

“Love is patient...”

—1 Corinthians 13:4 (niv)

Timaeus’s son heard the birds react first.

The beating of pigeon wings pounding against dry air felt almost like a wave that vibrated right through his bony frame. Out of habit, he curled his legs tightly under him, and pulled up his beggar’s cloak until it partially covered his lap. He’d learned the hard way. Here on the road between New Jericho and Old Jericho, it was usually best to trust the birds. When they gave a warning, it was always for safety’s sake, always out of fear and anticipation. It was wise to take precautions if the flying ones suggested it, to avoid exposing his earthbound cloak and body to careless runners in a crowd.

These birds are survivors, he thought. Like me.

Bartimaeus let a breath loose itself slowly through cracking lips, listening for clues. His narrow back stiffened. There were sounds in the distance. Someone was coming.

No, a lot of “someones” were coming.

He’d been stationed at this roadside all day—all his life, really—begging for small favors from passing townspeople and visiting pilgrims. This pathway was his normal spot, and at times it even felt like home to stumble to this place each morning. To sit down here outside the gate to the new city. To spread his thin, weathered, cloak on the ground before him and call out “Alms! Alms! Mercy for the blind!”

He reached into the darkness before him and gathered close the few coins scattered in the folds of his beggar’s cloak. The spoils of his day so far.

It wasn’t much. Almost nothing really.

He sighed, then breathed in again, deeply, tasting the faint scent of orange groves and almond blossoms. Here in this desert oasis, the world bloomed with promises. Those promises, though, were for others. For the blind, the weak, the Bartimaueses of Israel, they were always Jericho's afterthought.

This is my lot in life, he told himself. But one day, oh one day, the Messiah will come. And when he does...

Above him Bartimaeus heard rock-pigeons winging into a frenzy. From the direction of the city he now heard the trampling of many footsteps, shouts of excitement, a threatening rumble of movement.

Yes, a crowd was definitely coming. Unexpected visitors, he supposed. Guests in his roadside beggar's home.

Well, that would be okay, he decided. More people meant more opportunity for kindness. Maybe someone in this crowd would take pity on a blind man and drop a lepton coin on his cloak. Or maybe today a small hunk of dry bread left over from lunch would bless the son of old Timaeus. Maybe someone would share something even more.

It was only moments before the first wave of people trickled out of the city and onto the narrow road. Onto Bartimaeus' road.

"Alms! Alms for the blind!" he cried out. But no one heard him, or else they pretended not to hear.

He felt the heat and wind of someone running past him, felt a tug on his cloak as a second runner slipped on the cloth and cursed at the blind man sitting in his way.

"He's coming!" a voice shouted to his right. "Where?" said another. "I can't see anything!" grumbled a third.

Nor can I, *Bartimaeus said to himself. Out loud he cried again, “Mercy! Mercy! Alms for the blind!” But no one seemed to care.*

The thudding of more footsteps filled the road until it almost felt like a human stampede. People milled all around him now, murmuring and waiting, no one ever standing still. They were impatient, excited. They wanted a glimpse of something, a once-in-a-lifetime something. A peek at history that they could talk about for years to come. “I was there when...” they’d say to their grandchildren. “I saw it all.”

Bartimaeus pulled his cloak closer, afraid of careless sandals tearing its fabric even more. Afraid of being trampled himself, but unwilling to risk moving in the midst of this now-swirling multitude. “Alms?” he said weakly. But he was as invisible to them as they were to his darkened eyes.

The buzzing of the crowd soon grew into a mild roar. “There!” someone said at last. “Is that him?” “No,” another said, this one close by Bartimaeus’ ear. “But it’s one of his disciples. He can’t be far behind!”

Disciples? he thought. A rabbi is coming? What if it’s the Rabbi?

Bartimaeus felt his heart stop, then start again at an accelerated pace. His breath became shallow and his ears tried to make sense of the conversations flying like pigeons over his head.

“Wouldn’t believe it if I hadn’t seen it for my—“

“Can anything good come from—“

“Malaki says he is the Anointed—“

“There! There! It’s him—“

“Jesus!”

“Jesus of Nazareth! He’s—“

The crowd erupted in shouting, nearly drowning out even Bartimaeus’ thoughts.

Jesus of Nazareth...here? *he realized.* The miracle-worker, the Messiah, the Son of David, he’s here!

