

REFLECTION FOR THIS WEEK

In the Gospel of Mark we meet one of the few people who receive healing from Jesus who is actually named – a blind man named Bartimaeus. Only Mark names him, but the writer gives us none of his history. All we know is that he is blind, he is a beggar, and he is sitting beside the road in Jericho. However, what happens when Jesus passes by is the real point of the story. As a result of his shouting, Jesus calls him near and in response he throws off his cloak and goes to Jesus. In the New Testament the cloak is often a symbol for the person (which is why Paul instructs us to "put on Christ" in Galatians 3:27). So here, Mark is telling us that Bartimaeus is about to become a new being. Then when Jesus heals him, we read that he followed Jesus on the way. The way is one of the terms for the new community of believers (followers of the way – see Acts 22:4). So here, Mark is describing Bartimaeus as a new believer. The point that Mark is trying to make is that Bartimaeus' healing is not just about his eyes. It's about his life, his whole person, his relationship with God, and his connection with his community. Where before he was an outcast, he is now part of the community of faith. Where before he was broken and rejected, now he is healed and included. It's a wonderful parable of restoration – and an invitation to us to be restored in a similar way. Where do you need to become a new person on the way today?

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