

October 24, 2021

Jer 31:7-9; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52

As I get older I have noticed my mildly failing eyesight. I bet if you younger than me out there you're thinking: "whew, at least that won't happen to me"; if you are older your saying "tell me something I don't know." It is interesting how the increased difficulties with certain functions: having to turn on an extra light to see, becoming more dependent on glasses, having a harder time driving at night, and forget about threading a needle! These small inconveniences - which are just part of the inevitable process of aging - can be a cause for frustration. But as this physical sight diminishes we have the chance to increase our sight in other areas - seeing is not just about the eyes.

In the Gospel the blind man Bartimaeus asks Jesus to give him his sight. Unlike the small inconveniences of aging - this man is blind - he can't see at all. He asks for pity for his condition (worse in those days because he would have been unable to work - which is why he was sitting at the side of the road begging). But although he was blind in terms of physical vision, he was displaying another type of sight that Jesus noticed. He calls Jesus "Son of David" showing he sees something others were missing. He has an insight about Jesus, a desire in his heart that Jesus knew - perhaps a desire to know Jesus more deeply. In his request to Jesus: *Master, I want to see*, there must have been another desire beyond healing his vision. A desire that was beneath the outward situation of his life, a hunger that Jesus sensed, a need for a different type of sight. Jesus tells him *your faith has saved you*. His faith did more than heal him - it was a path to being saved - a path he could now follow because he internal eyes were opened. As he approached Jesus for healing he threw off his cloak - for a poor bigger, one of his most valued possessions - and some say symbolic of throwing off his old life, putting all in Jesus' hands. Then an interesting thing happened. In most all of the healing stories in scripture, the person being healed goes off on their own way. Although Jesus doesn't drag him (he tells him *go on your way*), Bartimaeus follows him.

There is an external sight of the body, and an internal - we might say insight - of the heart. We sees things as they are in the world by vision, and we knows things that lie below the surface by an insight. Can we approach Jesus for the things we need in life, and also seek from him this insight? Jesus knows we have longings in our heart for this, and he wishes to give it to

those who have faith. Can we, like Bartimaeus throw off the cloak of our older ways, our preconceptions, our stubbornness, our anger at others, and our pride. Can we drop these barriers to true insight and a deeper relationship with Jesus. As often as you approach Jesus, don't seek only the things on the surface, but look to be touched by a deeper internal sight? Can we spend time in reading scripture, in reading holy books, in attending opportunities for faith formation - opening ourself to let Jesus tune that internal sigh? Can we live the life of Christ, walk hand in hand with Jesus; putting our faith into practice - and by this gain an insight that cannot be had elsewhere? It is with that insight that we will perhaps find the answers to those things that have alluded us when we were only looking with external eyes.

Jesus wants to give this to us. We have internal eyes to be enlightened (if we expose them to that light of Christ). Our physical sight continues to fade with years, but our internal sight only grows the more it is exposed to the light of Christ. It may become harder as we age to navigate the road in our car at night, but as we age also we have the opportunity to gain an insight that helps us to navigate, with Jesus, the darker times of life.