

The Blind Guy Sees. Do You?

Mark 10:46-52

Lent 2, March 4, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

God promised David that David's throne would be an eternal throne. In other words God promised David that David would always have an heir sitting on the throne of Israel. The throne of Israel would be established forever. Old Testament scholars like to call this the Davidic Dynasty. Call it what you will for many years God prevailed in keeping this promise.

In later years when Solomon was reigning over Israel, God did add a caveat to His promise. The eternal establishment of David's throne was contingent upon whether or not David's heirs would keep the Lord's commandments.

David died and was buried. His Son, Solomon, reigned in his place. Solomon's Son, Rehoboam, reigned in Solomon's place. Rehoboam's son reigned in his place and so on. Eventually the people of Israel went astray. They worshipped idols. And it was usually the king that led them into idolatry. Many people simply do what they see the king doing. They don't know any better. They are like sheep. If the king worships the Lord then the people worship the Lord. If the king worships an idol, then the people worship the same idol. Since the kings were no longer keeping the Lord's commandments, God sent the prophets to them to warn them away from their sins. It was not just any commandment that the kings were breaking, it was the main commandment.

Some of the kings heeded the warnings of the prophets. Those who did so kept the kingdom going for more years as God kept His promise to David that David's throne would be established forever. Eventually the kings were so insistent upon idolatry that God had had enough. The king is not keeping the commandments of the Lord. God is no longer obligated to His promise to David to maintain David's throne forever. The Lord brought Babylon against the people. Babylon conquered Israel, burned Jerusalem, and seized the descendent of David. Finally, after many years there was no descendent of David on the throne at all.

God is just. The kings were not keeping His commandments. Since they were not keeping His commandments God did not have to establish David's throne eternally. But that is not what the Lord told David. The Lord told Solomon and his descendents that they had to keep the commandments in order to receive an everlasting kingdom. The Lord did not originally say that to David. When the Lord promised David an everlasting kingdom, the Lord promised it unconditionally. He simply told David that He would not take His love from David as He had done with Saul before David. The Lord promised David that David's throne would be an eternal one and David's kingdom would last forever.

I suppose the Lord modified His promise to Solomon because after God promised David an eternal kingdom, David committed adultery and murder. But nevertheless the promise was given. The hope of an eternal kingdom was still alive in Israel even though after Zedekiah they had no formal king. The line of David did not cease or go extinct. While they were not sitting on the throne, the line was still there.

All the line of David had to do was produce an heir who would keep all of God's commandments. Once the line of David produced such an heir God would make that heir's throne eternal. The kingdom would become eternal at the same time. You have to take care with such promises. You need to know who the line of David is and you need to know which heir of David is keeping the commandments of the Lord. Whoever that heir is is the one who is officially *the* son of David. He is the Son of David par excellence. All who are members of His kingdom will live as long as His kingdom does.

If the kingdom is eternal the subjects of the kingdom are also eternal. One must only have the eyes to see the Son of David when He comes.

Did you know that Bartimaeus is the first person in Mark's Gospel to call Jesus the Son of David? Matthew and Luke talk about Jesus being the Son of David, but even in them Bartimaeus and his associates are the first people to cry out to Jesus and call Him the Son of David. In fact Bartimaeus is so convinced that Jesus is the Son of David that he keeps on saying it after the crowds rebuke him and tell him to be silent. Bartimaeus calls Jesus "Jesus" once. He calls Jesus "Son of David" twice. When Bartimaeus wants mercy, he wants mercy from the Son of David.

Jesus is headed out of Jericho when He has His run in with Bartimaeus. He is heading for Jerusalem. Bartimaeus acclaims Jesus the Son of David. And immediately after this the very next thing that Mark reports to us is the events of Palm Sunday. After Bartimaeus acclaims Jesus the Son of David, the people with palm branches in their hands shout, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David."

Jesus is riding on a donkey when He enters Jerusalem to these shouts. He is riding on a draught animal the same way that Solomon rode into Jerusalem on the mule of his father, David, and everyone shouted about Solomon, "Long live the king!"

You all know that the events of Palm Sunday are simply a prelude to His crucifixion. And there is no discussion in Mark's Gospel about whether or not Jesus is king until He is put to trial and crucified. Then it is clear that He is king.

When Jesus rises from the dead and ascends into heaven, He is seated on His throne at the right hand of God the Father almighty. No one knew that the throne of David would be in heaven, but there it is at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus is the Son of David. Jesus has kept the commandments of the Lord. Jesus has established David's throne and David's kingdom forever. The subjects of His kingdom will live forever. And Bartimaeus, the blind guy, is the one who could see it.

The crowds could not see it. They rebuke Bartimaeus. They tell him to be silent. But Bartimaeus is stubborn about the whole thing. He will not let the crowd stop him. And why not? Jesus is walking by. He is headed to His crucifixion. Who knows where He will be after that. Will He ever come back to Jericho again? Now is the moment Bartimaeus has been waiting for. If the Son of David can establish an everlasting kingdom, then Jesus is the judge in that kingdom and Bartimaeus requests what everyone needs from their judges: mercy. "Have mercy on me."

If Bartimaeus gives in to the demands of the crowd and becomes silent, then he will have left his opportunity go by. His one big chance to talk to the Son of David in His court will have been lost. Then will there be mercy for Bartimaeus? The crowds cannot see that Jesus is the Son of David or they would be praying for mercy from Him as well, but Bartimaeus can see it. This is his chance and he cannot allow a bunch of blind people in a crowd keep him away from the mercy of the One who can give it.

Jesus comports Himself as a royal would. He tells the crowd, "Go and summon him." The crowd tells Bartimaeus, "Take heart, get up, He is calling you." Like any royal Jesus asks what He can do for Bartimaeus and Bartimaeus request his sight back.

If Jesus is the establisher of the eternal kingdom, then He is by definition the One who will restore all things. You cannot have an eternal kingdom in the midst of a creation that is subject to decay. Thus Jesus is the One who comes to restore. He will restore all things, but Bartimaeus seizes his chances

and asks for his restoration right away. And Jesus gives it to him. The restorer of all things restores Bartimaeus. And Jesus declares to Bartimaeus the full restoration of everything, "Go, your faith has saved you."

I submit to you that Bartimaeus could see even before he could see. He recognized about our Lord what no one else in the crowd recognized. Even though they could see, they were blind. Even though he was blind he could see. He recognized who Jesus is and what He had come to do.

Do you? Beware of your sight. It will deceive you. Beware of what you can see, because what you can see says that Jesus is not reigning and that He is not on the throne and that He will not restore all things. But the full restoration has not come. Do not be more ignorant than the crowd was. At least they told Bartimaeus to take courage.

In spite of what you see in politics or nature, in spite of what you think in your heart, Jesus is the Son of David. He has established His everlasting Kingdom for David His father. Have your mercy from Him. Your faith will save you also.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.