

“So You Want To See?”

Scripture: Mark 10:46-52

Graphics: wearable technology, glasses

Big Truth: The people of the PUMC are called by God to open the eyes of our hearts to see Him more. The pathways to that is faith in the saving power of Jesus that leads to sight. That spiritual sight leads to spiritual Insight and the desire to know and follow Jesus closer.

Focus Phrase: True spiritual sight comes through faith.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY!

- B. Today, we find ourselves in the very last section of Mark 10. If you have your bibles with you, open to Mark 10...let's get our bearings here, because if we want to SEE what Jesus is teaching us, we have to know what Jesus and the disciples have been up to.
- C. Mark 10 started with Jesus teaching about divorce...but really that teaching is not JUST about divorce but about relationships and why they're so hard sometimes.
- D. Then Jesus met a rich man and asked him to sell everything he had to give the money to the poor and FOLLOW HIM. But the man went away sad...
- E. Last week, enthusiastic disciples James and John wanted to be GREAT - to sit at Jesus' right and left when he got to His throne. They could just see themselves high and lifted up with Jesus...in places of honor. The only catch was, Jesus told them that greatness in the kingdom of God is about serving, empathy, love, and, in fact, giving up your life so others can live.
- F. The whole time, Jesus and the disciples have been walking from Capernaum and Galilee heading to Jerusalem. As we pick up our story today, Jesus and the disciples have amassed a crowd who were ALSO following them. They've reached Jericho, which is about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem.
- G. And as they enter this town, Jesus is once again interrupted by a blind beggar on the side of the road. The question is: So You Want to SEE?
- H. Let's read Mark 10:46-52...

2. Scripture

A. READ Mark 10:46-52

- B. In this short section of scripture, we see a lot going on - Jesus in Jericho with the crowds and disciples, a blind beggar on the side, the ornery disciples telling him to shush, Jesus hearing him and calling him. SO many sounds, SO much movement.

- C. But let's NOT lose sight of the fact that a MIRACLE has just occurred!! Sit with that for a sec. A blind man ran to Jesus and in an INSTANT he could see. BAM!
- D. If this is the first time you've heard this part of Mark's gospel, that should amaze you! If you've studied this story in a class or heard someone preach about it before, IT SHOULD AMAZE YOU! Jesus is amazing! Amen?
- E. This man was blind. Then, he could see and followed Jesus. Amazing!
- F. Do you know what's also amazing, in a vastly lesser way? **Technology.**
- i. Some of you are like, *groan* But I LOVE technology (not like I love Jesus, but more like I love tacos). The latest iPhone, the most powerful camera or video game, the drones I fly, the watch I wear, the computer on which I typed this message. I know technology isn't for everyone...and that someday robots will take over the world, blah blah blah. But technology is amazing!
 - ii. My pastor and friend Bob Kaylor said this, "Wearable tech is all the rage these days. Smart watches can track your workouts, monitor your health, answer your phone ... and *even* tell the time! Virtual reality goggles make you feel like you're inside the video game you're playing. Chances are just about everyone here is wearing some kind of device that makes life a little more interesting, informative or convenient."
 - iii. Most of our wearable technology isn't essential for life. Seriously, just a few years ago, we had watches that ONLY told time. But what about Lifelines for older adults who want to feel safe while solo? What about pacemakers and internal defibrillators? These things ARE essential and could be the difference between life and death in some cases.
 - iv. This week, I read about a really cool device called smart glasses, which are an assistive technology that helps visually impaired - and even totally blind - people see. These smart glasses have small high-tech cameras in them that magnify what the person is viewing, enhances the clarity, and can even recognize words and read to the person. There's also a way to send whatever is being input into the smart glasses to a sighted person - even a world away - so they can help the person wearing the smart glasses to navigate, read, and work, etc.
- G. The blind beggar who met Jesus that day in Jericho definitely would've benefitted from this type of technology, right?
- H. Maybe, but while smart glasses can help a person with sight, they — like most technology — can't help that much with real **INSIGHT**.
- I. Mark tells us that this blind man could actually see more clearly than Jesus' own disciples where it counted: in the real vision of discipleship.

