Learning to See with Jesus

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[0:01] It's good to be here with you this morning. It's a privilege to be here. You will see that I am, I will be struggling a little bit with my English, you know, people, they don't authorize me to preach in Portuguese. It will be much easier.

It's a privilege to open God's word and always again to listen to what God is telling us today.
And he always has a fresh word to us. We already heard from Matthew chapter 14 this morning at this worship.
Richard was his name. There are many people called Richard. In Brazil you would say Ricardo.
We said he was, his name was Richard and he was 16 years old. He had three brothers, sisters.
[1:07] One, the youngest one was Maria. And she was six years old. So Richard was the oldest one. Maria was the youngest one.

But the difficulty was that they were living alone. They were, they were what we call today a child headed household.
The four kids were living alone. Their parents were buried at the back of their fallen down house. It was in Rakai.
Rakai is a place in Uganda where you have many dissidents and many, many victims of AIDS.
Their parents died of AIDS.
And they are buried at the back of their house. But the house had fallen down. And so they were living at the other side of the street where some neighbors had allowed them to use their house while there was some expectation for the children's house to be rebuilt.
[2:23] The two, three, four, four, five, four, five, five, six, five, five, six, seven, seven, seven, seven, eight, eight, and eight. It wasn't a nice picture. It wasn't a nice history. It wasn't a nice struggle. It wasn't a nice struggle. And when we tried to find out a little bit about the life of those children and asking about basic questions.

Do you go to school? Where do you get food from? Is someone helping you? Who looks after you?
The questions that came out of a very shy and reluctant research were somehow difficult.
Were dubious. Do you have food? Where do you get food? Yes. Sometimes I get some bananas.
Some neighbors come, pass by, give us some bananas. How can you leave by bananas? My wife, Tileda, will tell that Maria was somehow looking for a mother and not only looking for food.
Because she needed a mother. She needed a father, six years old. One of my reactions at those encounters, and we went there as members of World Vision International Board.
We had a meeting in Uganda, and we went to Rakkai to see some of the terrible damage that AIDS is causing to so many different people and places in Africa and other parts of the world.
[3:47] We wanted to see a little bit of the world. We wanted to see a little bit of the work of World Vision there. We met with some pastors and the work of the church there. That's a very heartbreaking experience. It's a very hard experience.

And then you ask yourself, how do I go back? How do I sleep tonight? Can I sleep tonight? What are the images that are coming to me when I lay down tonight?
It's not easy for me to react to those kinds of situations. It's not easy to walk into those kinds of situations. And there is one part of me that just tells me, let's get out of here. I can't stand this.
To look at the children, to look at Maria, six years old, to look at that fallen down house, to look at the grave of the parents.
It's too much. I need to get out of here. I can't stand it. It has happened in my life several times that I have said, oh I hope I don't meet someone today that demands me, demands some emotional strength from me.

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[5:01] I hope the phone doesn't ring today. I hope no visit comes today. I hope no call comes up for a pastor. I hope no hospital call will come today. I hope I don't need to go to Rakai again. I hope I don't need to meet Richard again. I hope I don't need to see Maria again.

Because I cannot stomach it. Do we say that? I cannot stomach it. It's too much. When we go at Matthew chapter 14, we may see that Jesus is living one of those moments.
One of those difficult moments. One of those moments where he said, I need to be alone. I need some time. Give me a break.
He just heard the message about what had happened to John the Baptist. And he suffered that impact. How could Herod do that? How could Herod do that to John the Baptist? How could John the Baptist have such a kind of a death? How can he be dead? What about his disciples? I need to be alone.
And the Bible tells us that Jesus heard what had happened to withdraw by, he withdraw by boat privately to a solitary place. He wanted to be alone.
[6:29] And when he reached that place where he wanted to be alone. And the Bible says, when Jesus landed, he saw a large crowd. There were people looking for him. There were people asking for him. There were people bringing their sick. And Jesus had to decide, what do I do?

If you look at the passage, what comes out of that passage, what comes out of that passage is that Jesus feeds the multitude and has an encounter with another crowd. He wants to go away from that. He walks on the water. He goes away from that. But when he arrives, there are more people that need him.
And then, chapter 15 will tell us from Matthew, chapter 15 will tell us that the Pharisees, the teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem. They came up from Jerusalem to Galilee just to question Jesus.
They gave him a hard time. When you look at the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, they are those ones that gave Jesus a hard time. Why? Why do you do things like that? Why do you relate to those people? Why do you go out of our traditional way? Why? Why do you work on Saturdays? Why? Why? And they were so skeptical. They couldn't swallow the ministry, the life of Jesus. They were so concerned with their own traditions and systems. Why?
[8:12] Why? And there Jesus was. And there Jesus was. And he had to make options. How do you behave? There he was. I need to be alone, he said. I need to withdraw. I need to, but I can't.