Bartimaeus could barely breathe, could barely feel the sun beating down on his meager, unsteady frame. In his mind the prophecies of Isaiah began to echo. “‘Your God will come...he will come to save you.’ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened...”

The eyes of the blind.

“Jesus!” Bartimaeus heard screaming. “Jesus! Son of David!” He felt burning in his throat, and didn’t care. “Jesus! Jesus! Son of David!” he shrieked. “Mercy! Have mercy on me!”

A sandaled foot kicked his ribs, unexpected violence that left him gasping for air. “Shut up old man,” someone seethed. “Or you’ll get worse than that.”

“Mercy,” he coughed, then caught his breath. “Jesus! Son of David!” He shouted even louder this time, trying to be heard over the buzzing and stamping of the crowd. “Have mercy on me!”

“Quiet that beggar!” a woman shrilled. “The Rabbi’s got better things to do than toss his precious coins on that ragged cloak.”

“Son of David!”

“Silence you old fool! You’re starting to annoy his disciples. That’s Peter there beside him. He’s looking this way and frowning.”

“Have mercy on me! Have mercy!”

Now he felt the crowd shoving at him, voices grunting in his ears. “Shut up!” “Be quiet!” “Stop bothering everybody!” “Silence you old fool, before I silence you for good!” “It’s no use, you causing all this trouble just for a few lepta.” “Besides, he’s almost gone now anyway.”

“Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!”

And then, silence.

A world gone still. Even the rock-pigeons could no longer be heard overheard.

Bartimaeus felt like dying, felt his lungs burning inside him, felt his neck and arms bruised from rough treatment by the crowd.

“Jesus.” He whispered it this time, a private prayer. His only hope. “Son of David, have mercy on me.” The words choked into sobs. “Have mercy.”

Nothing happened. No one moved. No one spoke.

In the distance, a murmur. A wave of surprise. Out of nowhere, rough hands shook at Bartimaeus’ shoulder, and a voice, several voices, once cold, now warm.

“Cheer up!” a man nearby said. “On your feet!” said another. “He’s calling you.”

The blind man didn’t wait. He threw aside his beggar’s cloak and left it, lepta and all, abandoned on the road. He wouldn’t be needing that anymore.

He jumped up on spindly legs and lurched forward into the darkness. Someone laughed and grabbed his arm. “No,” the voice said, “this way.” He felt himself propelled by strong hands, heard the shuffling crowd part to make room for him until at last he was tugged to a stop. Placed in the very presence of the Son of God.

“What do you want me to do for you?”

Bartimaeus felt like weeping. The sound of the Savior’s voice was really not that different from anyone else’s. It was a man’s voice, strong, calm, but still a man. And yet, in that timbre

was more than a man, in those words were more than humanity. Hope surged inside him, threatening to make the blind man mute, but nothing could keep his mouth from moving now.

“Rabbi,” said Timaeus’s son, “I want to see.”

“Go,” Jesus said to him, “your faith has healed you.”

In an instant, in a moment of awestruck wonder, all darkness fled. Bartimaeus saw his great, wide world for the very first time. The son of Timaeus found himself staring, breathless, right into the face of God.

And Jesus was smiling.

Better than a Miracle

It is no mistake to read the experience of Blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52 and say joyfully in response, “God’s love delivered a miracle for this man!” But that’s only part of the story, only a fraction of the love on display in this event.

It’s no error to linger on Christ’s words, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” and to nod approvingly, to acknowledge that God’s love granted the blind man his greatest wish, an almost-undreamable gift. But again, that miraculous healing was not all Bartimaeus received that day. It wasn’t even the best. It was a secondary blessing. Proof, if you will, that God had given the beggar another, better gift first.

Yes, what happened for Blind Bartimaeus was astonishing and glorious and more than wonderful—both then and now. And yes, it’s a crystallized moment in history, one that makes us feel like cheering, one that encourages us to have faith like the blind man when we face dark circumstances of our own. Sight for the blind was an inexpressible joy and a fantastic testimony

of God's love at work in human lives—but I'll say it again: it wasn't the best gift given outside the gates of Jericho that day.

Like all matters of human flesh, Jesus' sight-giving miracle was still just a temporary blessing. It was a benefit that lasted only a few years, until death claimed the body, and then it was no more. But a greater favor was bestowed by the roadside, one that lasted longer than a lifetime, one that continued into eternity:

God gave his attention to a man.

Imagine what happens if, in this frozen moment, Jesus acts with impatience toward the blind beggar. If he shrugs off the shrill cries, if he decides it's not worth his time to respond to this "annoying neighbor" on the road.

