

SERMON GUIDE:

May 7, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How important is our natural vision? What are the many benefits of your vision? In the same regards, how important is your spiritual vision.
- What are a few takeaways from our main scripture Matthew 9:27-31.
- How spiritually blind is the church at large in today's society? Do you have the faith to declare for vision to be restored?
- The word of God says that according to your faith it will be done unto you. Take 5 minutes as a group and pray a prayer of faith over spiritual blindness that the church is currently walking in.

SERMON NOTES

You will never outperform the picture you have of yourself.

Possibly, the way you see yourself is as important as the way you see God.

Many Christians will believe in the greatness of God but discount the greatness that God wants to do through them. You will act like the person you think you are.

Proverbs 23:7

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

The way you see yourself determines your attitude toward life.

Your self-portrait is the way you see yourself.

Your self-portrait is the view you have of yourself.

Your self-portrait controls your self-confidence – and your self-conduct.

You will always act like the person you think you are.

You cannot outperform your persuasion.

When God wants to do something great in you the first thing he will do is change how you view yourself. What and if you see, is something God cares about deeply.

Stop saying what you are seeing and start saying what God is seeing!

Matthew 9:27-31

And as Jesus passed on from there, **two blind men followed him, crying aloud,** "Have mercy on us, Son of David." **28** When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, **"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"** They said to him, **"Yes, Lord."** **29** Then he touched their eyes, saying, **"According to your faith be it done to you."** **30** And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." **31** But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

According to the CDC.GOV website, the following is stated about Vision loss.



- Vision loss can affect your physical health by increasing your risk of falls and your quality of life
- It can also have a big impact on your mental health.
- Loss of vision has been linked to loneliness, social isolation, and feelings of worry, anxiety, and fear.
- Depression is common in people with vision loss.

Story of my Dad losing his eyesight.

The road became less clear and the side mirrors of the cars he passed paid the damage for it. Spiritual vision loss doesn't just affect you, it affects those who are around you.

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no vision, the people perish

WikiHow wrote an article about coping with Blindness. There are a lot of interesting similarities between how they suggest to treat physical blindness and how the church has treated spiritual blindness.

- Learn more about your eye condition so you can better understand it.
- Allow yourself to grieve over the loss of your vision.
- Remind yourself that you can still be independent without your vision
- Recognize that you can still live a happy life.
- Accept yourself and your condition to make it easier to cope.

The church has treated spiritual blindness much in the same way.

Instead of believing by faith for vision restoration, we have taught people how to cope with their spiritual blindness rather than conquer their spiritual blindness.

If you take away a person's ability to see what God sees, they become subject to every whim and attack that life, the enemy, or circumstance throws at them.

Take a look at how serious God took a lack of natural vision in the OT and the type and shadows of the NT;

Leviticus 21:16 tells us;

Blindness incapacitated a man from serving in the priesthood

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Leviticus 22:22, Deuteronomy 15:21, Malachi 1:8 tells us;



blindness in an animal rendered it unfit to be offered as a sacrifice to the Lord

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

The widespread incidence of blindness in NT times is indicated by the importance which the restoration of sight had in Christ's ministry of healing. These scriptures are just some of the examples of Christ's healing ministry in blindness.

Mt. 9:27; 11:5 [par Lk. 7:22]; Mt. 12:22; 15:30f; 20:30-34 [par Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43]; 21:14; Mk. 8:22-25;

Jesus even noted to correlation between lack of vision naturally and lack of vision spiritually.

Matthew 15:14

Let them alone; they are blind guides. **And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.**" In the 1st cent. a.d blindness was generally regarded, in accordance with the OT tradition (cf. Ex. 4:11; Dt. 28:28; 2 K. 6:18; Ezk. 6:9), as a divine punishment for sin without any reflection on its possible incidence from purely physical and external causes. **Jesus did not subscribe to the punitive view of blindness**, but instead used the condition from time to time as a means of manifesting divine love to an underprivileged segment of the community

John 9:1-5

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

My point: Blindness or lack of vision didn't scare Jesus.