Because there is a large crowd. There are some people that need me. And the reaction of Jesus is so beautiful. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them.
He had compassion on them. We can see it at Jesus' eyes. The way he looked at the people. And the way he just told himself, I cannot go away.
Because here, because here I have a crowd of people that need me. That need me here. Here I have a crowd of people that are looking for me. They need a word. They need a touch. They need a healing touch. They need to meet the path of salvation.
And the Bible says that he had compassion on them. And that he healed their sick. We might ask, but how this took shape in the life of Jesus? How did it happen in the life of Jesus?
[9:43] In the life of Jesus? And I want to go to a passage from Luke chapter 18. And if you are with me, if you have your Bible open, open please in Luke chapter 18.

And there we see what Jesus said. There we see what it meant to have compassion. There we have a story that tells us how Jesus reacted to people and how he behaved.
As Jesus, verse 35, as Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside, begging.
When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. He called out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.
Those who led the way, those who led the way, rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more, son of David, have mercy on me.
[10:50] Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, what do you want me to do for you? Lord, I want to see, he replied.

Jesus said to him, receive your sight, your faith has healed you. Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.
When all people saw it, they also praised God. There is a man. There were many people in Jesus' history.

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There were many people in the life of Jesus' ministry. Today, it's a blind man. Yesterday, it was a sick woman. The day before, it was a mother who had lost her son.
The day after, it was a child. Many, many different, different type of people. One day, it was a house. The other day, it was Matthäus.
[11:56] The other day, it was Peter. It was John. Different people in different experiences in their lives. Today, we see a blind man.

A blind man sitting at the roadside, begging. There are so many people sitting at the roadside in our days. There are so many people who are outsiders in our society.
There is Richard in Rakai. There is Maria in Rakai, six years old, somehow screaming for a mother, screaming for a father.
And you can look it, you can see it in her eyes. There are families who are broken up. There are teenagers that are in despair. There are elderly people who feel so lonely.
There are fathers and children that cannot communicate. There are mothers that are crying over their sick child.
[13:01] There are fathers that lost a job. There are so many blind people sitting at the roadside of our society today.

And here, what we see is this man that lives at the outside of society. He lives at the roadside, begging.
And this is his life. A life without events. A life without much happening. A life without much good news. But at that day, he was somehow sensing that something different was going on.
And he said, what is going on? And the people around, they were busy. The people around, they had other priorities. The people around just told him, be quiet.
It's not for you anyway. He insisted, but he, because he wanted to know. And he said again, what is going on? I sense that there is something different going on.
[14:04] I want to know. I need to know. Isn't there anyone that can tell me what's going on? And again, somehow, someone will look down just to shut up him.

Just for him to be quiet. And someone will tell him, it's Jesus of Nazareth. He's passing by. He's passing by. He's not coming to look after you.
He doesn't have time for you. He will not stop to look after you. He's just passing by. But when this blind man, sitting by the roadside of his life story, begging, when he heard the words that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he took a decision and he said, I will try.
I have almost given up. I don't have much hope left. There is no much alternative that I can see.
I can see anything anyway. I can see my way in the future. Tomorrow I will be here. The day after tomorrow I will be here. Next year I will be here. The following year I will be here.
[15:24] I will be here. To the end of my life I don't have much hope in my life left. But today I will try again. Because they told me that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

And he starts to scream. Son of David, have mercy on me. Son of David, have mercy on me.
There some hope is back to his heart. Some hope is there and we can sense it at his voice. And it gets stronger.
It gets louder. Son of man, have mercy on me. Son of man, have mercy on me. But the people that led the way, the Bible said, rebuked him and told him to be quiet.
Don't you see what's your place? Don't you know that you are a beggar? Don't you know that Jesus is just passing by? Don't you know that he is not here for you?
[16:26] Don't you know that he is a beggar? One of the struggles of that day in Rakai was exactly to go away.

And with the idea and with the tension in our own life saying who is going to look after. Who is looking to go? Who is looking after Richard?
Who is looking after Maria? Isn't there anyone in this world that can look after them? And Jesus stopped. Jesus stopped.
Because he heard a cry. There was a moment of silence when he stopped.
People looked around to see what would happen. Some of his disciples got nervous by him stopping. He is already late.
[17:34] He is always late. Can't he follow a watch? Doesn't he have a sense of time? Why he is always late? Why he is stopping when he shouldn't be stopping?

He has a commitment. But Jesus stopped. Because he heard someone calling for him.

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And he said, bring the man to me. He said, bring the man to me. He said, bring the man to me. He said, bring the man to me. He said, bring the man to me. The poor blind beggar got nervous.
His heart started to beat stronger. He didn't know how to walk straight because he was blind. Someone was helping him. Somehow his hands, he was balancing. He was trying to see because he had some hope being born in his life.
[18:37] What do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you? Such an obvious question. Such a profound question.

Lord, I want to see. Jesus said to him, receive your sight.
Your faith has healed you. As a passage that comes from Matthew, where we see two blind men, it says that Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes.
This is a touch of compassion. That is, this is a touch that receives people. That this is a loving touch.
It's a touch that tells many words.
[19:46] It's a touch that tells about salvation. It's a touch that tells about a new day. It's a touch that tells about hope. It's a touch that makes us dream for a new day.

