

Mark 10:32-52

“Seeing” The Whole Picture

Kid Sermon:

(blindfold):

Are any of you afraid of the dark? Why? I can't see any of you right now. It's really scary to not be able to see. I don't know where things are, and I don't know who to trust. I'm scared I will hurt myself. I am scared someone might hurt me.

Even though I can't see with my eyes, though, there are still things I can “see”. I can tell using my ears that there are a lot of kids around me. I can tell by using my nose that there are candles lit in the sanctuary. I can tell by using my hands that this floor is cold and hard.

(take off blindfold)

And now I can see with my eyes that the sanctuary is filled with people!

The disciples were with Jesus every day, but they didn't see who Jesus really was. They knew he was amazing, but they didn't really see that he was God.

Bartimaeus couldn't see with his eyes, but he knew that Jesus was God, and that as God, Jesus could heal him. In a lot of ways, Bartimaeus could “see” better than the disciples!

There are a lot of ways to “see” Jesus. What are some of those ways?

- When other people help us
- When we read the bible
- When we pray and know that God is with us
- THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE

Yes! Did you know that we can see Jesus through other people and that you can help other people see Jesus through you? Today is a healing service, and Jesus is using other people to care for us and to help heal us today. These people are called our parish nurses. They help people when they are sick or when they have lost something or someone that they love, or when they are sad. They also help us learn how to care for other people too. Today, they are helping us learn what to do if an adult got really hurt. After church they are helping people learn how to do CPR and use the AED.

Who knows what an AED is? (Machine that helps people). If there was ever an emergency, or someone was having some heart problems, you might be asked to go and get the AED for an adult! Do you know where the AED is? (Explain where it is).

After we pray, one of our parish nurses, Jean Prickett is going to be standing by the door and you are going to follow her back to your Sunday school class rooms, but on the way, she is going to show you where the AED is in our church incase you ever need to help someone and run and get it for an adult. Sound good?

Let's pray.

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Adult Sermon:

Today's reading is all about Jesus on the move. He is on his way to Jerusalem, toward the cross. Let's find Jerusalem on the map (show map). This is Jesus' ultimate destination. Before today's story, Jesus and the disciples had been in Ephraim (locate on map). When our story begins, Jesus and his disciples are in the area of Perea, which is a region (not a city) northeast of Jerusalem (locate). And Jerico (locate) is where the travelers came to on their way to Jerusalem. Jerico is close to the Dead Sea, a very low lying area, so when Mark says they were going UP to Jerusalem, they were probably really going uphill!

So why is it important for us to know where these events took place? Well, it's important to understand that Jesus was getting closer to the place at which he would die. It's also important to realize that Jesus didn't just minister in one place.

Jesus is literally on his journey to the cross...to the place where he will be betrayed, and ultimately killed. And as Jesus walked and taught and healed, his people followed, amazed and afraid. Jesus used this journey to try to teach people what was going to happen to him...and what that all meant. Jesus tried to tell his disciples (for a 3rd time actually) what it means that he was about to suffer, die, and rise again.

So what does it mean? What does it mean to us that Jesus is on this journey to the cross?

I think much like the disciples of the day, we don't always understand what it means either. The disciples definitely didn't get it...I think the disciples have a hard time seeing what is really going on when Jesus is trying to tell them what is about to happen. Jesus is right in front of them – what do you mean that you are going to be handed over to the chief priests and scribes and be condemned to death? What do you mean that you will be mocked and spit upon and flogged andKilled? What do you mean you are going to “rise again” after 3 days. What do you mean?

The disciples can't see what is really going on. They just can't see the whole big picture.

I grew up with a girl named Sarah Bailor (I've changed her name for privacy purposes). Sarah was rough. In elementary school, Sarah always wore dirty clothes and smelled dirty so no one really wanted to sit with her

at lunch or play with her at recess. The teachers made us, of course, but when we went to middle school, and high school, Sarah had to defend herself and stick up for herself and so she became a bully. She was mean. No one liked her...everyone stayed clear of her. She put everyone down all the time and was always picking fights. She would tell people, "You're fat. You're ugly. You should transfer schools because nobody likes you". She would go out of her way to find something wrong with you and then pry on that feature. I remember losing a big tennis match once and she was relentless. "You lost it for the whole team you know! You should just quit because you suck".

I hated Sarah. No matter how nice I tried to be to her (which honestly, probably wasn't very nice), she never had a good thing to say about me, or anyone.

Three years after we graduated, Sarah passed away. After her death, it came out that Sarah had suffered years of physical, sexual and emotional abuse in her house. Sarah had to essentially raise her younger brother on her own because her mom was too drunk every night to be a parent, and when her brother grew up, he turned on her and raped and abused Sarah repeatedly.

Sarah was a bully at school, but we never saw the whole picture. We didn't see what was really going on in her life and what she was going through. We never knew that Sarah was being abused and destroyed from the inside out.

We couldn't see what was really going on. We just couldn't see the whole big picture.

Jesus tries to explain to the disciples that he will soon be betrayed, suffer and die for their sakes, but they can't see what is really going on. They just can't see the whole big picture.

And so Jesus and his disciples continue on their journey toward the cross and they come upon Bartimaeus. A blind man who truly and physically is unable to see anything. Completely blind. And Bartimaeus shouts out to Jesus, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" People walking by told him to be quiet, but Bartimaeus shouts out again, "Son of David, have mercy on me!...My teacher, let me see again".

Bartimaeus is a man who is physically blind, but, even in that blindness, recognizes who Jesus is. Meanwhile, the disciples could see physically, but were blind to who Jesus was.

Where in our lives are we blind? Are we blind to seeing God at work in this world, in this community? Are we blind to seeing the need of our neighbor or how God can use us to help? Are we blind to seeing how God is at work in our lives?

"Son of David! Have mercy on me! Let me see again".

Jesus says to us just as he said to Bartimaeus, "Go; your faith has made you well". Do you see that correlation between faith and wholeness? Faith is never a prerequisite for healing (if I believe a little more, I will be healed...and if I am not healed then I don't have enough faith)...but faith creates a sense of orientation. It's Bartimaeus' sense of who he is and who Jesus is that turns him to the healer and in the sense of the healer, he is made whole/well.

Ultimately, it's the free act of Christ...and one to be welcomed and celebrated.

Jesus, the disciples and Bartimaeus are all on the way – to Jerusalem, to the cross, to a new kind of faith – and they invite us to consider our own journeys on the way to something new....a new way of seeing who Christ is and the bigger picture of God's love for us!

I end with a creative expression litany:

Our Lord, Jesus came and turned the world on its head.
He made us rethink what we thought we knew

Our vision of beauty...

Includes impossible ideals for size, color, gender, and age.

God's vision of beauty...

Includes every face, every ability, every size every age, and every color.

Our vision of power...

Includes strength by force, financial success, and ability to influence those around us.

God's vision of power...

Includes inner strength, surrender, and reliance upon God, and God alone.

Our vision of value...

Includes wealth, possessions, ability, and what we can produce.

God's vision of value...

Lies in our every being.

Let us rethink our vision...

And see instead through God's eyes.

Thanks be to God. Amen.