

March 22 – Christ the Son of David –Matthew 20:29 -21:11
By Amanda A. Nevin

How many of you in your life have been introduced not necessarily by your name but by whose son/daughter you are “oh this is George’s Son, Oh you are so and so’s son/daughter? Or this is Bill’s son/daughter, Mary’s son/daughter, etc. What does it feel like when you have been introduced in this manner? Sometimes it is a source of honor and pride, especially if your parent has done something that you are proud of. Sometimes it might be shameful or embarrassing for some especially if a parent has done something wrong, think of someone who is incarcerated or has a notorious reputation, how would you feel if you were introduced as that person’s son/daughter. Sometime there are feelings of anger because, hey after all you are your own person with your own identity and name and you are someone more than just so and so’s daughter/son. What if you were the child of one of the following...(show slides); When we hear “these are the sons of **Abraham Lincoln**” we may think, sadness they died so young, tragic, heroic father, legacy, hard—must have been hard to have pressure put on them to be better, a leader, etc. or **Sons of Prince Charles**—future king of England, loss, stewards of helping others; polo; pride if you like the monarchy, indifference if you don’t; **Dale Earnhardt Sr. & Jr**; racing legacy, family traditions; **Martin Luther King Jr—Yolanda, Martin Luther III; Dexter Scott; Bernice.....** legacy of freedom, religious leader,

Traditionally in Jewish history a Hebrew name was a given name, followed by ben (son of) or bat (daughter of) followed by the person’s father or mother. To take it another step if they are a descendant of a particular clan like Aaron or Levi that name would then have that attached to the name: for example the Levites then are “ha-Levi.” Moses was a descendant of Levi so his name would have been Moses son of Amram from Levi. It wasn’t until probably the 10th or 11th century that Jewish family’s really began to take surnames. So what is important about understanding the title given to Jesus as the Son of David?

The blind men in our story call out to Jesus as the “Son of David.” And later when Jesus enters Jerusalem the crowds are shouting “hosanna to the Son of David” and worshipping this would be king. This title was to be reserved for the one who would come as the Messiah, the Savior of the people. The Messiah was to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David. In order for Jesus to be the promised messiah he had to be of the lineage of David. When David was on the throne he wanted to build God a place “to rest” or a sacred home. However the prophet Nathan informed David that it was not his to accomplish, rather God himself would give David a house that would last forever. In 2 Samuel 7:11a- 14a & 16, it says “Moreover the Lord declares to you (David) that the Lord will make you a house, when your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.” Israel believed that the promised Messiah was to come from the house of David, to be a Son of David and to reign forever on “David’s throne as King.” This is a messianic title, the blind men recognize that Jesus is the divine one.

In our story this morning the blind men call out to Christ. They cry “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David.” In that one cry they are making a proclamation about who Christ is, that Christ was

the long awaited deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets. This title that the blind men call out, expresses their sense of faith that this person is the Son of David, the Messiah who is now in their presence and they cannot hold back from calling out to him, by so doing they express the sense of deity, dominion and power that Christ had and by calling him son of David expressed their faith that he was the Messiah.

Who stands in the way of the blind men? The crowd, they try to silence them, in other words those who are following Jesus. Why did they try to silence these men? Perhaps it is cultural, after all they are beggars/outcasts, perhaps they misunderstood Jesus' teaching of discipleship, maybe they thought they were "protecting Jesus" from being bothered, after all he was a great man, important leader; maybe because it was a pride of place- they were enjoying the company of Jesus and did not want his attention to be deflected away from them. Sometimes Christ's followers are the greatest obstacles to others following him. We as the people of faith get blinded as well. We think we know what Christ wants of us and yet we don't seek to follow him with all our heart mind and soul, we "think we know what the scriptures tell us to do," but we don't stop and listen; we think that we know the mind of Christ because we have been a follower of Jesus for a long time but we have failed to go deeper in our faith through study, prayer, individually seeking to know more of the scriptures etc.; we think we know what Christ wants of our community because some person in either religious or politically authority has given us a word or two and we believe that it is gospel truth and we haven't run it through the lens of scripture, we take it on blind faith. We sometimes hinder people coming to faith because we lack humility in our own faith; we lack the ability to confess and say we are sorry and wrong, we don't admit that don't have all the answers; we think we have an "in" with the big guy because like the large crowd we have "followed" Jesus but when it comes right down to it, when we have been pressed by others to give a reason for our faith, or people have made fun of Christianity/Christians we have remained silent for fear. We are like the crowd who recognizes the Son of David shouting Hosanna one day, but then when faced with opposition we slowly dwindle away. Instead of proclaiming Jesus as the Son of David, we become like the crowd sushing ourselves/others so that people may not know we are true followers of Jesus.

