

What Are We Asking Jesus to Do?

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Spring is erupting all around. Skies are blue, grass is green, and birds are singing a cheerful tune. This refreshing and happy time of new life has taken on a more somber tone as we shelter in place to counter-act the deadly coronavirus.

Worry and anxiety are daily visitors as we keep an ear tuned to the news. We take comfort in hearing from our state and national leaders as they calmly tell us how to protect ourselves. We agonize over our finances and find creative ways to celebrate birthdays, graduations and weddings. We're living as normally as we can in less than normal circumstances.

For me, these concerning days have re-enforced my need to read the Bible for reassurance. This week, during an online study with my church family, the pastor read from Mark 11:46-52. In this story, Jesus and his entourage of disciples came upon Jericho where a blind beggar named Bartimaeus was sitting.

When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was near, he shouted to him, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!"

Even though others in the crowd tried to quieten him, he only shouted louder, trying to get Jesus' attention. Jesus heard him and asked the man to be brought to him.

Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"O teacher, I want to see!"

Jesus said, "It is done, your faith has healed you."

Jesus surely knew what Bartimaeus wanted from him, and yet, he wanted the man to express his personal need. So, in these days of crisis, what is it we are asking Jesus to do? How are we expressing our need to Jesus?

I've long realized the importance of having a close and personal relationship with Jesus, but this question stopped me in my tracks. This powerful message has hung with me all week. What is it that I'm asking of Jesus?

In the days since this question arose, I've pondered if what I'm asking of Jesus is adequate. Is it acceptable? In the last few days, I've come to believe that King David may hold some of the answers to my questions in the Book of Psalms.

One of the more familiar passages is the 23rd Psalm. As we consider these awkward days of self-isolation, perhaps it is timely for us to revisit this beautiful poem and make it our personal

prayer. The following is an exercise I learned about from a Bible study titled, *Walking in Fellowship with God: Disciple's Prayer Life*, written by T. W. Hunt and Catherine Walker. Their suggestion is to express our personal relationship with God and how is caring of for us by rewriting this well-known passage as our own prayer. Here is David's version (NIV):

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
²He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
³he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

As an example, this is the outcome of my personal rewrite:

Bobbie's 23rd Psalms

The Lord is my master and teacher
My desire is to love and serve him.
He guides me where He needs me most
He opens my heart and my ears to listen

He reminds me that my life is for His Glory
My words and actions a reflection of Him
Even when I falter and fail
He reassures me that He is nearby
Through the Holy Spirit, He will prevail

You have seared your words upon my soul
You share your wisdom when I seek it
My heart is overwhelmed by your glorious gifts
Your love and mercy go with me each day of my life
I want to be like you, to serve you and be with you forever.

This prayerful exercise helped me reflect upon what I want Jesus to do for me. It has also given me a sense of calm during this very turbulent time in our world. As we encounter Jesus each day of this coming Holy Week, I pray you'll have a similar sense of peace through the grace of our loving father.

On Maundy Thursday, let us recall His teaching during the Lords Supper – that we love one another as He first loved us. On Good Friday, we remember the ghastly death of our savior as our hearts await the gift of the promised resurrection. Let us rejoice in knowing, Easter is coming!