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Title: Let Me See Again

Preaching: Samantha Copeland, Minister for Youth & Young Adults

Text: [Mark 10:46-52](#)

E-mail: [Samantha Copeland](#)

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In our scripture today, Jesus performs a miracle. Bartimaeus, a blind man who was known as a beggar asks for and is given his sight. I'm going to be honest with you. Miracles don't always sit well with me, especially when they are surrounding people who are differently-abled like Bartimaeus. It is hard for me to make sense of them. When I read

such stories in the Bible I notice the importance placed on able-bodies. That's hard for me, as I believe we all have a place in God's story, without limitation of our physical bodies. So I want to say upfront, how this text makes me a little uncomfortable. I also want to step into that uncomfy-ness with you right here with me, holding this tension, and explore what God is saying to us.

Bartimaeus is poor, he is identified as a beggar. Scholar Luis Menéndez-Antuña points out in his commentary on this passage that in Bartimaeus' community his blindness has most likely made it so that he is unable to work and potentially leaves him outside of the family structure, he is on the margins of his society.

But being on the margins doesn't mean he doesn't have wisdom and important things to offer us. Everyone has something to offer. While he cannot physically see, he sees in his heart Jesus and he knows. He knows Jesus as the Son of David, he knows Jesus is special. He has faith that Jesus can do something for him, that Jesus can help him see. It is this faith that leads to Bartimaeus getting just that.

Not only does Bartimaeus gain new sight in this passage, but we as the readers gain new sight of him through his faith and the work of Jesus. How we view Bartimaeus when the story begins changes by the time the story has ended. He starts as this beggar man on the side of the road. Bartimaeus stays strong in his conviction and does not let the crowd silence him, he continues to call out to Jesus even after he is being quieted.

" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" He then goes to Jesus, leaving his worldly possession behind, his cloak, and tells Jesus what he needs. Bartimaeus says "let me see again". You notice, he has seen before and he is asking to see anew. It is also not a question, it is a statement. By the end of the story, Bartimaeus is a prime example of a faithful disciple. Stepping into faith and following Jesus. No longer just a blind beggar man, we see him again.

Jesus' work in this passage shows us how to listen and respond when someone calls for our help.

- He calls Bartimaeus to come to him, he doesn't just leave him.
- He *asks* Bartimaeus what it is that he needs, he doesn't assume what he needs.
- He then fulfills his need without any further discussion, he doesn't make Bartimaeus prove why he deserves to have his need filled.

Through this passage, Jesus walks with us in our faith to see again. Not just to physically see but to deeply see, in our spirits, minds, and hearts. Just like most things, Jesus shows us in his example. Scripts are flipped, perspectives are changed, and we see things, again, almost for the first time. Jesus changes how we perceive this man. I'm sure it was the same for the crowd that was there with them that day. One minute they are telling Bartimaeus to be quiet and the next, they are watching as Jesus honors his faith. Maybe they also see things again, too.

When I think of seeing things again, I think of the cinematic masterpiece, *Frozen 2*. If you haven't seen the movie, I highly recommend for it's thought-provoking plot-line (some of which I am about to give away, spoiler alert, so sorry) and the delightfully hilarious character of Olaf, the talking snowman who loves warm hugs.

During the movie a voice takes Elsa and her sister, Anna, and their friends on a journey, and during their journey, they find their eyes, hearts, and minds open anew. You see there is this story that they have been told since they were little about their past but there is part of it she isn't seeing. But first, she must step into the unknown. She has to have faith. She listens to the voice and she follows and she sees. Not only does it allow her to live more fully into herself, into who she was created to be, but also it opens up a world of possibilities for everyone around her. Faith and sight.

The scripture doesn't tell us about how Bartimaeus felt after he regained his sight, only that he followed Jesus afterward. There is a tradition in the Jewish faith called Midrash, which is a way of interpreting and imagining the

ancient text. "Rabbinic narrative". It is a Of wondering about the text. In the spirit of that tradition, I wonder if Bartimaeus was ever afraid. I wonder what it was like for him after the story has ended and he is stepping into sight again. If there might have been moments of hesitation or a learning curve for him with his new sight. Just like Elsa, I think gaining a new sight, a new perspective is like stepping into the unknown. To do that can be an act of courage sometimes. The unknown can feel big and scary. But in those moments when can hold onto faith, just like Bartimaeus, and maybe a whole world of possibilities will open up around us.

So, I ask you: like Bartimaeus, how do you need to see things again? In what ways do you need to regain your sight? A new perspective, a new story. Maybe it is of a group of people that you find to be so different from yourself. Maybe it is seeing yourself as new. What stories are you telling yourself that aren't true about you? Maybe you have no idea what it is that you need to see anew. But together we say "Son of David, have mercy on me", and walk in faith we will see things again. With our hearts, our minds, and our eyes. It will mean stepping into the unknown, and in the moments it feels too scary and it might seem too big, hold onto knowing there is something beautiful on the other side and God is right there with you. A new vision beyond what we have now. The potential to lean into this faith and see anew is not contingent on the ableness of your body. Your body is holy, whatever physical ability level it may be at, and you are invited to participate in God's work always.

This is about a deeper seeing, in our hearts and our minds. A deep knowing of ourselves and each other as God's created. The Holy Spirit moves us, if only we feel and listen and let it. So let us lean in, having faith and praying...

"My teacher, let me see again"
Amen.

(Reference: <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-30-2/commentary-on-mark-1046-52-5>)