If Jesus is impatient with Bartimaeus' yelping, if he keeps on walking, if he keeps his face set on the road ahead, if doesn't pause to look aside, if he decides not to react to the echoing wails of this random roadside beggar, then...well, the blind man stays blind. End of story.

History forgets that Timaeus's son ever existed. Without God's patient attention, Bartimaeus is never heard from again.

And you know what? If that had happened, nobody—not you nor I nor anyone in the crowd that day—would think less of our Christ. In fact, most of us would probably side with those cranky people telling ol' Bart to shut his bread-hole and leave the Messiah alone. I know I would have.

I mean, realistically, there on the Jericho road, God-in -Flesh had places to go and people to see. His entourage at this point was already beginning to resemble something of a royal procession. Plus, he was headed to Jerusalem where (he apparently knew) he'd be greeted by a thunderous mob of worshipers (see Mark 11:1-11). And after that (he apparently knew), he had a

mission of eternal redemption to accomplish on the cross. So, at this particular time in this particular place, why waste even minutes on one braying beggar? Why postpone everything that is to come—nothing less than the redemption of the world—just to listen to this man’s irritating prayer?

An obscure beggar on the Jericho road should have simply been scenery in the background just then, something to pass by unnoticed on the way to somewhere better. His uninvited intrusion would try just about anyone’s patience. Except, of course, Jesus.

Like the majority of that crowd, if I’d been there, walking right beside the literal Son of God himself—hot and tired and with a long way yet to go—I would’ve seen Bartimaeus’ intrusive demands as an unwelcome annoyance. I would’ve wanted the irritating homeless guy to quiet down and give everyone a break. I’d have wanted to keep moving, to get out of earshot of his grating histrionics, to get on with the tasks ahead of me in Jerusalem.

I might even have felt embarrassed for that blind guy, out there yammering and making a fool of himself in front of God and everybody. I mean, seriously, hadn’t Jesus given enough to enough people already? Why not let the Son of God have a little time off for once? Of anyone, he certainly had earned it. But Bartimaeus thought differently.

“Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet,” Mark records in 10:48. “But he shouted all the more.” I can almost hear the echoes of their thinking in my own, impatient little brain. *How annoying. So inconsiderate! Get a job, why don’t you? How could that guy be so... Wait a minute... What?*

Then, at the exact instant when people like me were lashing out in righteous impatience at Blind Bartimaeus, Jesus suddenly changed the rules. He stopped everything and everyone. He turned away from the adoring crowd and turned his face *toward* the annoying, screaming, man.

He didn't rebuke Bartimaeus like others had been doing.

He didn't ignore him, didn't deride him. Didn't retaliate or condemn.

Instead God interrupted his journey. He postponed his plans and the plans of everyone else around him. He gave the beggar his attention. He called the man to come.

And he waited, patiently, for the unsteady walker to draw near.

Jesus responded to Blind Bartimaeus in a totally unexpected way, in the way that God's love always does: *Christ was patient*.

And he still is.

Christ's Patience Grants Us His Attention

Here's why that's so important, why you and I must linger on that moment this morning.

It is Christ's loving patience that allows us to demand his attention without fear of reprisal or rebuke. It's what makes him accessible to us, the thing that gives us the unconditional privilege of his familial presence. Blind Bartimaeus learned that lesson firsthand, and it changed everything.

Mark tells us that, after receiving his sight, Bartimaeus "followed Jesus along the road" (10:52). Bible historians speculate that the formerly-blind probably man didn't stop there. When he threw aside his beggar's cloak—before being granted the ability to see, no less—he also abandoned his only real, earthly possession. That cloak was all the poverty-stricken man had to use for bedding and warmth at night, and his means for collecting handouts in the day. Tossing that cloak (and any coins or scraps it held) left it unclaimed and as-good-as-stolen in the burgeoning crowd. It appears that this was an all or nothing moment for the man. Healing or no,

he clearly intended to follow Jesus from that moment on, no matter what. And Bible historians report that's likely what he did, following Jesus from Jericho into Jerusalem, through the Triumphal Entry, to the cross and beyond. In fact, some scholars believe Mark mentions Bartimaeus by name because Mark knew him, because the old beggar actually went on to become a well-known disciple of Christ in his time.^{1 2}

And the catalyst for all this transformation?

The patience of Jesus, who halted the busyness of his existence long enough to turn his attention to one wretched, desperate man.

