

What Do I Want the Lord to Do for Me?

Intro. Do you remember the story of Aladdin and his magic lamp? It is one of many in a collection of stories from the Middle East sometimes called, “One Thousand and One Arabian Nights.” There have been several movie versions. A young man finds an old oil lamp and discovers a “genie,” a spirit imprisoned in the lamp who grants the finder three wishes. In most of the stories, people waste their wishes on silly things. Bartimaeus meets more than a genie in a bottle and doesn’t waste *his* wish.

I. The Lord and his apostles are still on the road to Jerusalem, passing through Jericho, fifteen miles northeast. It was a major road to and from the holy city, heavily used by people making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. A blind man could hear a lot of news

sitting and listening to people passing. He had heard about a man called Jesus, from Nazareth, who was a powerful teacher. But more to Bartimaeus’ interest, he heard he could heal people. On learning it was him, he was not about to lose this opportunity for regaining his sight; he began to shout. There was *no way* they could have shut him up. When called, he quickly came to Jesus.

The question the Lord asked Bartimaeus was the same question he asked James and John in last week’s gospel. Bartimaeus had thought about it for a long time, probably *every* day. There was no hesitation, “Master, that I may see.” If only the disciples had asked the Lord to cure *their* blindness about his suffering, death and resurrection. Because he showed faith in the Lord, he found not only healing, but also salvation.

Concl. Bartimaeus didn't ask for money or food or a place to live. It was much simpler than that: *he just wanted to see*. To marvel at a sunset; possibly to look lovingly at the face of his wife and children. By contrast, James and John who asked for the best seats in the kingdom should have been ashamed. Some of the silly things *we* have asked God for should make *us* turn red with embarrassment. Who hasn't asked for God's help on a test they didn't study for? Or a presentation at work not prepared? So, what *should* we ask the Lord to do for us? Some short-term, fleeting fancy that we will want to exchange next week? Or something enduring like love, wisdom, patience, healing, world peace. Of course God is not like a genie in a magic lamp. We can't just ask him to grant us three wishes. But He has a wish for us; just one: faith that heals and saves

us. Bartimaeus found it on a dusty road outside Jericho and it led to the Lord. Sometimes healing and faith find us on the road of our everyday life too. Take courage, the Lord is calling us too. Let's not waste our wish.

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