

Matthew 20.29-30 | Now I See

### **INTRO | The Resurrection**

**He is Risen [He is Risen Indeed].** For those visiting, this year we decided against the bell choir, the rainbow-colored pyrotechnics show, the inflatable bunny-shaped jump-houses, the pancake breakfast, and the politically correct “spring orb” hunt. Instead, we’ve chosen to do the same thing we do EVERY Sunday—the only thing with power—we **preach Jesus life, death, and resurrection.** Christians speak often about the incarnation and his crucifixion, but not enough about his resurrection. The Resurrection is the linchpin by which all Christianity holds together—and yet, we for 364 days of the year, we remain relatively silent. There can never be enough sermons about Jesus’ resurrection.

**Easter was the only sermon that the disciples had.** In the book of Acts, Judas’ replacement was chosen because he was a witness to His resurrection. Peter’s first sermon proclaimed the reality of Jesus resurrection. Peter’s second sermon condemned the men of Israel for killing Jesus whom God raised from the dead. The religious leaders became annoyed with the disciples because they were proclaiming the resurrection. Upon being arrested for this teaching, their entire defense rested on obeying God who raised Jesus. The first martyr’s last breaths were describing a vision of a glorified and raised Jesus which ignited a great persecution of any disciples preaching the resurrection. And the leader of that persecution, Saul, was changed from murderer to martyr after a face-to-face encounter with a resurrected Jesus.

**Easter is STILL the only sermon we have** (though we are known for others). **All sermons should point to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—because that is what the Bible is about.** Today, we providentially find ourselves in the book of Matthew in a story about two BLIND MEN. Ironically, while the much of the world believes in the person of Jesus, and even admire his teachings/example, the majority of the world is BLIND to His true identity proved by his resurrection. **Jesus only saves the blind.** *John 9.39-41* <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains. **Jesus saves those who are blind and warns those who say they can see.**

### **Blindness in the Bible**

**The Bible has much to say about blindness.** In Luke 4, Jesus began his ministry in his hometown synagogue. There, he stood and read the scroll of the prophet Isaiah which partly said: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind...”* (Luke 4.18) After taking his seat, Jesus said to them, *“This Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”* and a riot ensued. When an imprisoned John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask if Jesus is truly the Messiah, He responds, *“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them”* (Matt.11.5-6)

**Jesus came to restore sight to the blind, but blindness always pointed beyond a physical problem. All of our physical brokenness points to our spiritual brokenness.** Jesus certainly healed physical blindness. But just as Jesus forgave the sins of paralytic before he helped him walk, Jesus intends to heal our heart problem. **All of our problems in this world are not principally physical, emotional, intellectual, or material—they are spiritual.** In his second letter to the Corinthian church, Paul writes that *“the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God”* (2Cor. 4.4). In Psalm 115, the Bible says that idols themselves are blind and deaf and those who worship them become like them. Sin is always associated with blindness, and salvation is always associated with vision. **We are blind; but we are blind to our own blindness.**

### Consequences of Sin | CREATION/FALL

**But it wasn't always that way. God created the world with men who could see.** They could see God. They could see God's authority. They could see God's goodness. They could see God's greatness. They could see God's beauty. They could see God's provision. They could see that they were creatures, dependent and accountable to a creator. They could see God's will for their lives and knew what they were joyfully charged to do for His glory. **Before the fall, men could see.**

The Bible says that men chose the darkness rather than the light—they closed their eyes and their hearts to God. Men exchanged the truth of God for a lie. Men worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. Men decided to reject God's goodness and disobey God's Word. **Men became blind through sin...and they became blind to their sin.** Men could no longer see God's authority, God's love, or God's beauty—they sought it in all the wrong places. More than once the book of Proverbs says, **"There is a way that appears right to man, but its end is the way to death."** Man's decision to eat that which God had forbidden left them lost in darkness. **Full of guilt and shame, instead of running to God, they hid from Him.** Like these TWO BLIND MEN, we are utterly helpless and dependent; but UNLIKE these men, most refuse to admit it. We cannot see what is right or what is wrong; what is good or what is bad; what is foolish or what is wise...**at least not with their eyes.**

### Call of Christ | REDEMPTION

**Left alone, like blind men, we stumble around the darkness and hurt ourselves.** Enter Jesus, sent to rescue a world from darkness. God became man in human flesh; light entered the darkness, in order to give sight to the blind. Those who claimed to "SEE" rejected Him just as they rejected with anyone else they considered a "nobody". Like these two blind men. The rich man could not see. The religious could not see. Even the disciples struggled to see. **The BLIND men were the only ones who could SEE—not with their eyes, but with their heart. What did they see? Listen to their words...**

