

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Bartimaeus is an adult, but, as a blind man, an adult without power. Like a helpless child, he must sit around, keeping out of the way, while others decide what will happen to him. His situation could be that of many a three-year-old, and so could his response to it: tired of having no control over what happens in his life, he begins simply hollering from his place on the sidelines, and nothing will make him stop. The “grownups,” the people with power, go right on with their affairs as if he were not there; when the noise reaches the definite nuisance level they turn on him. “*Would you please stop that noise?! I’m trying to sleep/study/talk/get some work done.*” “Don’t pester us. We’ll listen to you after the guests leave. If you don’t stop it, you’ll have to go to your room.” Nobody has noticed what it is he is actually saying; nobody cares. To them it’s just noise.

Jesus is the only one who, we are told, does not cooperate in this scenario, this casual, thoughtless robbing of Bartimaeus’ human dignity. Bartimaeus is yelling, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” and Jesus’ response is, “Tell him to come here.” Then, face to face with Bartimaeus, he asks the question that restores him his humanity: “What do you want?” Anybody would think it was obvious what the blind man wants—he wants to be “normal,” like us. Why bother to ask him? Why not just do it for him, if you have the power? It would save a little time, enable Jesus to stay on schedule, get back to what he was doing before he was interrupted ... But Jesus will not be co-opted. He will treat Bartimaeus, while still blind, as a human being, with the opportunity to speak for himself: he will not read his mind or run his life.

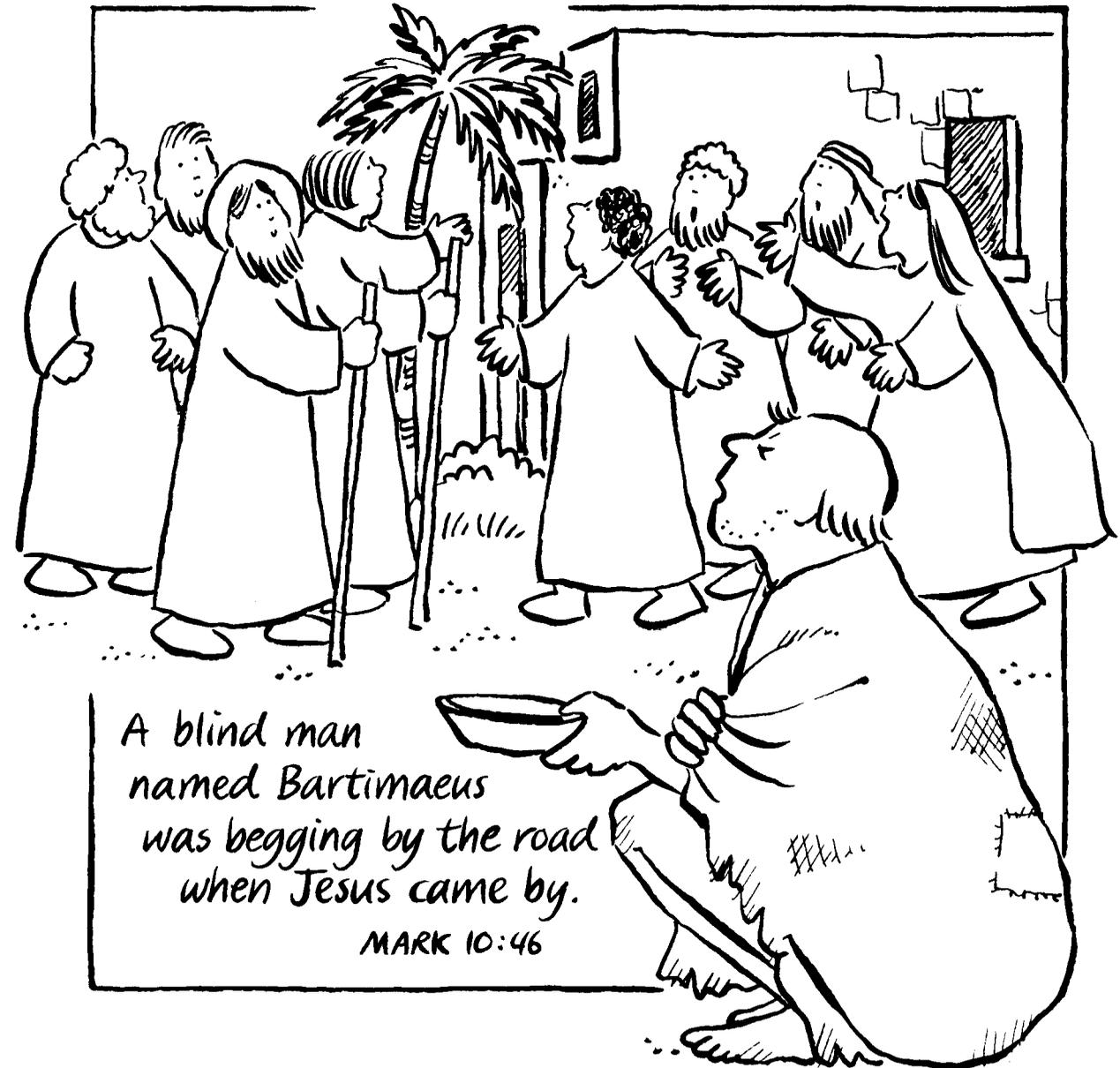
It’s so easy for the powerful, the “grownups,” to rob the powerless of their humanity. It’s easy to ignore them completely, or, in a burst of benevolence, to set out to give them a present without first asking whether that is even what they want. It’s easy to be distracted by Jesus’ power to heal physically, and not notice the other healing he offered, that we too can offer: the healing gift of seeing the helpless as human beings like ourselves.

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Year B
PROPER 25
TRACKS 1 and 2



A blind man
named Bartimaeus
was begging by the road
when Jesus came by.

MARK 10:46

Bartimaeus shouted to Jesus, "Son of David! Help me!"

People nearby told Bartimaeus to be quiet.



But Bartimaeus kept calling to Jesus.

Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted. Bartimaeus said, "I want to see!"



Jesus said, "God has given you your sight."



The people around Bartimaeus thought he was just a nuisance. They didn't care if anybody helped him or not. They thought Jesus wouldn't want to bother with him either. But Bartimaeus didn't give up. He thought Jesus would listen and care. And he was right.



Shut your eyes. What can you see? What do you think Bartimaeus could see when he was blind? Draw it.



What do you like best to look at? Draw what you think Bartimaeus wanted to look at most of all.