- J. Jesus and his disciples were headed to Jerusalem, where the cross awaited Him. He had warned his disciples three times that he was going to Jerusalem to die, but each time they failed to understand what he was talking about. James and John got it wrong. So often, the disciples got it wrong. Peter would get it wrong.
- K. Jesus warned them again and again that his throne would not be the kind they were hoping for...that he had come to “give his life as a ransom for many” (v. 45). To be a servant for humanity through death and resurrection.
- L. Even though the disciples had been with Jesus for a while, they still didn’t see the truth about who he was and where he was leading them.
- M. In comes a blind beggar, sitting on the side of the road, as Jesus, the disciples, and the crowds parade by. No doubt, this man heard people saying Jesus’ name. No doubt this blind beggar had heard of Jesus and the (remember) MIRACLES he had done - lame walked, blind saw, demons fled, bread distributed, wine made from water, water made into a walkway...MIRACLES!
- N. All we know about this guy is that his name was Bartimaeus - which isn’t really a name but an indication of who he was. Bartimaeus just means son of Timaeus, as Mark points out.
- O. And this blind beggar, sitting on the side of the dusty road, wearing a dirty cloak with maybe some small coins in his lap from passersby, starts to CRY OUT (TO SHOUT, so Jesus could hear him above the crowd noise), “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- P. “Hush, man! Shut up!” That’s what the crowds said to him. Basically, “Just sit there and mind your manners and keep quiet.”
- Q. Undeterred by that, the man shouted even louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- R. It’s significant that, just before going up to Jerusalem, Jesus is identified as “Son of David,” and by a blind man, no less. Time after time throughout the gospels, Jesus tried to keep a lid on the “messianic secret.” But it’s now clear that it won’t remain a secret much longer. **Bartimaeus is, ironically, the one who sees the truth.**
- S. The term “Son of David” calls to mind the kind of messiah that would be a military ruler like the original King David. But Bartimaeus also saw that THIS Son of David was different and was the one who came with mercy and not wrath.
- T. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me” is the cry of one who sees more of who Jesus really is than those whose eyes were supposed to be functioning normally.

- U. I mean, just look at the contrast between James and John - who viewed themselves as worthy to be seated with Jesus in glory - and Bartimaeus - who viewed himself as nothing/no one, in need of mercy.
- V. He wasn't using Jesus as a way to gain glory for himself. He saw himself as a beggar in need of the grace and mercy brought by the Son of David, who is also the Son of God.
- W. In a world where people believed that physical infirmity was a sign of spiritual brokenness, Bartimaeus didn't argue for his own righteousness or about the unfairness of it all. **He simply wanted mercy.**
- X. To express that, he prayed the original sinner's prayer: "Have mercy on me! Have mercy on me..."
- Y. And in that moment, Jesus **stood still**. It's the first time in all the weeks that we've been reading through Mark that JESUS STOOD STILL. A hush fell over the crowd. Jesus told those nearest Bartimaeus to call out to him to come.
- Z. And like a kid being chosen for the dodgeball team, he jumped up, and because Jesus was standing still, Bartimeaus could find him.
- AA.I envision that he grabbed onto Jesus' arm...Jesus was probably smiling. And even though Bartimeaus couldn't physically see it...he could FEEL Jesus smiling. He could SENSE Jesus smiling. He could SPIRITUALLY SEE Jesus' eager joy.
- BB."What do you want me to do for you?" If you remember, that's the same exact question we heard last week from Jesus when James and John approached Jesus on the road. What a contrast to today's scenario! Jesus KNEW what this dirty, broken, blind beggar wanted - to SEE! BUT...BUT...because Jesus already knew his heart, Jesus also KNEW that Bartimeaus already HAD what he NEEDED - faith!!
- CC."My teacher, let me see again." He used the same word "teacher" to address Jesus that James and John did. But here, it's the plea of one who has actually understood the lesson, even if he'd never read the scroll of the Scriptures.
- DD.Bartimaeus may not have been able to see, but he had a full vision of a merciful Messiah who could open a new world for him. His spiritual smart glasses were working perfectly.
- EE. He WANTED sight. He already HAD faith!
- FF. In 2 Corinthians 5:7, Paul reminds us that, "For we live by faith, not by sight."
- GG.Jesus would remind us that, in order to truly see, one must start with faith, and when one has faith, then sight is given.

