

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Pentecost 22

24th October



Christ healing Bartimaeus ~ Carmel Cauci

WORSHIP AT HOME

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.

Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

Psalm 34

Prayer

Great and loving God,
We pause to focus ourselves on you,
To illumine our life by the light of your love and your mercy.
Holy God, we delight in your love for us, shown to us by Jesus.
All blessing to you.
So often we become mired, lost in our own and the world's darkness,
But your divine light shines on us and can see again.
For this we are grateful so we rest in your care.

We are grateful and joy-filled for all that we inherit:
The love and care of those we share our lives with,
The legacy we receive from family, friends,
those who have gone before us on the way.
May we savour and cherish this inheritance.

Jesus, you invite us to see and inhabit your kingdom,
Yet so often we are blind.
Touch us. May the scales fall from our eyes.
May we respond to your call to follow and so receive life.
Free us from our bondage that our souls may leap for joy
And we be your children of freedom.

In the name of the one who was free and is always free, even to death, Jesus your Christ.
Amen

Job 40. 1-10, 42. 1-6, 10-11

We come to the end of the story of Job and his wrestling with God. His has been a life and death struggle and it is only through the protracted pain of that struggle that he can now say of God: "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you." His experience of God is firsthand now.

And the Lord said to Job:

'Shall a fault-finder contend with the Almighty?
Anyone who argues with God must respond.'

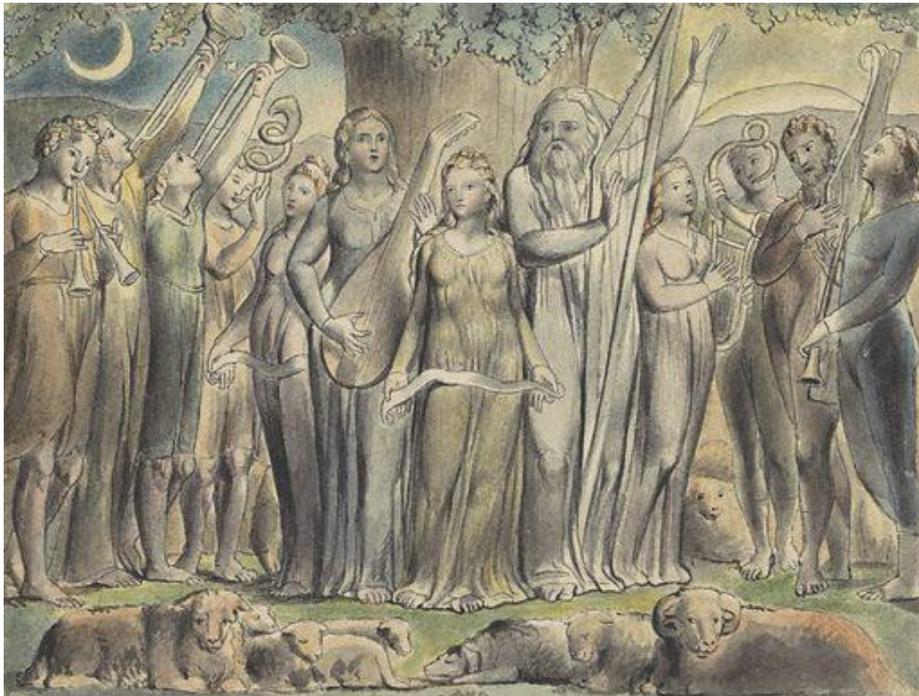
Then Job answered the Lord:

'See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
I have spoken once, and I will not answer;
twice, but will proceed no further.'

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:

'Gird up your loins like a man;
I will question you, and you declare to me.
Will you even put me in the wrong?
Will you condemn me that you may be justified?
Have you an arm like God,
and can you thunder with a voice like his?

'Deck yourself with majesty and dignity;
clothe yourself with glory and splendour.'



Job and His Wife Restored to Prosperity. Illustrations of the Book of Job.

John Linnell 1792-1882

42 Then Job answered the Lord:

‘I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?”
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
“Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.”
I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.’

And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring.

Psalm 34. 1-8

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
Look to him, and be radiant;
so your* faces shall never be ashamed.
This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,
and was saved from every trouble.
The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.

