness or lack of ability.

In *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer stressed our need to ask God for help and our "need" to help

one another in our life together in community. We may be quick to ask God for help, perhaps to the detriment of praising him and giving thanks, but we sometimes don't do the second part so well.

We can learn something from Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. A blind man, he was cast aside by society as worthless and left to eke out a living by begging. Cast aside, perhaps, but not ignorant; he had knowledge of Jesus and what Jesus was about.

Leaving Jerico, Bartimaeus hears Jesus and the crowd approaching and he doesn't hesitate; this may be his only chance. He calls out, "**Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!**" He presents a problem for Jesus; his request for mercy. As a counselor, I've learned that there are "presenting problems" those issues someone raises for help yet there is often an underlying problem or cause that needs exploration and discovery but once revealed, it can be managed or changed. Bartimaeus knew he couldn't see but he also knew he had deeper problems he couldn't fix on his own.

Bartimaeus asks for mercy, but he is told by the church to be quiet and not speak. Well, he was told by the crowd following Jesus. Whose voices do we quash and who do we cast aside as unworthy? Who is asking for help but we are not listening?

Bartimaeus ignores them and, shouting louder, calls out again to Jesus, "**Son of David, have mercy on me!**" When seemingly few others realized, the blind man saw clearly who Jesus truly is; Son of David, the long awaited Messiah, come to save the people and offer mercy and grace and relief from the pain of sin.

Jesus, instead of calling him directly, tells the crowd to "**call him here.**"(v49) The church's role it to bring people to Jesus so he can heal them, so he can deal with their problems. All too often, we, the church, think we have to do the saving, that it's our job to tell who can and who can't approach the living Jesus. We get in the way of Jesus' kingdom work.

Thankfully, Jesus gently corrects us and invites us back into the work of kingdom building. "**Call him here**" is the instruction. Now that doesn't mean you have to invite someone to come to the physical building of the church, though one may discover Christ that way. Rather, we are to invite people to Jesus' presence through us by our life, by our good works, by acts of grace, by simply sharing why we believe Jesus is the answer.

Look at Bartimaeus' reaction. He throws off his cloak and jumps up. He bared himself before Jesus as if to say, "Here I am in all my weakness, frailties, and sin." Bartimaeus humbled himself, a beggar getting

even more humble. What pride gets in your way and keeps you from truly being present with Jesus?

Jesus asks, “**What do you want me to do for you?**” (v51) Bartimaeus is ready with an answer, “I want to see again.” In a deeper way, he already had better eyesight than most of the disciples and Jesus honors his request, restoring his vision. Jesus tells him, “**Your faith has made you well.**” (Note: faith is not required for healing, there are many other accounts where faith of the sick played no part in their healing.) Then instructs him to go. The last part of verse 52 reads that he “**regained his sight and followed him (Jesus) on the way.**” It’s an interesting phrase that reflects the name of early Christianity, “The Way.” I don’t think Mark means that Bartimaeus followed Jesus on the road back to Jerusalem but rather that Bartimaeus became a disciple and lived like one, his life was transformed.

Let’s take a moment and think about this. If it helps, just close your eyes a moment and in your mind’s eye place yourself where Bartimaeus was, sitting along the road, maybe sitting at home, or even present here. Jesus is coming by, you have but a moment right now to call out to him, what do you say? What is on your heart that you want to call out to him and ask for? Go ahead and ask, he is listening.

Take that leap of faith and ask. You put up a front for the world, but Jesus already knows you. Take off that cloak that you think covers your sin and allow yourself to be in his presence like a humble beggar for surely that is who we are asking for the mercy he is so ready to give away.

What is Jesus saying to you right now? What is he offering you? What is he inviting you to?

Perhaps you are hearing and receiving his gift of forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Perhaps you hear an invitation to service or perhaps you are being healed from an emotional, spiritual, or physical disease. If so, respond with gratitude. Give thanks, give praise for what Jesus is doing right now. Give thanks for what he’s doing for the one beside you, in front of you and behind you. Amen

Asking God for help begins with knowledge that you need help and God can provide it and it might begin with the hope he can provide it.

Asking means humbling ourselves and revealing who we really are, but then, Jesus already knows and still offers his grace and mercy.

Asking means being ready to respond with gratitude. Saying ‘thank you’ helps develop a discipline of gratitude and discipleship.

Let’s not let your quarephobia hold you back from asking for all of God’s grace.