Hi,

I hope you had a good Memorial Day, despite the circumstances. Here’s today’s updates:

* **My Tuesday class on Genesis will be at noon today** on [my Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/scottengle).
* **My Sunday class is moving to 11am,** to conform to our usual church schedule.
* The links to my on-line classes, the video recordings of the classes, the class audio podcasts, and the archive of these daily emails can all be found at [www.scottengle.org](http://www.scottengle.org/). All the postings are up-to-date.

I imagine some of us feel like we’ve been walking in place for the last couple of months, with no real plot to the story of our life, no plans . . . not much of anything. But even in this strangest of times, there is a story, there must be a story to our lives . . . and the best story of all is found in God.

**Psalm 113:5-9 (NRSV)**

**5Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, 6who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?**

**7He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, 8to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.**

**9He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.**

**Praise the Lord!**

**Mark 10:46-52 (NRSV)**

**46They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” 48Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” 49Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” 50So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” 52Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.**

When I was a young boy, *This Is Your Life* was a popular television show. Each week, Ralph Edwards “surprised” a celebrity on the street and coaxed him or her back to the studio. There, the celebrity would be presented with a red book, a biography of sorts. As the show unfolded, various people from the celebrity’s past would come onstage and tell their part of the story. The public ate it up. The show went on to be as big a hit in the U.K. as in the U.S. The public’s interest in the stories of famous people’s lives continues unabated. The A&E network now has a cable channel devoted to nothing but re-runs of their popular *Biography* series.

Most of us are very interested and at times fascinated with the lives of famous and infamous people. But how about the stories of our own lives? Do we see where our lives are going? Do you sometimes feel like the events of your life have just pushed you along? Do you feel like your life is without a plot? Meet Bartimaeus, who probably asked himself that very question.

*Son of Timaeus*

Today’s is a simple story. Bartimaeus is a blind beggar who sits by the side of the road, cup in hand. When he hears that Jesus is passing by, he shouts out to Jesus, begging for mercy. When he shouts out a second time, Jesus calls him over and restores his sight. This is another of those Jesus stories that tempt us to read quickly onward. But Ellsworth Kalas invites us to stop and take a closer look.

Bartimaeus has lost his health, his livelihood, his reputation, even his name. Because Mark writes that his eyesight was restored, we know that Bartimaeus could at one time see. Now, he has been reduced to begging, having lost whatever means he might have once had of earning a living. Because the ancients, including the Jews, saw blindness and other ailments as indications of God’s disfavor, Bartimaeus is an outcast, a person to be avoided and even forgotten. In fact, he has become such a non-person that he has even lost his name. “Bartimaeus” is actually “bar-Timeaus,” meaning “son of Timaeus.” This was a common way of giving someone a last name of sorts. Thus, Bartimaeus has lost his first name and become about as anonymous as a person can become. In truth, in the community he has become little more than an unnamed blind beggar. More an object than a person.

What is the story of his life? Where is his plot headed? The answer is nowhere. Nothing will change. He’ll just eventually die, hardly noticed, until his body is put in some sort of pauper’s grave.

But in an instant, all is changed. When Bartimaeus rushes to meet Jesus, utterly throwing himself on Jesus’ mercy, his life is restored. He finds a new plot. He finds that there is a story for him yet, a story inaugurated by and centered upon his Savior.

Notice what happens at the end of the passage from Mark. Bartimaeus doesn’t resume his begging by the side of the road. He doesn’t even head home to family. There probably is no home and no family. Bartimaeus has come to Jesus (v. 50), trusted Jesus completely, and will now follow Jesus (v. 52). As Jesus heads onward down the road, Bartimaeus follows him. He knows where the story of his own life will now take him.

*The stories of our lives*

Many of us would be hard-pressed to tell the story of our lives. We could recount past events and we might be able to make a few predictions about the future, or at least lay out some hopes. But finding the purpose in it all, seeing a meaningful narrative . . . well, that is another matter. Early in our lives, we might think that we have enough control to shape our lives and achieve our dreams. But we soon find that dreams change and control eludes us.

Like Bartimaeus, we can find the story we seek only by coming to Jesus, by taking a seat at his table. Life can be difficult. So often these days, the world seems to be swirling out of control. But in Jesus Christ, we find a faithfulness and a hope that transcends our problems and our fears. By coming to Jesus and following him down the same path as Bartimaeus, we will find a God-given story for our lives. Let’s be clear. We won’t find that all our wants are met. Bartimaeus would have found his story even if Jesus had not healed him. It was the man, not the cure. Bartimaeus wanted to see, but he found far more.

Kalas quotes Peggy Noonan, who wrote, “Life isn’t flat and thin and ‘realistic,’ it’s rich and full of mystery and surprise.” In short, true living is full of God, in whom we find rich and full lives, full of story.

‘til tomorrow, grace and peace,

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