

## *Let Me See Again*

*(Preached by Cheryl Williams at FBC, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Mark 10:46-52)*

Today I want to invite you to enter into the scene of the bible story, to imagine what was happening. This is a method first formed by St. Ignatius and has been used for many centuries. The purpose is to bring the story alive and in so doing find Jesus speaking to us.

So, as I retell this story from the standpoint of a bystander, close your eyes and place yourself in the scene and take note of what you see, hear or find interesting.

*I have been following Jesus for quite some time now. I have watched him heal people, feed people and teach people. Lately, he has been talking about following him and keeps reminding us that doing so will be risky. He keeps talking about getting into trouble even to the point of death.*

*The whole group was in Jericho with Jesus, and we were getting ready to leave there and go to Jerusalem. On the way out of Jericho we came upon a man, a blind man, a blind man begging as he sat by the roadside. He was sitting on his cloak and begging. He must have heard us come along and he must have heard us talking about Jesus, that must have been how he knew Jesus was there, he couldn't see him after all.*

*As we approached, he started calling out, calling Jesus the Son of David and asking for mercy. He must have known who Jesus was to both ask him for help and to call him Son of David.*

*Some in our group told him to be quiet, tried to silence him, not sure why. Did they think he was an interruption or irritation, was he getting the way? Was he a distraction? Did they think he was unimportant? Did they think he was a crazy man? Must say I felt a bit uncomfortable about the way they were treating him. He couldn't help that he had a disability. He had no way of working or getting food because he could not see. The fact that he was out here on the road, out of town, showed me he had been excluded from this community. I wondered what had happened to his family, who I am guessing, would have looked after him, perhaps they had died, and he now had no one to look after him. Must be awful to have to ask people every day to help you. I actually think it probably took a lot of courage or desperation to sit there day in, day out, in all kinds of weather. I am do glad I have my sight – I can take in the world around me, see the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, can see clouds forming and know rain is on the way so know when to go inside, can see who is approaching me on the road, get out of the way of camels or other animals, can even see what I am eating and not spill it down my front. I can see potholes in the road and avoid them and not fall over. I can see what I am cooking, I can read, I can see the birds. Not sure how I would be if I couldn't see.*

*Anyway, they kept telling him to be quiet. Didn't really work, he simply got louder and louder.*

*Jesus was having none of this, he asked those who were telling the man to be quiet, to go get him. So, they did. Then they were much nicer to the man and said – take heart, get up he wants to see you.*

*Well, the man, Bartimaeus, jumped up, threw off the cloak he was sitting on and collecting money in and ran to Jesus.*

*Now this was interesting, who was going to speak first. It was Jesus, and he asked Bartimaeus (we knew his name by now and that he hadn't always been blind, something must have caused him to lose his sight), Jesus asked him what did he want, what did he want Jesus to do for him? Well, Jesus, what do you think he wanted? He wanted to see again, that was obvious, blind Freddy could see that. Actually it was a bit strange that Jesus should ask him, lately it has been the other way around – the rich man came and asked Jesus what he needed to do get eternal life and then some of our number (much to the horror of the rest of us) asked Jesus to do them a favour and give them the honour of sitting on his left and right in glory. Now Jesus was asking – what do you want me to do.*

*Bartimaeus replies as I expected, I want to see again. Oh, Bartimaeus, do you know what you are asking. Have you not heard that we need to be careful what we ask for, because we just might get it. What a change this will be for him, once he can see again, his life will be turned upside down, no more begging and relying on others for survival. He'd have to get up and go back to the city and find himself work and earn a living. It would be good too – seeing people's faces and their expressions again, seeing the landscape, the night sky, the trees and flowers and animals and birds. Being able to see and move around without bumping into things and people, but what a change it would be.*

*This time I noticed Bartimaeus calls Jesus, 'teacher.' Last time he called him Son of David, perhaps he knows more about this man Jesus, than I am giving him credit for. Might he be a believer?*

*Then Jesus tells him his faith has made him well. Perhaps he was a believer after all. Perhaps he just knew that Jesus could and would have compassion on him and help him. Perhaps he just knew who Jesus was and that is why he kept crying out and would not be diverted.*

*The other thing I noticed was that Jesus told him to go. Go where? I am guessing back to his old life, to his family. Go back into town, he was no longer excluded from his community. Perhaps he meant go back and make something of yourself.*

*Then he got up, but he didn't go anywhere, he started following Jesus. His response to Jesus' grace and compassion was to leave it all aside and follow. He left behind his cloak – probably his only possession, his protection against the elements and his tool of the trade when you are a beggar, he just left it all behind.*

*It wasn't just his sight he regained, but he really saw who Jesus was and what Jesus was calling all of us to do – give up the things that hold us back and follow. That's what he tried to tell the rich man now I think of it.*

*This whole incident really was a lesson for me. I learnt many things that day.*

*I wonder what I would have said if Jesus asked me 'what do you want me to do?'*

*Jesus showed me how I should be treating those who cry out for help – I shouldn't be silencing them, rather I should ask them what they need and do my very best to help. I need to make sure I encourage others rather than try to silence them. I need to really notice others and not just treat them as if they are invisible. This is discipleship, this is loving my neighbour and loving God, this is what it means to follow Jesus.*

*Bartimaeus taught me that I should be grateful for sight. I need to really open my eyes and see the light in the sky in the morning, the green of the trees, the beauty all around me. More than that, he taught me sight is not just about what my eyes can take in, but really seeing with the eyes of my heart as it were, to see clearly just who Jesus is and what he wants for me and what he calls me to be and do. Maybe I should look at life from the perspective of others.*

*Bartimaeus, reminded me that I should have the courage to ask God for what I need and then be prepared to turn my life upside down and follow him.*

*Bartimaeus showed me that when embraced by Jesus, my possessions, my security could be tossed aside. He showed me how to embrace joy. Jesus is all I need.*