

“Getting Unstuck”
Message by DD Adams
Kemptown Providence U.M. Church
Pack 369 Sunday
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The gospel lesson is taken from Mark, chapter 10, verses 46 through 52.

⁴⁶ Jesus and his followers came into Jericho. As Jesus was leaving Jericho, together with his disciples and a sizable crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, Timaeus’ son, was sitting beside the road. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was there, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, show me mercy!”

⁴⁸ Many scolded him, telling him to be quiet, but he shouted even louder, “Son of David, show me mercy!” ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him forward.” They called the blind man, “Be encouraged! Get up! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his coat to the side, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Teacher, I want to see.” ⁵² Jesus said, “Go, your faith has healed you.” At once he was able to see, and he began to follow Jesus on the way. This is God’s word for God’s people. Please pray with me.

Dearest Creator God, who consistently points us his magnificence and continues to shape us, who desires our happiness and peace and that all our relationships be blessed. Comfort us so we might be transparent and share our

hearts with you. Show us what we need the most in our lives. Take away our timid asking and help us to not hide our struggles and pain from you. You already know us better than we know ourselves. Help us to be specific in our asking and to wait expectantly with faith for you to answer. Amen.

Here's the narrative again from Mark's gospel with added insight. Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho. A blind man named Bartimaeus who was a beggar sat alongside the road—probably waiting for Jesus to pass by. He was hungry, lonely, and was an outcast because—*well*—he'd been cast off.

Bartimaeus was making a lot of noise to get Jesus' attention, but the huge crowd continually told him to shut up. He didn't care, he just cried out all the more despite the nasty comments of all the naysayers. He needed Jesus to have mercy on him, and regardless of all the noise and confusion Jesus heard his cry.

Jesus told the crowd to bring him, and the crowd said, "Take heart; get up, Jesus is calling you." So Bartimaeus jumped up! Flung off his coat and faced Jesus boldly! Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus said, ". . . let me see again." Again. It sounds like Bartimaeus had his sight years ago, but lost it. Now he wanted it back. He had had enough of this dark life, and he was tired of dealing with all its difficulties.

So Bartimaeus told Jesus what he wanted, not in general, but specifically. He told him spot on what he wanted. He already had the hope to believe Jesus would

heal him or he wouldn't have cried out again and again. And Bartimaeus knew; he couldn't do what he needed done in his own strength. So he cried out to the one who pours out mercy freely, who has the healing power to change our lives and give us new sight.

Let's take a moment at this place along the road for ourselves. Do you ever feel like you just can't find the solution to a problem you have in your behavior? It's like—you can see the consequences of the problem, but you just can't find the solution and stop acting it out. You want to find the root of the problem causing the trouble, but it's beyond you and your ability to fix it—just like Bartimaeus.

Bartimaeus believed that Jesus could heal him, but would he? He'd heard about his mercy and healing power, and there was no doubt, Jesus already had given Bartimaeus hope and faith. So Bartimaeus had to speak up. He had to get Jesus' attention! He had to petition and cry out because in his own power, things just weren't working.

It's like getting stuck. You just can't seem to get unstuck and get free. And you know, until you do get free, this "thing" is going to mess you up, tie you up, and make your life very hard.

So let me ask you. What keeps you from shaking this monkey off your back? You can't do it right? It seems impossible. Maybe it's that bad habit or that bad attitude. [SHOW PUMPKIN ATTITUDES] It's like a rut you get in. You're free

for a while, but then it grips and pulls you again back into its hold? Maybe it feels harmless at first. You tell yourself you'll get out. It seems like a good idea at the time, and gee whiz, nobody's perfect right? Maybe it's laziness or a coldness toward others. Maybe it's uncaring attitudes or just an overwhelming sense of selfishness.

You can tell me about it if you want . . . but who you really need to talk to is Jesus. You need to get specific. Tell him exactly what you think you need! You're not trapped. No matter what you've done or what's been done to you . . . these things do not define who you are and they don't have to plan your future either! We can have freedom. We don't need to live in regret and shame, we don't need to live in fear because that's water under the bridge with Jesus.

But the thing is this, don't *ever* let anybody *and especially yourself* tell you that you can't change, because that's when you'll give in and give up. Your only limitation is when you leave Jesus out of your troubles and selfishness; this is probably the hardest thing to learn—don't let go of God—ever.

So you need to get unstuck. So go to God. Every time you're tempted to go back to your bad habits, go to God. And every time you go to God your faith gets more excellent. And as your faith becomes more excellent, you'll get more and more unstuck. Know this. Bartimaeus didn't cry out in vain. When he throws off

his coat he comes to Jesus. When he calls Jesus “my teacher”; that’s when he asks Jesus to see. And when he receives his sight, immediately he follows Jesus.

So what’s the so what of this message? It’s this. Getting Unstuck means you need Jesus to heal your stuckness. You need him to fix what you can’t. So come to Jesus. Tell him what you need. Get specific. And most importantly, don’t give up or give in to the naysayer voices in your head or all those people that say you won’t get free. Change your friends if they pull you down, and make Jesus your best friend who has mercy and power to set you free.

Let’s pray. God of all mercy, move in our hearts and minds today. We cry out to you like Bartimaeus did, “Show me mercy!” There’s been times we’ve all seen God intervene, but here we are again Lord, crying out for mercy. Lord work in us a steadfast spirit that doesn’t give up or give in on you or ourselves. Help us to fix our eyes on you and regain our sight. Encourage us to surrender our will, to press on and keep our eyes on you. Amen.