

June 24, 2007

**I Want To See
Mark 10:46-52**

“We may not all be chasing the same thing, but we are all chasing something. What defines us as a people is our pursuit, our movement, and our tendency to head out... The fabric of our everyday lives is frenetic.”

David Brooks – On Paradise Drive

Some Theology: Deeply embedded within God’s character is a powerful generosity. Now, we all know that God is the One True Judge – and many Christians/Organizations have no problem painting Him that way – they love to speak in harsh tones regarding God, almost as though they feel they that they have to be God’s human screening agents.

But what we find in the scriptures is that the goodness or generosity of God is as extremely beautiful as the judgment of God is severe – and when folks only paint God as being angry with sin and the Judge of sinners (which He is), they only get half the picture give half the story.

The Gospel **does** convict us – and it is a fierce conviction. It makes us painfully aware of our sin just like that man was painfully aware of his blindness – every waking moment was a reminder. But the reason the Gospel exposes such misery is to save us – it is to take us somewhere else.

So Jesus is attracted to people who know their condition, who cry to Him in despair – not because He enjoys our pain but because He alone has the power to relieve it.

What did Jesus mean by ‘saved?’ The answer is really that he (Bartimaeus) was saved from everything:

- He was saved from the shame of society’s scorn – because of his faith he was unwilling to be defined by the crowd that treated him as pitiful, damaged goods.
- He was saved from his own inner demons and self-pity – the presence of Jesus inspired and empowered him to act out of character and refuse to accept a life less than what God could provide.
- He was saved from his sin – with Jesus he was forgiven – his physical condition did not negate his spiritual blindness – and only Jesus could bring relief from his guilt.

And it wasn’t until he was saved that he was healed from his physical affliction. Before he was healed, he was healed. It wasn’t until he was loved by Jesus that he realized that all he needed was to be loved by Jesus. Now we know this because immediately our friend followed Jesus.

Have you ever considered that in your afflictions God may be drawing you to a deeper healing, a deeper understanding, even a deeper joy?

Our friend’s affliction mattered to our Savior.

Three Conclusions:

1. Our Sorrows and Afflictions are never Lost on Jesus

Exodus 3:9 – “... the cry of the Israelites has reached me...”

Christ is never so preoccupied that He will turn a deaf ear to our cries. In a world where everyone is headed ‘somewhere,’ Jesus is always passing by.

2. Our Condition is Never so Great that Jesus cannot Heal and Save

Exodus 3:7-8 – “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them...”

To Jesus our cries of desperation are sweet songs of faith. His work on the Cross insures that He will always, ever able to sympathize/save.

3. The Church’s Effectiveness will always be Measured in Terms of its Willingness to Minister to the ‘Least of These.’

The Church will be measured by its willingness to care for and about what and who Jesus cares for and about. Interestingly, in the Jewish community, from earliest times, it was intended that blind people were to be cared for.

Leviticus 19:14 – “Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God...”

Further, in the Jewish society there were to be no beggars. It wasn’t that poor and afflicted people didn’t exist, but it was the responsibility of those who had the means, to take them in, and at

the very least to offer them work as servants – without treating them like slaves.

In other words, the generosity of God was built into the Law of God to the extent that the Church was to be an arm of God to the poor and helpless.

Which begs a Question the Church has to Answer (a question that leads to other questions):

- **Do we Care?**

“Our careless lives set the outer world talking; and we give them grounds for talking in a way that throws doubt on the truth of Christianity itself.”

C.S. Lewis – Mere Christianity

Do you care? What are we willing to do? What are we willing to give up? What are we willing to sacrifice? What are we willing to change – for the sake of the Kingdom of God? Because, if not the Church, who?

The Scriptures teach that Christ still walks the earth today – and He does so through a flawed, broken, yet loved and redeemed community of people called the Church.

And here is what we cannot escape – that the Gospel presents a Savior who sought out and died for His sheep. We can't escape it because it is not only intertwined into His teachings and stories, but it is demonstrated in His life and sacrifice.