



See and
Be Seen

May 28th,
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Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'

Mark 10: 48-49

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Mark 10: 46-47

So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Mark 10: 50-52

Audio file

[See and Be Seen Audio.mp3](#)

Transcript

I kind of asked that today because we talk about having a guest. We have a special guest speaker today. He was also our special guest Cahone player, which we decided about. Yeah, 45 minutes ago. But it was a lot of fun. We have a friend, Brian James McMahan is here visiting us today from Kansas City. He came up a couple of days ago and LED a leadership retreat for the leaders here at hometown. And it was an. Awesome, awesometime for us to be together and grow together and just have somebody else help us kind of navigate through. A lot of things, Ryan, Julie, Stacy and I met him during church plant training. He and his wife facilitated one of our courses to help us get ready to church plant. So it was super cool I to get to bring him back up here for the retreat. And then we said, hey, would you be willing to share with us Sunday morning? And he said, yeah, he would love to. So please give a warm hometown welcome. Brian James McMahan. There you are.

Thank you for having me, seriously. What are there parameters on your camera of like how far I can and cannot wonder? I just sometimes I'll like when I'm speaking somewhere, like walking, like. Well, we'll back up that you're now off camera, so I everywhere has their own rules of like, where you operate within. And so just wanting to be attentive to that. Thank you for having me, I. Live in Kansas City, where I have a A therapy practice. So one of the one of the expressions of my life is that as a licensed marriage and family therapist. But I've been a four score pastor with my wife for a decade and a half. I've done a lot of different things, but ultimately, if I could say, like, what the thematic. Element of what I do, what I love to do, what I try to do is to Createspace for brave relations. I think in this world, the journey that we are on there is no way to walk forward in Community without it being difficult and risky and challenging, and I think the invitation for us is to allow the spirit to continue to make us. And so in all of the contexts that I live in that I work in, that I walk in, my hope is that we would find ourselves. Courage to take some brave steps to become more brave, to allow the spirit to fill us with greater bravery, and I think particularly. Really today is Pentecost Sunday. For those of you who follow the the liturgical calendar. If that's a a background or thing that you came from. But even as we engage today in our time, I just pray that the spirit would enliven our souls, would deepen our groundedness in his presence, and would allow us to walk with a little bit more braver. So Jesus as we. Walk together today in this space and in this way would you speak. Would you encourage? Would you give us each a moment with you? In a way that only you can. Jesus, would you still? So many of the places, even in myself, that I carry in this morning. That I can pay attention to your voice and to your presence. To what you were doing and me to what you were doing in those around me. To what you're doing in this place and this people in this city. Jesus, who pray this in. Your name. Amen. So this morning I'm just want to walk together through a story. I love stories. I have two little girls at home who are learning the art of storytelling, and sometimes it is phenomenal and sometimes I have no idea what is happening in the story. But one of the things that I love about stories is how often the stories. Aren't just about. Themselves, we talked a little bit about this weekend at a story, a piece of art, a song that there is an element of beauty in the the form itself, and in what it is but the greatest songs and the greatest pieces of art and the greatest stories are always stories and art and songs that actually draw somewhere even beyond that, that open

