

## Vision for Life – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 22, October 24, 2021

- I. **Mark 10:52** - <sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed Him on the way.
- II. **Blindness is a distinct disadvantage in life...**
  - a. Now, I know that we want to focus on the abilities of people in the midst of the disabilities – so yes, a blind person has many positive ways of experiencing life.
    - i. I met a blind pastor in St. Louis who ministered to the blind, and he was able to learn Hebrew and Greek by braille.
    - ii. He also cooked dinner for the family, got around with a walking stick, and kept up his ministry along with being a father.
  - b. However, statistics show that blind people are isolated far more than others in society, along with the various trials of struggling to be employed, doing simple tasks, and going outside the home.
  - c. Blindness is a huge problem... and though a person isn't helpless, they are certainly limited compared to those with sight.
  - d. The difference between 2021 and 2000 years ago is stark – people with disabilities had few options other than depending on family and begging.
  - e. So Bartimaeus, as a blind person in Jesus' day, is begging on the side of the road outside of Jericho.
    - i. As Jesus is making His way to the cross, Jericho is another stop on the journey where He can open up people's eyes to who He is.
- III. **Jesus is God, and He is ushering in His kingdom and reign.**
  - a. Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah coming into the world to heal...
    - i. Isaiah 35:5-6 says God will come, “<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.” And in Isaiah 42:16, God says – “<sup>16</sup> And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground.” (Isaiah 42:16)
    - ii. Jeremiah prophesied a hundred years later what we read today as God says – “<sup>8</sup> Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame...shall return here.” (Jeremiah 31:8)
  - b. Yes, Jesus healed the blind and the deaf and the lame in a physical way... just like blind Bartimaeus today... but He also brought vision, hearing and walking in a spiritual way.
    - i. The spiritually blind are brought to faith...
    - ii. The deaf hear the Gospel, the Good News of their salvation...
    - iii. And the lame begin to walk, or follow, Jesus by faith.

- c. The interesting thing about the words, seeing and hearing, is they are not only physical traits of the body, but can mean knowing and understanding.
  - i. Have you listened to someone and when they were done said, “I hear ya”?
  - ii. Have you ever been told a point of view, or their understanding?
  - iii. Maybe you’ve even said, “Oh, I see!” when you get something.
- d. Faith and understanding are the sight, hearing and walking that God brings that are more important than physical healing in the end.
- e. All throughout the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is trying to get His disciples to see, hear and follow....
  - i. He rebuked His disciples in the boat in Mark 8:18 saying, “Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?”

IV. **These are good questions for us today...**

- a. It’s amazing how people can come to church their whole lives and still have blind spots with God and His will... His vision for their lives.
- b. I’m no different than anyone else by the way.
  - i. Sometimes I will be reading Scripture or listening to a sermon (not mine 😊), and a sin or stubborn spot that I’m holding onto comes into view.
  - ii. Sometimes the challenges in this world force me to look outside myself to see and hear the Lord and His vision for my life.
- c. Do you have a “blind spot” when it comes to God and His vision for you?
  - i. Do you pay attention to some sins in your life, but overlook others?
    - 1. The Lord calls us to be in His Word, to know and follow His 10 Commandments – and He doesn’t allow us to just “plead ignorance.”
      - a. That’s why David writes in Psalm 19, “[Lord], declare me innocent from hidden faults,” (vs. 12) which is also what we say in our confession sometimes – “I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You.”
      - b. To be clear, we are seeking the Lord to reveal to us where we can see our faults and repent.
  - ii. Another blind spot can be our pride and self-reliance...
    - 1. We don’t need to worry too much about seeing, hearing or following when we rely on our own will and desires
    - 2. Probably the most difficult thing to see in ourselves is pride, and not listening to God...
    - 3. Over and over in the Gospel of Mark, we see the disciples vying for the number one spot, trusting in themselves rather than Jesus, and being spiritually blind and deaf.

4. We sort of chuckle when we keep reading this, yet we cannot claim to be so much better... and we know the whole story!
  - a. We know that Jesus went to the cross and rose again for us – we know the rest of the story compared to the disciples who followed Jesus 2000 years ago
  - iii. Even with all that we still fail to see... to hear... to follow.

V. **We are the blind beggar... until Jesus comes along.**

- a. Sure, Bartimaeus cried out for Jesus to help him... which means he had heard that Jesus could heal... Bartimaeus reached out in faith.
- b. Our faith is also calling out for Jesus to heal us of our blind spots, or anything that might keep us from knowing, loving and believing in God with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37).
- c. Just like the physically blind people, we cannot help ourselves... we cannot bring ourselves to wholeness or see on our own... that takes the amazing grace of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.
- d. As that old hymn says, we were once lost but now we are found, we were blind but now we see.
  - i. What do we see? That Jesus is the Christ, the one who came to save us from our sins.
  - ii. We see that Jesus is the one who died to pay for those sins... and rose again to open the door to faith in Him.
- e. There is no explaining our newfound “sight,” because none of this makes sense except by God’s power coming to us and giving us faith –
  - i. That’s why Paul calls it the foolishness of the cross in 1 Corinthians 1 (vss. 18-25), because it doesn’t make sense to the people who are blind to Jesus.
- f. Nope, we simply sit by the side of the road, hopeless... and Jesus comes by with the gift of life... a new vision for life.

VI. **Many of those who were healed went away, but Bartimaeus followed.**

- a. It’s hard to say whether he followed Jesus to the cross with the others, but in the excitement of receiving his sight, he was going to follow.
- b. That’s our calling as well – when we see and hear – we follow.
- c. Some call that discipleship, but others might just call it vocation.
  - i. You see, some people believe following Jesus means going overseas to some foreign mission field...
  - ii. Others believe it’s about becoming a pastor or professional church worker
  - iii. Yet others consider following Jesus as giving up everything.
- d. Any one of these things might be true, but in our daily vocations of parents, children, grandparents, employment, members of clubs, and just about anything... we can have Jesus in the middle of it.
  - i. In other words, we can live for Jesus no matter where we are.

- ii. That's a vision for life that God won for us on the cross – to see, to hear and to follow Him in every part of our lives.
- e. Without a doubt, the Lord came to us on the road (wherever that may have been) and said, "Go your way; your faith has made you well," (vs 52).
- f. Praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for we were once blind, but now... we see. Amen.