He looked at the condition as an opportunity for the works of God to be displayed.

When eye sight is restored, vision is gained.

In our text this morning, two blind men followed Jesus, crying out loud.

They didn't just follow him on the street but followed Him into the house.

When persistence and desperation meet, you end up next to Jesus.

They knew that the answer to their condition was walking and following Jesus.

How did two blind men follow through streets and into a house?

Scripture doesn't give us the details, but **persistence and desperation often times don't care about the details.** They had an appointment with destiny, their vision for life was coming back.



They approach Jesus and before they can cry out again, He asks an important question. **Do you believe I am able to do this?** Simple, yet direct. They could have said, Jesus we chased you blindly. We cried out to you loudly. Listen, just because you chase something blindly and cry out loudly doesn't mean your situation will change. Faith is more than outward expression, it's an inward conviction. They answered a direct question, directly. **Yes, Lord.**

Notice when they were chasing Jesus at first, His title was son of David. Son of David was a term to describe a descendant of David whom God will place on a throne to rule his kingdom. Their situation changes when Jesus became more than just a ruler over God's Kingdom but theirs. Yes, Lord was an outward confession of an inward surrender. You are not just the coming ruler, you are my ruler.

He then touches their eyes. He is stilling touching eyes. He still longs for a people that will see with His eyes and love with His heart. But notice, their eyes sight wasn't immediately healed when Jesus touched their eyes. Jesus as he places his hands on their eyes, says **"According to your faith be it done to you."** Jesus had given them permission via their faith to go as far as they wanted to go.

Our vision. 1000. 100. 10. 1. Will only be accomplished according to the faith that we are willing to walk in. God is actively touching the sight and purpose of Parkway, we can see but it will be according to our faith be it done to us.

I want to tell you what I see in our church when I look through His eyes.

- A church of 1000 in the next 2-4 years (crowds aren't disciples, we endeavor to be a house that disciples and equips the people that God brings)
- 100 trained and equipped volunteers (Everything that God saves, serves)
- 10 sent out into full time ministry (We are to be a sending house, not the dead sea)
- 1 - a church that develops a heart for the lost in all we do. (A church outside of these four walls)
- I see multiple campuses all throughout Southern Oregon.
- I see a church, funding ministry all over the world through missions giving and outreach.
- I see a church completely updated and renovated. This community needs to see us investing in our facilities, it sends a clear message that our better days are ahead.
- I see a worship ministry that ushers the presence of God in such a powerful way that people up to an hour drive will call this church home.
- I see a church that celebrates what God does on Sunday, but the excitement is because of what He is doing M-S.
- I see a church alive with expectancy and united in cause and purpose. A church that is a biblical representation of together.
- I see a church willing to help other churches reach their kingdom potential. Our giving will not just affect this house but other houses.



- I see a people living and loving in proper healthy relationships.
- I see a church preaching holiness and an un-compromised, unmixed, gospel of freedom from strongholds, sin, and generational curses.
- I see a church where people can be released into their calling under a covering that will provide accountability and not manipulation or control.
- I see a church that unleashed our facilities to their full potential. I so long for the day that the Hull Center is open everyday.

For every one of these bullet points, a thousand things need to happen, or maybe just one thing. Yes, LORD!

Yes, Lord over:

- My obedience
- My conduct
- My career
- My character
- My decisions
- My future
- My goals
- My words
- My wallet
- My family
- My integrity
- My choices
- My plans

You get the point.

What God is saying as he is touching our sight, **You pick how far and fast you want to go?**

You hold the key's now.

Your faith will determine how fast and far we go.

God has proven He is willing.

This Pastor is all - in.

I can have no more ministry among you than what you and your faith allow.

The board is united in heart and purpose.

We need you to see what God is seeing.

Faithful in attendance.

Faithful in generosity.

Faithful in service.

Faithful in confession.

Faithful in Unity.

Faithful in outreach.

Faithful in relationship.

According to your faith be it unto us.