



Blind Spots: Jesus' Reach

OPENING PRAYER:

Dear Triune Loving God, we give you thanks for this time that we have together. Open the eyes of hearts so that we may see you and see each other as you see us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ENCOUNTERING GOD:

How have you seen God at work this week?

.....

.....

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READING:

Read Mark 10:46-52

“They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’** The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.”

ADDITIONAL READING:

Read Mark 8:22-26 (Common English Bible)

“Jesus and his disciples came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch and heal him. Taking the blind man’s hand, Jesus led him out of the village. After spitting on his eyes and laying his hands on the man, he asked him, ‘Do you see anything?’ The man looked up and said, ‘I see people. They look like trees, only they are walking around.’ Then Jesus placed his hands on the man’s eyes again. He looked with his eyes wide open, his sight was restored, and he could see everything clearly. Then Jesus sent him home, saying, ‘Don’t go into the village!’”

What is healing? Is it the same thing as being cured?

Being cured and receiving healing is not the same thing but the two things can happen at the same time. Being cured is the restoration of health, but healing from a biblical standpoint means to be made whole. There are many people who were born visually impaired or who lost their sight later in life, but they are spiritually whole. They are whole people and their impairment does not define them.

Jesus can heal us spiritually and can cure us physically. A couple of weeks ago, during Wednesday Night Dinner, a member of our congregation approached me, with a smile on his face and a gladness in his heart. He told me the story about one of his friends who had been diagnosed with brain cancer. The doctors had performed surgery to remove the tumor but unfortunately, the cancer spread to areas of the brain where it was inoperable. So, the doctors decided that they would use radiation to treat the remainder of the cancer. During a post operation visit, scans of the patient's brain were taken. After reviewing the scans, the doctors were shocked to discover the cancer was completely gone! Friends and family had been praying for this man and he was miraculously healed and cured. Jesus' reach extends beyond the biblical narrative of the past and into the story of our lives today. However, healing does not happen for everyone. The same was true during Jesus' day. Judas Iscariot was one of the disciples, yet he was not healed from greed.

WEEK FOUR: JESUS' REACH

REFLECTION:

Jesus attracted crowds of thousands of people- many of them were present because they desperately wanted to be cured of the diseases that made their lives painful and difficult. However, Jesus did not cure every person. It is a holy mystery why some faithful people receive cures while others don't. Jesus does offer healing to everyone through his sacrificial act of love, dying on the cross for our sins. It is healing for our souls.

So, what is necessary to be healed? First, we need to accept that healing is a gift offered to us. Secondly, we need others to cry out on our behalf or we need to cry out. When we cry out, we acknowledge that healing is only something Jesus can do. Next, on our own or with the help of others, we need to go to Jesus. Going to Jesus may look like participating in worship, small group discussion, and mission experiences. In other words, being in places where Jesus shows up is how we reach Him. Just coming and expecting Jesus to be present is an act of faith. Lastly, we must be willing to do whatever Jesus commands. Sometimes, the healing happens immediately and other times it happens in stages. Either way, we need to trust that Jesus will heal us of what ails us. By faith, we begin walking with Jesus, and the more time spent with Jesus through prayer, the study of scripture, worship, small group interactions and mission work, we begin to see with greater clarity. We see God more clearly, and we can see our neighbors through the lens of Jesus Christ.

NOTES:

.....

.....

.....

GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Encounter The Head:

What was the most impactful thing that you learned from the scripture sermon series, discussion guide, podcast or video?

.....

.....

How are the two biblical narratives about healing and curing (of blind men) the same and how are they different?

.....

.....

Encounter The Heart:

Share a time when you experienced healing in your life. Being cured?

.....

.....

Have you experienced any miracles in your life? What did you learn about God? Yourself? Others?

.....

.....

Encounter The Hands:

What do you want Jesus to do for you? Please write your response below. During your daily prayer time, ask God for what you want Jesus to do for you. Also, lift the responses of the group members during your prayer time as well.

.....

.....

.....



PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/concern.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

.....

.....

DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

We encourage everyone to do a daily reflection. This can be done alone, as a couple, or with your family. This spiritual practice will help answer the questions you have and it will improve your ability to see where God is at work in your life, and in the lives of those around you. Please answer the following questions during your personal devotional time at the end of the day.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, “what made you happy today?”

.....

.....

What broke your heart or made you sad today?

.....

.....

What good thing did you do for someone else today?

.....

.....

What are you thankful for today?

.....

.....

WEEK FOUR

Supplies:

- Bible

- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter

WELCOMING GOD:

Gather together, and welcome God into this time and space through the lighting of a candle. Take this moment to pause briefly and sit quietly in this light for a few moments allowing time for everyone to relax their body, mind, and spirit for this time. In these moments, the invitation is to become aware of God's presence with and amongst you as a family.

SHARING WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER:

Say: "If anything is on our minds that makes it difficult for us to focus, let's share it now and then let it go."

- Whoever leads this portion might share what is on his or her mind to model this. Give time for each person to respond. When everyone has responded that would like to, invite everyone to place their hands out and lift them up as we give these distractions to God.

OR you can invite the family to pray together as one person leads, saying the following:

"Dear Loving God, The One who knows our hearts, celebrates our victories, grieves with us during our losses, and gives us the strength to overcome our challenges. Please help us to let go of the distractions we name now, so that we can openly share with our family and may encounter you in a special way today. Our distractions are... (let there be silence here, so everyone has an opportunity to name aloud what is distracting them).

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."

ENCOUNTERING GOD:

Read aloud: Mark 10:46-52.

- Take turns reading the Scripture or have a different family member read the Scripture each week.

"They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way."

ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Say: Bartimaeus experienced blindness for a long time which means that for a long time, he was unable to work, unable to earn money to pay for a place to live, and unable to take care of himself in ways that we sometimes take for granted. And, he became a professional at asking for money. He had to in order to survive. So, when Jesus calls Bartimaeus and asks “what do you want me to do for you,” Bartimaeus could have just asked for money. But, Bartimaeus doesn’t ask for money. He asks to see again. He knows that once he can see, he won’t need to beg anymore. He named the real challenge in his life—the one at the root of his other challenges. He needed to see. He named that. Then, when Jesus says “Go; your faith has made you well,” Bartimaeus follows Jesus. But, Bartimaeus believed before he followed. He saw Jesus—before he physically saw Jesus. He believed before he named the need. Bartimaeus believed from the beginning of this story, and he kept believing when people told him to be quiet. His belief caused him to keep calling out to Jesus. And—after he got what he wanted—he continued to follow. Only now, he could physically see, too.

Bartimaeus’s belief—his faith—strengthened him to stand up, to push back, to keep shouting for Jesus, to get up, and—ultimately—to follow Jesus.

Activity: Take turns naming what you need from Jesus. Then, give God thanks for how Jesus is working in your life. Ask for each family member’s faith to give them strength this week.

Say: “When Jesus invites the disciples to bring Bartimaeus to him, he invites them to be part of the miracle that is about to happen! Every single day, we receive the same invitation to bring others to Jesus and participate in miracles because every single day, God invites us to be encouraging and kind to those around us.”

Discussion Questions

- What about this story surprises you?
- What about this story troubles you?

ENCOUNTERING GOD TOGETHER:

Say: “May we pray together as a family...

Let us share our prayers for the world: for our country and leaders, for other countries and their leaders...

Let us share our prayers for the church, ministers, and spiritual leaders...

Let us share our prayers for our teachers, first responders, friends, and others in the community...

Let us share our prayers for our family and our own specific needs...”

If you would like to record the people for whom you pray, use the next few lines to do so:

ENCOUNTERING TRANSFORMATION TOGETHER:

Pray aloud together:

God, we welcomed you here and read Your Word,
we prayed and we spent time with you,
we rested in your love for us,
and we did this all together.

Now, we promise to love one another and others as you love us.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

BLESSING ONE ANOTHER FOR OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORLD:

Invite family members to bless one another using any of the examples below or their own blessings.

Examples:

- “I love you. God loves you. I pray God blesses you.”
- “God loves you exactly like you are—and so do I.”
- “I love the gifts God has given you and how you bless the world with them.”