A new chance. A new opportunity. A new bridge in life. A new path. A new day. As I said. And there. And there. The man saw again.
Because Jesus heard the cry. Because Jesus stopped on the way. Because Jesus touched him. And because Jesus told him. Receive your sight. your faith has healed you.
Thanks. Thanks be the Lord for the touch of Jesus. Thanks be for the message of the gospel that comes to us again and again saying to us and sharing with us showing to us that there is hope.
[20:52] A blind man sitting at the roadside can see again there is hope. There is hope for Maria. There is hope for Richard.

There is hope for me. There is hope for you. And Jesus stops because he is listening to you. He knows the agonies of my life.
He knows the fears of your life. He knows the brokenness in your life. He knows the loneliness of the sleepless night. He knows the suffering of the mother with a sick child in his hand.
He knows the suffering of the man, of the blind man. He knows it. He knows the scream of the beggar. He knows the pain of the widow. He knows the scream of the heart of Maria that cannot say how much he wants a mother.
He knows it. He knows it. He knows it. He knows it. And he stops. And he has compassion on us. He has compassion on them. And he calls them to him. And he touches us.
[22:04] He touches them. Receive your sight. And a new chapter starts in our life. A new chapter begins.

A new day comes. And we can see again. The man here can see again. And he praises God. Immediately he receives his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.
Praise God. There is hope for Richard. Praise God. There is hope for Maria. Praise God. There is hope for me. Praise God. There is hope for you. Praise God.
There is hope for the beggar sitting at the roadside. At Jesus' time, there is hope for the beggars of today. There is hope for the young people.
There is hope for the elderly. There is hope for the mothers, for the fathers. There is hope for you. And there is hope for me. Because Jesus stops.
[23:06] And stops always again. What do you want me to do for you? He asks you and He asks me again and again.

Receive your sight. We are God's people in this world. We are part of God's church of today.
What is our call? What is our task? What is our journey? What are we spending our ways on? Are we part of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law going up to Jesus and always saying, Why? Why? Why? And it looks like sometimes this is what we are as a church. We are so concerned with ourselves, so concerned with our traditions, so concerned with our laws.
And we spend so much time with all of that and we forget and we are deaf to listen to the screams of the world today. We need to follow Jesus.
[24:10] We need to go with Him. We need to be able to listen. To listen as He listens. To see as He sees. To stop as He stops.

To touch as He touches. Because if we don't, the beggars will continue sitting at the roadside. The hopeless will continue to be hopeless.

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The blind will continue to be blind. The hungry will continue to be hungry. The poor will continue to be poor. The desperate will continue to be desperate. The lonely will continue to be lonely.
The lost will continue to be lost. this is what we harvest if we are only part of the protocol people like those who rebuked the blind man because he was screaming out of place he was screaming when he should be doing he should be knowing his place but he said no son of man have mercy on me there are people screaming today there are people in our society who are saying Jesus son of man have mercy on me there are blind people today there are lost so many lost people today and we need to stop the church needs to stop and all what we need to do is to guide those people to Jesus to be touched by him and a new day arises in their life a new day arises in the life of the church there is hope there is hope while the church is willing to serve there is hope because Jesus is stopping there is hope because God didn't lose his sense of compassion there is hope because God didn't lose his obsession with salvation and he is always going after us and he is always going after us he is always stopping again and the church is called to bring people to Jesus in order that they might see and in order that a new day may be coming to them and then and then all together all together we go to praise God immediately as I read he received his sight and followed Jesus praising God when all people saw it they also praise God a church a church is a praising church a church that praises God because God is listening a church that's praising God because God is stopping at the worst places in society a church that's praising God because God is touching people for salvation
God's healing touch is helping people to live again and to see again a church it's a church that follows Jesus with the blind man that recovered his sight because he was touched by Jesus all of us are there all of us are there all of us were part of this community of blind people sitting at the roadside of our lives and screaming and screaming for salvation son of David have mercy on me and God said yes I do yes I have mercy come to me and I will give you a new day come to me and I will give you eternity come to me and I will give you a new song a song of praise because God lives because God sees because
[28:08] God calls upon us and he touches us for salvation let's go away today with the sense of having been touched by him in such a way that we are no longer the same let's go away today with the commitment in our heart that we want to be such a church that is always again willing to walk one more mile to help a blind man to see again to be touched by Jesus to help a blind man to be taken to Jesus because Jesus touches him and this is all that we are called to do and this is so much and this is so beautiful to be touched and to help other people to be touched by God is a beautiful vocation in life may God help us to do it let's pray thank you Lord because you have stopped you know our stories and you know our life's journey you have stopped and you have called us up to you and you have touched us for salvation help us to lead the way so that others might be touched by you help us to help others to meet you in Jesus name

Amen Amen .

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