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May Only Gods word be spoken, may only Gods word be heard. Amen

It's easy when we read some of the Gospels to be amazed by the miracles we are offered. Today we are offered a story of a blind beggar who, in spite of his blindness, seems to recognize Jesus for who he is and calls out "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He is then rebuked sternly by the crowd, but he continues yelling to Christ asking for mercy. Jesus asks that he approach. The crowd that rebuked him a moment ago, now supports him saying "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." The man then "sprang up and came to Jesus" – no real clarity is provided on how the blind man did this. Jesus asks, "What do you want me to do for you?". (I appreciate that Jesus does not wish to assume, but wants to hear the man speak his desire. The blind man humbly asks "My teacher, let me see again.". Jesus then says "Go; your faith has made you well." And immediately the man regained his sight.

If you were paying attention, you may note that Jesus does not say "I have made you well" - it is specifically "your faith has made you well." This almost makes it seem that Jesus has not done the miracle, the miracle is something the man had within him that Jesus calls forth. But still a miracle has happened! He regains his sight and then "followed him on the way". With the regaining of sight, he begins to follow Jesus.

We are able to do many technological miracles in our time. Lengthy work has been done in retinal regeneration. It has been found that some fish are able to do their own retinal regeneration, but this is not something that mammals have been found to be prone to do. Recently, in 2013, a drug was approved that helps those who have had retinal degeneration, to a point where they can perceive shapes and movement and perform some day to day tasks,

But we hear today of a man who has his sight restored. Which led me to some consideration of how often we are blind and do not see what is present right in front of us.

Think about it, honestly – when are you blind? What do you not see? Or what do you perhaps choose not to see? I offer that anyone seems blind when they are overly preoccupied with their phones. I have lost count of the number of times I have seen people blind to the people they are with, at dinner or really anywhere, while they are texting or checking e-mail. People are often blind when driving. My wife, Kim, was recently nearly hit by a car when crossing a street in the crosswalk. The driver never noticed – they were on the phone.

Do we see the pain and loneliness in each other? I remember being amazed when I worked in Boston how often everyone, myself included, could walk right by a homeless person and never see them as another person. When I realized this, I took that as a personal challenge, and began to stop and talk with Michael who was often camped out near where I worked. Yes, I gave him money occasionally, I picked him up something to eat occasionally, but

I made a point to speak to him whenever I saw him. Just a simple acknowledgement of someone else who was on this journey, too.

Jesus was big on this seeing thing – In Luke, we also hear “Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” – In Matthew we hear of two blind men healed – “And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They said to Him, “Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.” Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him” – interesting to note here – they want their eyes to be opened – they are not looking to be given their sight - and John offers - While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When Jesus had said this, He spat on the ground, made some mud, and applied it to the man’s eyes. Then He told him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” . So the man went and washed, and came back seeing.

This sight is spoken of in Isaiah where we hear “Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” We are led in prayer for sight in the Psalms, where we are offered “Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law”

Maybe when Jesus opens their eyes of people they can see each other with compassion. Maybe with the gift of sight from Jesus, we can better see each other as he sees us.

Think about it again - When are you blind? When do your eyes need to be opened? It’s an unfortunate example, but I often end up thinking of people driving blind. Reoccupied with their own thoughts and needs, they do not see what is right in front of them. I mentioned my wife nearly getting hit by a car recently, and as I said the driver never noticed. My wife noticed – her eyes were open as she crossed the street. The driver was only seeing their own needs and desires – they were only focused on where they were going. We can notice a lack of open eyes on 128 all the time. If you open your eyes you can see that car that cut you off only wants to get home and merge into traffic. Their needs are really not so different from our own.

Look around and see the people around you. I often chat with other people in the grocery store. The cat food aisle is a popular spot for this. If I notice someone looking at the cat food with their brow furrowed, I’ll ask “I wonder what Fluffy is going to eat this week?” I have ended up hearing about their cat or other fur companions in their life. I had one woman in the parking lot offer me the flowers she had just brought, because I observed that they were lovely.

For my life in God, I had someone ask me once how a priest always seems to be able to offer a prayer in most any situation. Hopefully, it is because our eyes are open and we can see what the situation may call for.

As we hear in the old hymn amazing grace – I once was lost, but now I’m found. Was blind, but now I see. Celebrate your open eyes this every day, or pray for them to be opened if you notice a blind spot.

Open your eyes and look at the world we have been given. Look with the eyes that Christ has opened for us and see that beautiful world with love and compassion. Pay attention and see what is around you and right in front of you. Go out into the world and see. See with the eyes of Christ – see with compassion and love.

Amen -