HH. Jesus' response to the blind man is an invitation, really: "Go, your faith has made you well" (v. 52). And IMMEDIATELY(!) he regained his sight... There's the miracle...there's Jesus.

II. But instead of GOING, like Jesus commanded...the man followed Jesus. The rich man went away sad because he had too much and couldn't give it up to follow Jesus. Bartimeaus threw off his cloak, the little he had went flying into the dirt, and he joyfully followed Jesus with nothing...and yet, he had everything!

3. Application

- A. So what? If we want INSIGHT and not just SIGHT, what do we do?
- B. As you and I leave here today and go out into the world, know that the chaos is still there, even though we've been in HERE this morning. Nothing has changed out there, but what do you want to change in HERE (heart)?
 - i. First, **Look for Jesus with your spiritual eyes** more than your physical eyes.
 - a. Or better said, look for Jesus with spiritual eyes in ADDITION TO your physical ones.
 - b. The problem is, while you and I can see Jesus at work in the world - people serving, praying, worshiping - we also get deceived by our eyes. We believe things that we THINK are true that aren't. And sometimes, what you SEE, physically, is only the tip of the iceberg.
 - c. Remember, "...we live by faith, and not by sight."
 - d. Paul said in Ephesians 1:17-21, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."
 - e. Spiritual eyes are the eyes of the heart. The eyes of the heart are empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life!
 - f. When you have spiritual eyes wide open, you can see not only what Jesus is doing in the world, but you can see what God is doing in spiritual realm and the everlasting world to come!
 - g. Look with spiritual eyes.

- ii. Second, when you go out into the world, **Don't listen to the crowd. Listen to Jesus' call.**
 - a. Maybe you've been crying out to Jesus during this pandemic. Maybe you feel like your cries are drowned out by ALL the NOISE. The crowd - the world - is so loud sometimes that your voice gets hoarse from praying the same prayers. It feels like you're groping in the darkness, blind.
 - b. Here's some truth: **Jesus hears every prayer.** Jesus heard the voice of one beggar in the crowds of hundreds (thousands?).
 - c. Jesus hears your voice every time you pray...every time you cry out, "Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner." "Jesus, heal my broken heart." "Jesus, take care of my children." "Jesus, free me from this addiction."
 - d. Don't listen to the crowd. Listen to Jesus' call on your life. Run to Him, with joy! Focus on His voice.
 - e. Jesus said in John 5:25, "Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."
 - f. Let Jesus' voice be the one above the crowds and the noise, and answer His call on your life again today.
- iii. Then, #3, **Let faith in Jesus give you spiritual sight to follow Him closer.**
 - a. "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." Psalm 25:4-5 (NIV)
 - b. "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NIV)
 - c. Faith is hard because it's putting your hope - your life's trajectory - into something that is UNSEEN. So many of us struggle here because we can't SEE God. We can't TOUCH Jesus. And yet, Jesus simply says, "Have faith in God." And even faith the size of a tiny mustard seed, can grow into a bush that can house many birds.
 - d. Grow your faith in Jesus to be more like Jesus.

4. Conclusion

- A. Wearable smart glasses will be a great help for those who need them, but our areas of spiritual blindness require a different sort of correction.
- B. Do you see Jesus as a means to an end, to enhancing your reputation, your status, your own glory? Do you see him merely as a means to getting to heaven?

- C. If so, allow the Holy Spirit of Jesus to give you a different vision! He's offering us the kind of vision that even a blind man can have: a vision of humility, of faith and of a desire to follow the One whose throne is a cross.
- D. It's not the latest gadget that'll save you from spiritual blindness. Only faith can make you well!
- E. GO! Follow Him!
- F. Let's pray...open the eyes of my heart!