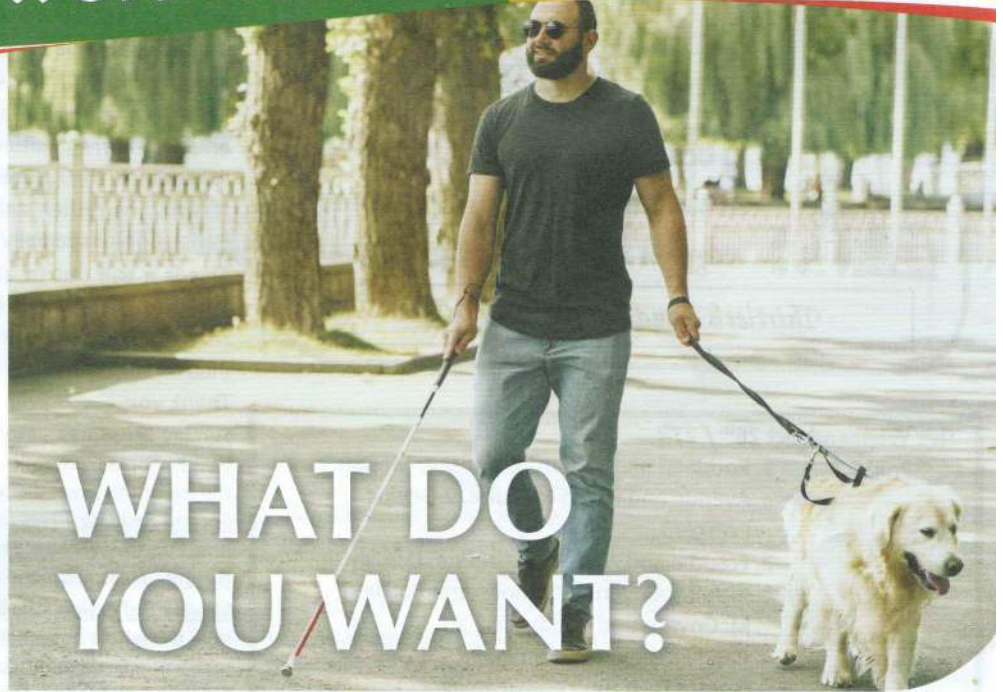




Down the centuries, eminent spiritual writers have agreed that desires are of great importance in the Christian life. In doing so, they have pointed to Gospel texts which make it clear that Jesus sometimes focused on such desires in his ministry. In Mark 10:49-51 we are told that when Jesus met Bartimaeus the blind man he stopped and said, 'Call him.' So, they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside – i.e. everything that might be a barrier between him and Jesus – he jumped to his feet and came to the Lord. 'What do you desire me to do for you?' Jesus asked him. In marked contrast to the cripple at the pool of Bethesda, who couldn't answer 'yes' when Jesus asked him if he wanted to be healed (Jn 5:1-15), Bartimaeus declared immediately, 'Rabbi, I want to see.' There is reason to believe that he was not only asking Jesus to open the eyes of his physical body but also the eyes of his heart, so that he might see Jesus by faith. In the event he was not only healed of his infirmity, he believed in the Lord and became his disciple and 'followed Jesus along the road' (Mk 10:52).



Why did Jesus focus in this way on people's deep down desires? He answered the question himself when he said, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him' (Jn 6:44). The Father draws us to Jesus by means of our deep-down desires. God can use our sense of neediness, whether spiritual or physical, to attract us to the person of Jesus by stirring up a desire for his assistance. That said, not all desires are necessarily graced ones that God wants to answer. For instance, when Jesus asked the mother of two sons what she wanted, she said that she desired that Jesus would command that one son might sit at his right and the

other on his left in the kingdom of God. Jesus refused to satisfy her desire, presumably because he discerned that it was prompted by her worldly ambition rather than a touch of God's grace (cf. Mt 20:21-23). Imagine Jesus is looking at you as he looked at Bartimaeus, and hear him asking you the question, 'What do you desire me to do for you?'

— Pat Collins

**Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

**For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Ps 19:6)

**We will ring out our joy at your saving help
and exult in the name of our God.**

Prayer after Communion

Prayer after Communion

May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray,
perfect in us what lies within them,
that what we now celebrate in signs
we may one day possess in truth.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Reflection

Imagine Jesus looking at you, when you do not see him, and let yourself hear him ask you, 'What do you want me to do for you?'



Lesson

Bartimaeus believes: his faith saves him.



Prayer

O Lord, comfort all who suffer, especially those who have lost hope, for whom every new day is a new ordeal. Console them, Lord, and give them hope. Amen.

