

**Sermon: “When Faith Made a Person Well”**  
**by Pastor Chris Eng**  
**Lectionary Text: Mark 10: 46 - 52, N.R.S.V.**  
**Sunday, October 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom**  
**Kailua Christian Church UCC**

Introduction: What’s the first thing we say to someone? “How are you?” And the response is usually, “I’m fine,” or “I’m good.” Depending on how well we know someone and if there is time to talk, there may be the sharing of how things really are. Mark’s gospel focuses on being well. We know there is wellness of our body, our mind, our emotions, and our spirit. Can faith really make us well? We must define what faith is and where it comes from. The story of Bartimaeus is inspirational until we face a time when we are searching for wellness ourselves.

**Community.** Faith resides in a community. The early beginnings of Kailua Christian Church began with members of Makiki Christian Church. According to Hebrews 11, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” The history of KCC reveals how faith grows. When someone is sick there is the hope for healing. In Mark 8: 22 some people brought a blind man to Jesus in Bethsaida. Here, a community acted in good faith. But in Mark 10:26, in Jericho, Jesus’ disciples tried to get Bartimaeus who was blind to be quiet when he cried out, “Son the David, have mercy on me.” A faith community usually helps us but there are times when this doesn’t happen. We learn to accept that we don’t always know what is best or how to respond to someone or a situation.

**Jesus.** Faith resides in the person of Jesus. We might wonder how Bartimaeus found faith in Jesus initially. So, we focus on the life of Jesus of Nazareth and how he lived with faith in God and how he taught his disciples to have faith in him. Did someone tell you about Jesus and how did you come to have faith in him as the Christ? Here, Jesus as the one who heals is emphasized. Jesus heals the blind man in Mark 8 and blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10. It seems that Jesus could heal us too. Sometimes we are healed but often, we acknowledge our humanness and have to search for another way to get well.

**Us.** To be well is something we all wish for. When someone asks us how we are, the best scenario is for us to say, “We’re fine, we’re good, we’re well.” But what if we aren’t? This story suggests that all we have to do is to ask Jesus to heal us, and we will be healed. But from experience, we know that it is not that simple. So, what can we learn from today’s text? Perhaps being well and being healed are two separate things. We find that Jesus first tells Bartimaeus that his faith has made him well and immediately he regained his sight. Is it possible that even if he remained unable to see, he could experience wellness? This is the challenge of today if when we pray for healing, it’s not forthcoming. So, we have to accept the medical diagnosis. This story ends with Bartimaeus following Jesus as his disciple. We could argue that anyone who is healed by Jesus would certainly follow him. But what if Jesus did not heal him? What happens if we pray for healing and we’re not healed? In this case, it takes more faith to continue to believe in Jesus and live as a disciple. (“the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”)

**Conclusion:** Since March of 2020, we may have learned of a family member, a friend, or

someone at work or church becoming ill. There have also been those who have died. When we know someone who has gone to be with God, we may discover or have already known how this individual lived their life, whether they had faith, if they cared about others and their values are revealed in their actions. Today's focus is realizing that faith in Christ allows us to live well in the sense that we are able to face those difficult challenges that persist. There are those who live with grief every day, having lost a loved one. And there are those who live with pain every day, despite using all of their resources to lessen that pain. And there are those who live with regrets, brought on by guilt or carelessness or shame for having or not having done something.

This is real faith: to live well despite not having our prayers answered, finding out that we're human after all. I find hope in this story because there is always a community of faith like Kailua Christian Church UCC where individuals are led to the risen Christ, even when there are those who like his disciples who did not recognize his need to be heard by this Son of David. As a community of faith, it is important to share our concerns, our needs, our challenges. For then there is an opportunity to have this kind of faith that makes us well.

A Bidding Prayer as the Pastoral Prayer: the pastor will read a statement about which persons we are praying for, and the congregation will respond in unison by saying: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."

Pastor: Gracious and Loving God, we come before you this morning to offer our prayers for our church, our community, our state, our nation and the world. We pray for the members of Kailua Christian Church UCC and for each person's prayer request.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: We pray for the families of our members, especially what they may be experiencing.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: We pray for the friends of our church and for our friends and the challenges they face.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: We pray for the communities of Kailua and Kaneohe, that they will find support today.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: We pray for Hawaii, its people, its flora and fauna, that there is love for the aina.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: We pray for America, for compassion, understanding and unity.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: We pray for the world, that there may be peace and justice.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: Finally, we pray for our church, for Pastor Dale and for ourselves.

**People: "Hear our prayers, O Lord."**

Pastor: Amen.

**People: "Amen."**