

123 STORY TIME !

JERICO, THE CITY OF PALM TREES

Have you ever heard of the city of palm trees, one of the oldest cities in the world? Today's history will take us there. Imagine a city in the middle of the desert. After an exhausting journey in a dry landscape, arid, under an overwhelming heat, the travelers discover a pretty city in a green oasis with springs, palm trees, fruit trees, a pleasant temperature, comfortable houses. They arrive in Jericho, the perfect place to quench your thirst, refresh yourself, rest; Jericho, the dream city! In Jesus' time, many rich people lived there. There were also unhappy people like this man whose story we are going to tell. You will see, sometimes a meeting is enough, an occasion that we grab that makes everything change. But, I'm not telling you more. Pay close attention and you can answer the question: Why did Bartimaeus keep shouting?

THE BLIND BARTIMEUS



The city of Jericho is surrounded by walls. To enter or leave it, you must pass through its imposing doors. There is a continual coming and going of men, women, children, merchants, visitors from foreign countries. There are also animals, caravans of camels heavily loaded with all kinds of goods, donkeys and sheep. In short, lots of colors, smells, noises, agitation.

A man sits there by the road side near the gate, that's his usual place:



- I hope passers-by will be generous, he says to himself. If they could give me a few coins that would allow me to buy a small piece of bread and maybe a piece of cheese, or a few figs. Oh! He doesn't get much, but it's the only way for him to have enough to get some food:

- Please! Please! Sir! Madam! a small coin! Please! Have mercy on a poor blind man!



This is what he repeats all day long, holding out his hand towards the strangers he hears walking, talking, discussing, arguing sometimes. They rarely pay attention to him because he's not interesting. He is dirty and even rather repulsive with his old torn coat. They jostle him and rebuff him. From time to time, someone says "Hello!" speaks a few words of comfort or throws a coin in his beggar's bowl, giving him a little courage. For years, Bartimaeus lives miserably, spending his days waiting for a generous person to have mercy on him. He waits and waits again for the day to pass, and tomorrow it will be the same.

Oh! He has time to ponder on everything he hears from this noisy crowd. He learns the news, what is happening in Jericho, but also in Jerusalem and in the surrounding villages. There is a name that keeps coming back often in conversations it is Jesus'. People talk about the miracles he does, about the anger of religious leaders who are jealous. Some believe in him, others say "he's an impostor, he deceives the people", but those who have been healed say "He is the messiah! Glory, glory to God!"



All this interests Bartimaeus. He thinks. Miracles, but only God can do miracles! Would Jesus be the one God promised to send? Would he be the messiah, the promised savior?

- Ah! If only He could come here, he sighs, I believe He would heal me too, but He's not in Jericho!

That day, he suddenly hears a hubbub that makes him think that a large crowd is approaching. He asks the first passers-by:

- What's going on? I hear a lot of people coming, what a noise!
- It is Jesus of Nazareth who is arriving with a large crowd following him! Explains somebody.

Jesus of Nazareth! These words swirl in his head.

- Jesus! Jesus! Have mercy on me! He exclaims immediately.



- Oh! But who's that noisy guy, say some. Won't he stop screaming like that!
 - Hey! You! Haven't you finished! Stop!
 - Shut up! That's enough! Miserable that you are! Can't you be quiet!
 - If you don't stop, we'll have a word with you!
- They rebuff him, threaten him to make him stop, but nothing helps. Bartimaeus cries louder and louder

- Jesus! Jesus! I know you are the promised savior, have mercy on me!

He is determined to take this opportunity to ask Him for help. No one can stop him.

- Jesus, Jesus! Jesus of Nazareth! Have mercy on me.

Jesus hears the cries of the unhappy man. He stops.

- Bring him over! He says.

The message is passed on to the blindman:

- Take courage, Bartimaeus! Get up Jesus is calling you!



With a leap, the blind man gets up, throws away his old beggar's coat and rushes to Jesus.

- What do you want me to do for you? Jesus asks him
- Lord! Make me see, heal me!
- You will have what you have asked of me, Jesus answers. Because you believe that I can do it, I will heal you.

At this moment, Bartimaeus can see. The miracle occurs in response to his faith.



Will he now return to his miserable life? No! He joins the crowd following Jesus and all together, they continue their journey praising and glorifying God who works wonders.

1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



You saw how they wanted to prevent Bartimaeus from asking Jesus to help him, but he was not discouraged. He kept on and on still shouting, begging, despite the nasty words and threats.

Why? This is what we asked you: Why did Bartimaeus continue to yell? Because he believed Jesus was the promised Savior. He was convinced that Jesus had the power to heal him, to get him out of his sad situation. It is because of his faith that Jesus answered him and healed him.

This story is really an encouragement for you and for me. Do not let us stop or get discouraged. Let us keep on believing in Jesus and praying to him.

I suggest that you reread this account in chapter 10 of the Gospel of Mark.

4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



We all meet people who want to discourage us, stop us in our walk with the Lord. Bartimaeus' example is a strong encouragement to persevere against all odds. Our perseverance will be up to our faith.

By reminding our children of this story, by sharing with them our experiences of perseverance, we help them deal with difficult times.