1. **I see I am blind (Helpless Cry)** | There comes a time in your life where you realize you are helpless, hopeless, and hapless. You see that you have a problem that you cannot solve; you see that you are broken in a way that you cannot fix. Every step you take is painful or off the mark. Like walking in the dark, you are blind to the dangers and lost as to the way out. The natural response to this experience is to cry out for help. **This is a heart of DESPERATION.**
2. **I see are the Son of David (Lord, Son of David)** | The title "Son of David" is a messianic title—the promised savior. The Son of David is the King who will reestablish the rule of God and set all things right. Isaiah 35.5-6 describes the age of the Messiah as one where the **"the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; [the] shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy..."** He is the Jewish Son of David, but he is the Gentile Lord—he reigns over all. The title Lord reveals that this is more than an intellectual ascent. **This is a heart of SURRENDER.**
3. **I see I do not deserve (Have Mercy)** | These men realize their deepest need. At the same time, they know they do not deserve the love of the King. The cries of the blind man are not the complaints of the entitled. "Have mercy" is how the blind confess they see they are broken, sinful and rebellious. That there is no one to blame for their dark wanderings than themselves. **This is a heart of HUMILITY.**
4. **I see you can heal (Sight)** | Jesus asks these men what sounds like a foolish question. But the men could have asked for many things. Jesus questions in order to find out if they can really see their deepest need. What do they believe will save them? Will they ask for money? Will they ask for food or clothing? They not only understand their deepest need, they see that Jesus is the only one who can fix them. **This is a heart filled with HOPE.**

**They want their eyes opened.** Beyond the physical, this is a desire to know, to understand, to -learn what life is all about. **This is a cry for meaning, a cry for joy, a cry for hope.** Spiritually, they want to be free of all the guilt, shame, and brokenness that came with the fall; they want to stop pretending as if they can find their way through the darkness; they want to renounce their independence and declare their dependence on God; they want to fully know God and be fully known by Him.

### **Power of Restoration | (RESTORATION)**

**And with a touch, Jesus eliminates the consequences of sin and restores sight to these blind men.** In doing so, Jesus reveals that God doesn't save us from a distance; he doesn't send his best representatives to do the dirty work. God in human flesh enters into our world and heals our deepest wounds. Not only were the blind marginalized for their inability to contribute, like lepers, they were often rejected for the disgusting discharge that accompanied their blindness. Unlike the crowds who believe King Jesus has a kingdom to get started in Jerusalem, Jesus STOPS, reaches down and touches our yucky-googy-filled hearts and makes them clean. **Jesus saves those who are blind and, in doing so, warns those who say they can see.**

And when Jesus gives a person life, it is as like a man receiving SIGHT after a lifetime of blindness. Through faith in Christ, I am given a new heart, new mind, and new eyes. I feel differently, I think differently, and I see differently. **IN CHRIST we have a different identity, a different loyalty, a different mentality, and a different trajectory.** I see RIGHTLY and I see IMMEDIATELY. Immediately these blind men could see. Immediately these blind men followed. And immediately, these blind men proclaimed the power of Jesus to do what no one in history can do. **John 9.25 He answered, 'Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.'**

Both the Gospels of Mark and Luke record that there was ONE man healed of blindness, while Matthew here records there were two. By ancient standards this is far from a contradiction; but scholars offer differing theories to explain the difference. The Gospel of Mark records the name of the one disciple as Bartimeus. While we don't know what happen to the other blind man, we do know that Bartimeus became a disciple familiar to everyone—the blind man who was healed by Jesus. **He became a living sermon to the power of Jesus.** And every time they saw Bartimeus, they remembered that the Son of Man who healed the blind man. What does this have to do with Easter?

### **CONCLUSION | REMEMBERING BARTIMEAUS**

Every Easter, I find myself thinking a lot about the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection. SATURDAY. What a hopeless day for these men. From what they could see, Jesus was wrong about everything. They had wasted the last three years of their lives. I imagine there were shocked, sad, angry, and confused. They had been blind-sided by the death of Jesus, and their trust in God shaken at its core. They had yet to learn to **walk by faith and not by sight. The Resurrection changed everything—even how much they trusted their own eyes.**

Most of us live on Saturday because we don't believe in the Resurrection deep enough. If the resurrection is false, then (as Paul says) we are a people to be pitied. We are blind and blind guides. **But, if the resurrection is true (and Jesus did what no man has ever or will ever do), then Jesus is who He says He is; and those who believe are the ONLY ONES WHO CAN TRULY SEE.**

There are those here who are blind, who don't see Jesus for who He is...YET. Believe the Resurrection and you will see. And there are also those who CLAIM TO SEE but have developed Christian cataracts because you have forgotten the Resurrection. **Never forget our former blindness—WHO WE WERE. Never stop celebrating our resurrection—WHO WE ARE. And we must always anticipate our restoration—WHO WE**

**WILL BE.** 1 Corinthians 13.12 – For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.