Christ was patient—even when his closest friends were not.

Were Jesus the impatient, short-tempered type, his attention would be conditional, simply a factor of whether or not we were somehow profitable to him at any particular moment. But he *was not* and *is not* that. His encounter with Blind Bartimaeus is proof of this.

And so, like Bartimaeus, anytime we desire to call on him, regardless of what we're interrupting or what else he's got going on, he's patient enough to stop what he's doing and turn his undivided attention to you and to me.

I imagine it like a classic *Peanuts* cartoon strip by Charles M. Schulz.

Standing outside his father's workplace, Charlie Brown explains the way things are to his snobby friend, Violet. "See this?" he says to her, pointing toward a plate glass window:

This is my dad's barber shop. He works in there all day long. He has to deal with all sorts of people. Some of them get kind of crabby...but you know what? I can go in there anytime and no matter how busy he is, he'll always stop and give me a big smile.³

This is the kind of patient attention Bartimaeus experienced on the Jericho road, and the kind of patience that we continue to experience from Christ with each prayer that we pray, each day of our lives. “No matter how busy he is, he’ll always stop...” Why? It’s simple really. In the same way a father shows patience toward his children, *Christ is patient toward those he loves*. Because when one of his kids calls, God is always willing to stop...to listen...to help.

Do you understand what this means for you and me?

Bartimaeus did, and the result was metamorphic for both his body and soul.

He was blind; now he could see. He was poor; now he was able to escape poverty. Like all blind men, he’d been banished from entering the Hebrew temple, forbidden to worship God there with the rest of his countrymen.⁴ Now he was restored, welcomed, *invited* into God’s holy presence. He’d been an outcast, deemed unworthy and of no value to his society. Now he was a priceless friend of God.

So I say to you again: Christ’s loving patience grants you his attention. *Do you understand what this great gift means?*

You are important.

You are valued.

You are miraculously treasured in a way that no creature on earth besides you will ever know, or will ever be.

You, like Blind Bartimaeus, are a priceless friend of God.

You are irrevocably, eternally loved.

Your weakest, plaintive whisper has the power to capture Almighty God’s full attention.

Christ's patience toward us grants his attention to us, and as a result we experience firsthand all the varied expressions of his love.

Now, stop for a moment and breathe that into your soul. Let the ramifications of this truth begin to percolate like hot coffee in your thinking. Christ is patient to give you his attention...and that means your faith need not be stuttered or apologetic or simpering or shallow. You can approach this life with boldness that rivals even Blind Bartimaeus.

Let me show you what I mean.

Christ's Patience Justifies Our Boldness of Faith

Perhaps you've heard of Steven Spielberg. If not, you haven't been to the movies in the last 40 years or so. He's been the driving force behind numerous movies that became cultural touchstones, including *Jaws*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Color Purple*, *Schindler's List*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and many, many more.⁵

That's who Steven Spielberg is today, but in 1965 he was a mostly no-account teenager with unrealized dreams of glory. He'd dropped out of high school (twice) before finally earning a high school diploma. He'd applied to film school—and been rejected. He was now living in Southern California, taking one class at a state college, and trying to figure out how to become the person we know him to be today.

Then came the summer of '65. Free of any classroom obligation, young Steven decided to spend a day visiting Universal Studios movie lot. There he met an editorial executive named

Chuck Silvers. Fortunately for Steven, Chuck was a patient man, intrigued by this kid and his homemade 8 millimeter films.

“Come back and visit again sometime,” Chuck said casually, as a goodbye.

Steven returned the next day.

Dressed in his only suit, the teenager packed his dad’s briefcase with a sandwich and candy bars and headed toward the front gate. He had no security clearance, and he certainly didn’t work on the studio lot. But why should that stop him?

He walked boldly toward the entrance, assuming that if he acted like he belonged, then he’d belong. When he approached the guard on duty, he waved and continued onto the lot.

The guard waved back—and let him pass. A filmmaking legend was born.

“For the entire summer,” Spielberg reveals today, “I dressed in my suit and hung out with the directors and writers. I even found an office that wasn’t being used, and became a squatter. I bought some plastic tiles and put my name in the building directory: Steven Spielberg, Room 23C.”

