

Sermon preached by Rev Mark Charleston at the Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney on Wednesday 27th June 2007. Reading: Mark 10:17-31, 46-52
Topic: "Are You in the Way"

As adults, we often see the 'What' of a story, but miss the 'How'. **HOW** a story is told!

Mark is a terrific story-teller. He is not writing a text-book. He is not sending an e-mail to us! Nor scripting a newspaper article. He is telling us a story – a true story – engaging us, captivating us, by showing us the lives of people – what they are like, what they say and what they do.

Today we are smack in the very core of Mark's story. And one thing is clear: Jesus is on the move!

From Chapter 8 to Chapter 10 - between Caesarea Philippi and Jerusalem - Jesus is "in the way". "In the way" is the unifying idea of Chapters 8 to 10. The big focus of Chapters 8 to 10 is that Jesus is "in the way". In the way to the Kingdom of God!

The big question in this part of the Gospel for Mark is:

What does it mean to follow Jesus 'in the way'?

Now Mark could have listed a whole set of theoretical points! He could have written a disciple's job description. But he doesn't! That wouldn't be a story! He **shows us** what it means to follow Jesus "in the way"!

And he does it by engaging us with real people.

Today, we look at two such people. I'll call them Man No.1 & Man No.2. Two minor characters in Mark's story that pack a major punch!

MAN NO.1 (10:17-31)

Man No.1 is an outstanding kind of guy!

He doesn't merely walk up to Jesus - **He runs!**

He falls on his knees before Jesus. He calls Jesus "Good". He earnestly asks a deep & pious theological question!

Jesus doesn't have to go catching this one! He doesn't run from Jesus – he runs to him! He's jumped into the net! Jesus doesn't have to cast it! **From one angle, he's the sort of person you'd want in your church!**

Then we hear Jesus' demand in verse 21. **[Read verse 21]**. And then we are met with a shocking response – a response from the man that takes us completely by surprise! **[Read verse 22]**.

You see, this man had a lot to lose!

MARK IS SHOWING US: You cannot be a believer without being a disciple!

Unless Jesus is Lord of ego, pride, jealousy, hate, lust, greed, everything – we cannot enter the Kingdom! Unless we receive the Kingdom of God like a little child we cannot enter the Kingdom! **We cannot justify ourselves!**

MAN NO. 2 (10:46-52)

And so we come to Man No. 2:

[Read verses 46-47]

Man No.2 couldn't be a bigger contrast to Man No.1! And Mark means him to be!

He cannot run into the way and fall on his knees before Jesus!

He doesn't ask a pious, theological question!

He sits by the way – with his only possession in the world (his cloak) and cries out for mercy!

Notice what Jesus says in **verse 52**. The literal translation is: “Your faith has saved you.” More is taking place here than physical healing. It's a spiritual healing. **A real relationship of trust in Jesus!**

And notice how “blind” Bartimaeus responds. He receives his sight and follows Jesus “on the way” – literally “in the way”.

Do you see how Mark has crafted these stories? He's showing us what true discipleship is like! He's showing us what it means to follow Jesus “in the way”!

We read this story and we want to be like Bartimaeus – and not like the rich man. Like Bartimaeus, who is spiritually perceptive and picks up his cross to follow Jesus in the way! He is the disciple par excellence in Mark's Gospel – he's the ideal disciple! No wonder we know his name and not the name of the rich man!

Mark's message to us today in the midst of his powerful narrative is this:

**To be believers, we must also be disciples.
Following in the way of Jesus our King and Saviour!**