

Dear members and friends of SEC

Some thoughts based on a recent morning sermon. Remember how blind Bartimaeus cried out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' It is a prayer that pleads and depends upon the mercy of God, and mercy alone. No-one who ever prays this kind of prayer from the heart will ever be turned away by Jesus. Have you prayed that prayer yourself? You will do so, you must do so, if you realise, firstly, that you are in great need of mercy and, secondly, that Jesus Christ responds to cries for mercy. When Bartimaeus calls Jesus 'Son of David', he is addressing him as the Messiah, as Christ, as Israel's Saviour.

The crowds try to shut Bartimaeus up. They can't be done with this blind beggar crying out – what shame, what embarrassment! Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem; it is clear that the crowd that is gathering is gearing up for the triumphal entry. But having been put off and silenced by the crowds, Bartimaeus does not give up.

True faith doesn't fall at the first hurdle. It persists and perseveres. There is much in this present life that will put you off seeking Jesus for yourself. There are those who tell you that there is no God. There are those who tell you that we cannot believe that the Bible is true. There are those who tell you that God doesn't answer your prayers. There is your own conscience telling you that it's all a waste of time, that you're too bad, or God doesn't care. But true faith rests upon the promises of the Bible. Therefore the silencing of the crowd only makes this man more bold and free.

Hindrances to prayer and praise – from all directions - are very great, but God's grace and mercy are even greater. Jesus is carrying an indescribably great burden of his own. But for that reason it is fitting that he is called David's Son; he is like David a Man of Sorrows. He knows what it is to cry out to his Father in great anguish. Many of David's Psalms, in which there are pleas and cries for mercy, are best found on the lips of Jesus himself. But he is not only David's Son; he is also David's Lord. He is the hearer of David and the hearer of everyone who cries out to him for mercy. Jesus says – and this is a promise – 'whoever comes to me I will never cast out' (John 6:37).

Your brother in the Lord Jesus

Paul