Only Chuck Silvers knew the truth about the squatter in 23C—and he kept the secret. He was willing to wait and watch, to help the kid learn the movie business and then see what would happen. Chuck’s patience paid off 10 years later, when the guy in 23C directed the now-classic shark tale, *Jaws*, for Universal Studios. It earned \$470 million in box office receipts, becoming (at that time) the highest-grossing movie in history.⁶

Steven Spielberg was incredibly bold to walk onto the Universal Studios production lot and assert that he belonged there, but his boldness was justified by Chuck Silvers’ patience with aspiring moviemakers in general, and with him specifically. It was within Silvers’ power, and his right, to expose the teen imposter, to have him kicked off the lot, or even arrested. But Chuck

Silvers didn't do that. Instead, he avoided hasty anger or punishment. He exercised self-restraint and kindness and understanding. He faithfully endured the awkward intrusion for the benefit of the boy. He was *patient*, and Steven Spielberg's legendary career began in earnest as a result.

It is this same kind of patience, found in the person of Christ, that justifies our boldness in matters of faith. It's what makes it okay for you or me (or Bartimaeus) to call out for God's presence and expect his benevolent attention in return. It's this longsuffering character that lets us know we can approach Jesus, anytime, anywhere, about anything, and not have to face angry retribution or even casual dismissal.

"Love is patient," the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:4, and the word he used there (*makrothuméō*) doesn't mean "bored" or "tolerant" or any other passive expression we sometimes associate with patience. It connotes an active response akin to the way Charlie Brown described his father: One who is happy to see us when we walk boldly into his presence, even during inconvenient circumstances. One who is not angry or dismissive or retaliatory, but who smiles and leans forward in anticipation, ready to welcome us, eager to listen to us. One who exercises personal restraint and understanding in order to esteem you and I as more important than whatever else might vie for his attention when we come into his presence. One who is willing to endure hardship and inconvenience and even humiliation, if necessary, in order to make himself available to us, in order to give us better opportunity for the fullness of growth and joy to come.

Or, if you prefer a more scholarly explanation, *makrothuméō* is the Greek word that gives us the term "longsuffering," and while it certainly includes the ideas of enduring, tarrying or delaying, it is a hope-filled, expectant "longsuffering"—not passive or hopelessness, not defeat or resignation, not giving up or giving in. It is an active, intelligent, deliberate expression that

“involves exercising understanding and patience toward persons.”⁷ It is “that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy.”⁸

This is the kind of purposeful, premeditated, longsuffering quality that Christ demonstrated to the blind man on the road those many centuries ago. It is the supernatural kind of patience that welcomes us into the intimate presence of Jesus himself yet today.

Blind Bartimaeus took a risk when he audaciously demanded God’s attention outside the gates of Jericho, and we continue to benefit from his brash brand of faith. It’s because of him (and others like him) that you and I can discover that Christ is a patient Savior—and that his patience justifies in us a corresponding boldness in our relationships with God.

We can demand God’s personal, immediate attention, not because we’re worthy of it or because we somehow deserve it. We can demand his attention because of who God is and the way he loves. He is patient with us, longsuffering, and constantly ready to answer our call.

How cool is that?

Christ’s Patience Teaches Us the Beginnings of Love

I’ve known this truth of God’s patience toward me for some time, but I’ll admit I often have difficulty believing it. After all, I’ve seen many who assume (either in words or attitudes or actions) that God’s patience toward us makes him our lap-dog, that his answer to our call always should result in a miracle, or at least in giving us what we are asking for. I find those attitudes presumptive and insulting. Yes, he turns his ear when we call, and yes, he always answers in

some way, but in the end he is still God and I am still not. I've learned to trust that his patient love toward me often offers better than what my limited expectations would demand.

In spite of this, there are times when his patience and attention in my life catches me by surprise, almost like I am a blind man who is suddenly aware that Jesus is passing by. I had a moment like this in 2014, during a mundane errand to buy bread at my local Panera store.

At that time, my extended family and I were going through an extremely difficult situation. There was anger and hurtfulness, sorrow and rage, frayed relationships and bitter divides. It was heartbreaking. My wife even said it was harder than cancer. I found that the only thing I could contribute to that whole mess was my (seemingly) ineffectual prayers. I felt much like Blind Bartimaeus, helpless, unwanted, and repeatedly begging for mercy to an unsympathetic crowd.