But the blind men are undeterred; their faith stops Jesus in his tracks! The Son of David does not refrain from stopping to help poor blind persons, because he came to serve and not to be served, to seek and save the lost. Faith gets to Jesus, this is what Jesus wants to teach us! Faith in him gets to him, it is essential for who we are, faith! The blind men show themselves to be true confessors of Jesus to be true people of faith. Undeterred by the resistance of others, they are a model of faith to us, to be undeterred by the naysayers, those who would persecute us, those who would laugh at our witness; we are called to have faith and to profess to the world who Jesus is—the Son of David. Throughout the stories of the Gospels when someone has given Jesus a title, like Lord, Son of Man, Son of David, often Jesus would tell them to be quiet and to not reveal this "truth" to anyone. But for the first time when the blind men call out to Jesus as the Son of David, Jesus doesn't sush them and tell them to keep it quiet. For the first time this title, Son of David is accepted by Christ and he gives no command of silence, why? He is walking towards Jerusalem and his final days on earth. He now seems prepared to be known as the Messiah.

The time for silence is past. These men who call out to Jesus and receive their sight unlike their counterparts in chapter nine of Matthew's gospel who are silenced, no prohibition is put on them, the King is about to make his royal entry into Jerusalem as we see in the remainder of our scripture reading this morning. The blind men's cry anticipates the acclamation of the crowd a few days later. The crowd on Palm Sunday that cries out: "Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Jesus on the way toward his own death does not cease to be the Messiah who meets the needs of individuals. The Son of David is present among his people and compassionately delivers them from their literal darkness and then continues on to Jerusalem where his sacrificial death delivers all of humanity from an everlasting darkness. The Pharisees understood exactly what the people meant when they called Jesus Son of David, but unlike those who cried out in faith, the Pharisees were so blinded by their own pride that they couldn't see what the blind beggar could. The blind men could see what the religious elite could not, that Jesus was this long awaited promised Messiah, descendant of the great King of David. The irony in this part of the story is that those who first "see" Jesus on his journey towards the cross are those who are physically blind and those who can actually see are the ones who ultimately are blinded to the truth that stands right before them. The blind truly recognize Jesus as Lord and the Son of David.

Jesus promised that "whoever acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in Heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I will also deny before my Father in Heaven," (Matthew 10:32-34). A warning to the would be followers. If we profess ourselves to be followers of Jesus the Son of David, then we need to be like the Blind Men shouting, Lord have mercy on us, Son of David; ready to give an account of our belief. Jesus wants a relationship with all of us, if we believe that he is the Son of David, the Messiah, come to save the world then we are part of that salvation plan we are adopted in God's family and we become the children of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 6:18 it says "And I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters says the Lord Almighty." In Ephesians 1:5 it says (NLT) "God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ, this is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." These blind men represent faith in Christ, they trusted Christ with their greatest need and he healed them. They became children of God. God longs for us to be his children as well, to take on a new name—and to be adopted into God's kingdom. In the beginning I asked you what it felt like to be called "so and so's son/daughter? What does it mean to you to be called a son or daughter of the King, the Son/Daughter of Jesus Christ? Would your life be different if you learned to live into this title? Are we like the blind men filled with a sense of joy, hope, proclamation, peace, trust, faith knowing that you are adopted children of our Lord and Savior? Or are we more like the Pharisees who know Jesus, who recognize on the surface that Christ is the Son of David, but are blind to the truth that Jesus wants a personal relationship with each of us?