

## Mark 10:46-52

<sup>46</sup>They came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, a blind man, Bartimaeus the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road begging. <sup>47</sup>When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>48</sup>Many told him to be quiet, but he kept shouting all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>49</sup>Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

They called the blind man, saying, "Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!"

<sup>50</sup>He tossed aside his outer garment, jumped up, and went to Jesus.

<sup>51</sup>"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man replied, "*Rabboni*, I want to see again."

<sup>52</sup>Jesus told him, "Go. Your faith has made you well." Immediately he received his sight and began following Jesus on the road.

## Lord, I Want to See

### I.

I want you to close your eyes for a minute. Do you remember what is up front in the chancel area? Can you list what you just saw moments ago?

Our chancel area is not super-elaborate, so maybe you have a chance. Do you notice those things on a weekly basis and categorize them and contemplate their meanings?

Keep your eyes closed and I'll describe a few. There is an altar. The altar symbolizes that God is present with his people in Word and sacrament. There is no need to sacrifice animals anymore, but the altar reminds us that there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. Christ shed his blood so that we could be in the presence of God. The cross hangs above the altar to remind us of the *way* Jesus died to complete the sacrifice for our forgiveness. When the pastor faces the congregation from the altar, he is speaking as God's ambassador to the people; when he faces the altar, he and the congregation are speaking to God, often in prayers and petitions.

In a prominent position is the font. Baptism is to be a lifelong reminder that we have been made children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. As the font takes us back to our baptism, we are reminded of the catechism truism that we daily do battle against the devil, the world, and our old sinful nature with the help of the Holy Spirit. It's prominent location reminds us that it is only by faith that we are able to enter into the presence of God.

There is a pulpit. In the sermon, the pastor is to speak to the people and convey God's Word to them. Related to the pulpit is the lectern. This is the place from which the lectionary, or readings, for the week are read.

All of these are pretty obvious. What about the others? Did you notice and remember the color of the Paraments? Today they are green. Green is the color of the Sundays after Pentecost and indicates the season that focuses on your growth as a Christian. Next week they will be red for Reformation Sunday and Last Judgment on the next week. Banners typically hang from the sides of our chancel. Perhaps you noticed that they have been changed this week. Luther's seal is hanging in anticipation of Reformation next week.

Ok, that's the quick tour. If your eyes are still closed, feel free to open them now.

### II.

The reason for this exercise is to point out how much we take our eyes and our vision for granted. Most of us know a few people who are blind, or legally blind, or visually impaired to the point they can't see many of the things that are quite apparent to the rest of us. Often, those with such conditions have trained themselves to heighten their other senses.

As Bartimaeus sat in his usual place to beg near the gates of Jericho, he could hear a

commotion. Concentrating, and sorting through the cacophony he figured out that all the commotion was because Jesus was passing by.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mark 10:47, EHV). His blindness was a disability that in his day meant he could not work to support himself, but it didn’t mean he was stupid or uneducated. That shout indicated he knew the Old Testament and the promise of a Savior to come from the line of King David. He recognized Jesus as that promised Messiah and showed his faith in him.

“Many told him to be quiet” (Mark 10:48, EHV).

Why, do you think? Why would they want to stop him from calling out to Jesus? Was it perhaps because it would inconvenience *them*?

“Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ They called the blind man, saying, ‘Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!’” (Mark 10:49, EHV).

The strategy belongs to those trying to find an “in” to someone they want to impress. First—“Oh, Jesus doesn’t want to bother with the likes of *you*.” Then—“What a lucky guy you are. Jesus has expressed interest in you!” What a pious bunch the crowd wanted to appear. How often don’t we exhibit the same strategy. Treat someone well if you think there might be a benefit to *you*, ignore them if there’s nothing in it for you.

### III.

“Go. Your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he received his sight and began following Jesus on the road” (Mark 10:52, EHV).

Bartimaeus was one of the few in the crowd that day who had any *real* sight, even before his physical eyesight was restored. He knew who Jesus was and believed in him. We know that without a doubt because Jesus said it himself.

Real sight means keeping before your eyes the real reason you come to church. Maybe your eyes were opened while they were closed as you began to consider the parts of the chancel and what they mean. Maybe you’ll pay more attention in the future. But even if you didn’t know there was meaning behind these pieces of furniture and art up here, or just didn’t really think about it all that much, you came here to think about and focus on your Savior. You *do* know about him.

You want to hear from the Word of God and be reminded of the great things your loving Savior-God has done for you. You *do* want to hear again each week that Jesus *did* come as the sacrifice God required to pay for the shame of your sins; that he died on the cross to make that sacrifice, but that he didn’t stay dead, but rose again on the third day. You want to be reminded that he promised he would come again one day to take you to his home in heaven to be with him eternally.

### IV.

“What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him. The blind man replied, ‘*Rabboni*, I want to see again’” (Mark 10:51, EHV).

And so you come. Week after week you come. You realize that your coming isn’t to show God how pious you are. It isn’t to show God that you are here and therefore deserve to have him give some consideration to you and bless you in some special way. You come here to see Jesus. You want to hear him speak to you in his Word and in song. You want to see again and again the reality of the salvation he has won for you. You want to be strengthened by him to go back into the world for another week, prepared for the onslaughts of the devil and the world and your own sinful flesh. Prepared to do battle against them because your faith has been refreshed and renewed. Prepared because *all* your senses are heightened when you see Jesus and hear that your sins are forgiven.

Go in peace. Your sins are forgiven. You have seen the Savior. Amen.