The irony of this is that I had felt this kind of hopeless desperation before, about 15 years before, when I was very ill for a very long time. During that experience—when I prayed and prayed and no miracle occurred—it felt like God was ignoring me. So in desperation, just to remind myself that God does indeed answer prayers, I started asking people to tell me about times when *they* knew for certain that God had answered their prayers. I collected those stories, and kept them near, and read them whenever I was particularly certain Jesus had given up on me and my life. They encouraged me and helped to give me strength to keep trusting, keep moving forward, even when it felt like God wasn't listening. Eventually, I published them in a book titled *True Stories of Answered Prayer*, hoping to encourage others in the same way. And then, after awhile, I'm ashamed to admit I forgot about them.

Then, more than a decade later, I found myself again in the same kind of prayerful desperation I was in during my extended illness. And that's what I was feeling as I was driving to Panera that day to buy a loaf of bread.

Now, I should warn you that God and I are fairly honest with each other, and so I hope you're not offended by my conversations toward him that I'm about to share.

I started telling Christ how angry and hurt I was by his (seeming) inaction in our current situation. I laid it out bare for him, telling God how awful it was and how I felt enormously helpless to do anything but watch my family suffer. And I'm going to be honest, I said a few hurtful things toward him that I regretted almost immediately, but which I prayed anyway. As I walked into the door of the bread store, I felt more discouraged than I can possibly describe. My sarcastic nature came out, and I said to Jesus:

"All I can do is pray, but apparently you aren't interested in listening to my prayers right now." I may have added a bad word that I won't repeat here.

I kid you not, at literally the *exact* moment I said "you aren't interested..." my cell phone buzzed with a new email message. It was from a woman in Africa. I paused long enough to glance at it while I was waiting in line.

Then I read it again, slowly, word for word. "My name is Pauline," it started, "and I live in Abuja, Nigeria..."

I just finished reading your book *True Stories of Answered Prayer* for this year. Since I came in contact with it a couple of years ago, it has served as a faith strengthener for me. This year, I just felt led to say thank you for

taking the time to compile & publish them. May God continue to bless you. Do take care and have a lovely week ahead.⁹

As I read this note from Pauline, my own sarcastic words to God echoed back at me: *You aren't interested in listening to my prayers...* I almost laughed out loud as tears came to my eyes. (I think the server at Panera thought I was having a breakdown or something...but what can you do?)

Right at the moment when I was berating him, blaming him for my sorrow and accusing him of ignoring my calls for help, God was not only listening, he was acting. He didn't get angry with me; he didn't retaliate or punish me for my self-absorbed, unwarranted insults about his character. Instead he was longsuffering, exercising understanding and patience toward me, reaching halfway across the world to remind me of his faithfulness and love.

In case you are unaware of it, Nigeria, where Pauline lives, is more than 6,000 miles from the United States, where I live. It sits across the Atlantic Ocean, midway into the African continent. It is not "next door" or even "not far away." And yet, when I was crying for his attention, when I was wailing too loudly to hear his voice in my ear, Jesus whispered into the heart of a woman I've never met who lives in a world where I've never been and told her to remind me of the very words I myself had written more than a dozen years before—and which had been proven true every day since: God always answers prayer.

This year, I just felt led to say thank you... Pauline said to me. I suspect she has no idea what her little emailed obedience meant for me at that exact moment. It told me that God's patience had me given the continuing gift of his attention during that awful situation in my

family's life. He used this lovely Nigerian woman to let me know that was true. It was not quite a miracle, but it was more than I needed or deserved at that moment.

Christ is patient—*Christ is what love does.*

And when I was praying awful things, he responded to me in the way that true love always does, in the same way that he once responded to the desperate pleas of Timaeus's blind boy. He was longsuffering. He granted me his attention and emboldened my faith. He taught me anew the beginnings of his love. And Christ's patience can do the same for you too, right now, right here, today.

Don't believe it? Well, just ask Bartimaeus.

From the Gospel of Mark, 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus 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, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

[END CHAPTER]

¹ Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 164.

² Merrill C. Tenney. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia: Volume 1, A-C*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1975, 1976) 481.

³ Charles M. Schulz. *You Don't Look 35, Charlie Brown*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985) 70.

⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, general editor. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Volume 1: Matthew, Mark, Luke*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002) 266.

⁵ “Steven Spielberg Biography.” *Internet Movie Database*.

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000229/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm. Accessed December 12, 2013.

⁶ Lostys, Fran. “Yes I Can: The Kid Stays in the Picture.” *Reader's Digest*. July, 2005. pp. 70-71.

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, General Editor. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992, 1993) 939

⁸ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White Jr. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984, 1996) 377.

⁹ From the author's personal email correspondence.