The Gospel according to Mark 10. 46-52

They came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him,

'My teacher,* let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.



Jesus cures the blind man

mosaic 6th century, St Apollinare in Nuovo, Ravenna

Reflecting

This story of the healing of Bartimaeus is a really important story for Mark. Because it is the last thing Jesus does before he enters Jerusalem at the beginning of the events which lead to his crucifixion. The journey to Jerusalem ends in our reading today with Bartimaeus gaining his sight. Because of its placement in Mark's Gospel it is a story of significance and so this story and the events leading up to this moment reveal what it means to follow Jesus.

For the last few chapters Jesus and the disciples have been on the way to Jerusalem from Galilee. The journey to Jerusalem begins with another story of a blind man gaining his sight. This gaining of sight points to something of significance for those who want to follow Jesus.

Just after the first healing Peter boldly declares that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus then tells the crowd and the disciples: *'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?*

Then they set off on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus repeatedly warns the disciples that when he reaches Jerusalem "the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and

they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.”

Mark tells us “They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.”

Then as they come closer to Jerusalem three things are asked of Jesus. We have heard these stories over the last weeks.

Firstly, a rich man comes. He asks, what must I do to receive eternal life? He is a devout man and fulfills the religious law. But his wealth is in the way and he cannot receive. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom, says Jesus. He cannot throw off his worldly wealth. It stands in the way.

Then the disciples ask something of Jesus: they want to be able to sit on the right and left of Jesus when he comes into his glory. They anticipate Jesus becoming a political leader; they want some of that power. He tells them that in the kingdom “it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” Their desire for power stands in the way.

Then as Jesus, the disciples and the crowd following him, depart Jericho on the final leg of the journey to Jerusalem, Bartimaeus cries out from the roadside and he also asks something of Jesus. His name means ‘son of the unclean’. He is a social pariah, with a status like that of an Indian Dalit – an untouchable. The crowd orders him sternly to be quiet. Have mercy on me, he calls, ‘let me see’. What little he has, he throws off and runs to Jesus, he receives his sight and follows Jesus on the way. Nothing stands in the way for Bartimaeus. He is able to receive.

Like Bartimaeus, Job has also been emptied – utterly emptied. His is a story of utter degradation. And only in his degradation can he see God as God truly is: “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you.” The rich man and the disciples, along with the crowd along the way, have difficulty seeing Jesus for who he truly is. But in their poverty the eyes of Bartimaeus and Job are opened that they can see and comprehend the true nature of God.

This is the mystery of the Gospel – that the last will be first in the kingdom. For each of us there are places of poverty of some kind. It is to our places of poverty that the Son of Man desires to come and dwell with us, where we may savour and enjoy the life of God. Those places which others have named unclean or those parts of ourselves which we have labelled as unworthy, it is these places which where we may be able to receive the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We can cry out for mercy and we will be heard and as our faith gives voice to our lack we will be healed.

Thanks be to God

Prayer – prepared by Warwick Barry

Everyone loves a good happy ending; we all want to “live happily ever after.” But the real world is rarely as neat as that. There are often lingering effects of suffering, or grieving. Life is different even when there is restoration, even when everything seems to have worked out for the best. In our worship today, we can acknowledge the complexity of life, in good times as well as in bad times. And

we can resolve to worship the God who is present through it all, and to be the community that will also be present.

O God,
We come to You, because we know You'll hear our cry.
We come to You, because You call us near to You.
We come to You, because You deliver and save.
We come to You now with our prayers and petitions.

In the noise of voices
calling for revenge and restitution,
for judgement and punishment,
we pray for the courage to speak out
for restoration. We remember asylum seekers in quarantine detention in Melbourne, the angry persistent anti-vaccine protesters, including members of far - right extremist groups who are lost; and Muslim women and children despairing for a way forward, caught in internment camps in Syria.

When grief and pain, poverty and persecution
leave people blind to grace and compassion,
we pray for the courage to carry the light
of comfort and consolation, love and forgiveness. We remember the people of South Sudan, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria and Afghanistan, where the spectre of famine reigns. We also remember all who are victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Where the quest to even the score
has left our world angry and wounded,
we pray for the courage to release our grievances
and seek wholeness for all. We especially remember the people of Afghanistan, adrift in more conflict, fear and uncertainty and the people of Lebanon and Beirut, where a crisis of the basic needs of living is unfolding. We also pray for our Indigenous people and their ongoing quest for justice and a treaty.

