

See with Your Eyes and Your Heart

One minute, you're feeling good. You have your bucket list for the coronavirus quarantine, and you have decided you will use this time to declutter every room in your house, master that second language you've always been meaning learn, and read through the stack of books on your nightstand. The next minute, you are overcome with feelings of hopelessness. You miss interacting with your family and friends--hugging them, touching them. FaceTime doesn't cut it. You long to take a leisurely stroll through the grocery store. You want normal to return.

It is all a matter of perspective, isn't it? I have immersed myself in the news more often than I'd like to admit these past few weeks, and sometimes our future looks bright, and sometimes it looks very bleak. Our eyes and our hearts see what they wish to see. We can choose the peoples' voices who fill our ears and the types of stories we read--which *shapes* our perspective--but we control our outlook. In these circumstances where we seem to have little control, that point cannot be overstated.

On the surface, our gospel story today is about blindness. It is about illness, healing and sin. The disciples, like many in the ancient world, understood physical illness as a sign of sin. Those who were sick deserved it; their spirits were sick. But Jesus vehemently rejects this idea. In fact, the blind man is not really the focus here at all. Jesus restores vision to the blind man, yes, but he calls the disciples to a new way of seeing the world. Jesus sees the man's blindness as an occasion to do God's healing work, to show God's love and creative energy. His disciples may not see it, the religious authorities may not see it (they question Jesus about performing work on the Sabbath), but the blind man sees it. The one who supposedly is the outsider, the sinner, the excluded, is the one who is welcomed into Jesus' fold. The relief Jesus brings is physical *and* spiritual.

Jesus gives us all eyes to see. If we think we do not need Jesus' intervention, we miss the point of the story. We too easily can become focused upon the sin around us--other people's, not ours, of course--or become consumed by the things that do not matter. Jesus insists that we do not lose ourselves in the minutiae (like whether or not worship "counts" if it happens online or which denomination is more faithful) and see the big picture. Our charge as Jesus' followers is to see and show God's way of love to the whole world.

In this particular moment, that looks like providing for people's physical needs. Notice, Jesus restores the blind man's vision. The physical matters. Many people in our world need food, medical care, a safe place to live, and money to cover basic living requirements now more than ever. Jesus urges us to recognize that God cares about bodies and spirits, and we too must attend to both.

We also must keep the faith. Our situation is grave, and without searching hard, we can find reasons to worry and despair. The virus is spreading, and it is taxing our health care systems, our economy, and our mental health. People are dying. It may take more work, but we can also see the good. Some news right now is good news: Disneyland donated its excess food after its coronavirus closure. In Spain, residents joined a group workout from their balconies. Neighborhood kids are putting on outdoor concerts for elderly neighbors who are self-quaranting. Landlords are cutting rent for service workers who are out of work. Distilleries are producing free hand sanitizer. There is so much good, if only we have the eyes to see.

Look with your heart, and you will see God's love all around us.

- [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)
- [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)
- [John 9:1-41](#)
- [Psalm 23](#)