As You intercede for us, Jesus,
we intercede for our world that all may know
the Good News of restoration in Christ.

We pray for the local and universal church.
Give us the humility to walk in Your way and to find our way,

In a post pandemic emerging world.

We pray for the leaders in our nation
and the nations around the world.
Give them the courage to walk in peace.
We pray for those who are in need.
Give us ears to hear their cries and be agents of Your mercy.

In our praying, heavenly loving Father,
we choose to celebrate,
in the midst of grief we because it reminds us of hope,
and brings comfort to our broken hearts;
we choose to celebrate,
in the midst of poverty because it speaks of wealth beyond material things,
and gives dignity to our humbled hearts;
we choose to celebrate,
in the midst of suffering because it lightens our darkness,
and inspires strength in our fragile hearts;
Though crosses may loom, and opponents gather,
through our devotion to You
we choose to embrace and enjoy
for our own sake, and that of the least,
the healing power of celebration.

As we lift our own hidden prayers to You in silence,
for You hear even that which is unspoken.

Taking comfort from our prayers
may we comfort one another through Your love
and the sharing of our experience.

God of wholeness,
we celebrate the healing You bring to us and our world,
and we celebrate the promised wholeness
that awaits all of creation
in Your eternal reign.

Hear our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

(Adapted from the Church of Scotland)

Blessing

God the Father make you holy in his love;
God the Son enrich you with his grace;
God the Holy Spirit strengthen you with joy;
the Lord bless you and keep you in eternal life.

Amen

- Christ healing Bartimaeus – Carmel Cauci (b. 1927) George Eliot Hospital Chapel
- Job and His Wife Restored to Prosperity, Illustrations of the Book of Job, circle of John Linnell 1792-1882

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NEWS AND NOTICES

AFTER WORSHIP CHAT – ZOOM LINK emailed

For those wishing to catch up after this Sunday's worship service, there will be an opportunity to stay online to chat afterwards on **Sunday 24th October 2021 11.00am to 12.00pm**. Zoom Link is being emailed to the congregation and you can phone in by dialling 7018 2005 (Melbourne) using

Meeting ID: 882 0236 8157

Passcode: 325716

OPENING UP

We will soon be able to gather in the church again. This week's opening up restrictions, though, left us with too many limitations to be able to gather yet. But once the State is past the 80% double-vaccinated rate we expect we will gather for worship again. We cannot be sure at this stage what guidelines we will be subject to but will let you know as soon as we are able. We anticipate that we may be able to meet again from Sunday 7th November.

Remembering and Celebrating our Halls....

Dotted through the latest October edition of Pathfinder you'll find people's memories of how our halls have been used. Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles (Warwick, Heather, David, Elizabeth, Dot, Jan) and to Lorraine for several of the photos– we hope you enjoy them. May they inspire you to reflect on your own memories and perhaps send something for next month – written articles and photos welcome. We will also be including material on the website.

If you'd prefer to tell someone your story so we can write it down for you, please contact Dianne Richter (0413 750 089).

We have also set up an online option “Ormond Uniting Video Memories” where you can record your memories so we can create a video record. Here is the link:

<https://app.memento.com/ormond-uniting-video-memories/bo5dlK8Ap/record>

If you require assistance to record your memory, please contact Gary (0411116415) or garyrichter@yahoo.com.au. You don't need sophisticated recording equipment, just a smart phone or laptop with camera.

Provisional Notice of Congregational Meeting

We will be holding a congregational meeting during November. We cannot, at this stage set the date for the meeting because of COVID restrictions. We advise of the date as soon as we are able to. Part of the business will be election of Church Councillors. You will have been delivered, or sent by email, separate documents relating to the election and the nomination of Church Councillors.

ROSTER for Sunday 31 October 2021

READING	David Northwood	
PRAYERS	Mardie Townsend	
RESOURCES DELIVERY Friday 29 October	Ron Townsend	