our imagination that allow us to see things. In experiencing things from a lot of different places, if you've, if you're into art, you've been at a museum and there's a lot of art around here. There are, there are certain pieces of art that we'll look at and would just kind of wander through, and then there'll be some where we just. Right. And for whatever reason, that piece of art or we're listening to a playlist and we're just kind of driving along and listening in a certain song comes on. And it like stops us. And it impacts us in a ways, because there's something about the beauty within art within story that is this invitation to even to see what is beyond. And I when I when I think about that, I think about the creativity of God to do that. That there's something that we can look at that also invites the stock beyond. And so we're going to look at a story today, which is one of my favorite stories and part of the reason it's my favorite story is because there's so many different things that I see when I sit in the story. And when I look at the story and I'll read it and then I'll go a little while without reading. It and I'll read it again and I'll stop and go like oh man. Let me let me think about that. Let me look at that. Let me take that beyond. So I I pray that as we look at this story that God would do that for us, that'll he'll allow us to imagine some things and to see some things in the story. So if you will pull up, hey, look at you being ahead of me here. I love this. This is a story out of the Gospel of Mark, and I'm just going to read. It and then we're gonna talk a little bit and we're going to read it again and do some imagining with it. So this this story that picks up in, in. Mark Chapter 10, verse 46, where the story says they they came to Jericho. They being Jesus, his disciples, a whole lot of people that came in their camp. They came to Jericho and as he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly. Son of David have mercy on me. Jesus stood still and said. Call him here. And they called the blind man saying to him, take heart, get up. He is calling you. So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and he came to Jesus and then Jesus said to him, what do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him, teacher, let me see again. Jesus said to him, go your faith has made you well. Immediately, he regained his sight and followed him on the way. In this story, some of the context is this. This is a story that takes place a little bit later in Jesus Ministry actually as he has set his face to Jerusalem as he and his disciples are on their way to what will ultimately lead to his death. He's actually had some conversations with the disciples saying, hey, the place that we're going, it's not going to go well. For me, I'm. I'm going to die. That there's some of these conversations about what is lying ahead have already been taking place and Jesus continues his. Ministry in the direction of of Jerusalem, and so they have come into Jericho. Things have happened. They're on their way out of Jericho, making their way to Jesus. And that's where the story takes place and I want to give you 2 things to hold in mind as we're going to read this story and imagine the story together. And these are two things that sit at the foundation. Of how I understand. The way that God has made us and the tension that we sit in as people who try to follow Jesus. In the first is that we are fundamentally created. For connection with God and connection with. One another and this comes out a lot about you read Genesis Chapter 2 in particular, where God placed Adam in the Garden to be in union and in connection and living in Paradise with God. And there's a moment where God said, actually, I've made you to be connected with other humans too. And he created even from the beginning, we're actually made. To live in connection and. God has also created us with a biological tendency to protect ourselves when things get risky. That some of us know are familiar with the language of the fight flight freeze response that when something happens when we get unsettled, like we all respond in different ways because there's something in us that says while I am made for connection, I'm also biologically wired to protect myself when things get risky and

God made us with both of. The challenge is moving from a place in a moment where it feels risky and we protect ourselves into a place where we're able to then walk in connection with each other. And I actually think when I follow my own journey of discipleship. And growth with. And when I walk with others, I would actually suggest that. Maturity for us as Christians is to be able to walk with that. Attention to be able to pay attention to these moments where we step into a spot where we actually start to protect ourselves because something is dangerous and we lose connection with those around us and we lose connection with God in the invitation to return to a place of connection. That sits underneath everything that I do. Everything that I see, the way that I watch relationships and I want us to hold that in mind as we're going to read this. Story again and I want to invite you as. You read it. Just to pay attention to the story. To the characters in the story to the different people in the story to what is going on in the story. So we're going to read it. One more time. We lead us through that. So as Jesus and his disciples, they came to Jericho, and as he and his disciples. And a large crowd. We're leaving Jericho and just allow yourself to actually picture this. Bartimaeus, son of Timeus, was a blind beggar. And he was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was walking through. He began to shout out and say Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Sitting by the road. Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me. Many who were around Jesus, who were walking with Jesus sternly ordered, ordered him to be quiet. But he cried out even more loudly. Son of David. Have mercy on me. Jesus stood still. And he said call him here. And they they called the blind man saying to him, take heart to get up. He's calling you. So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up. Came to Jesus. And then Jesus said to him. What do you want me to do for you? The blind man said to him, my teacher let me see again. And Jesus said to him, go your faith has made you well. And immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. And I want to take a moment and actually just check in when you read that story. What character in the story did you find your attention being drawn to? I'm just curious it in this room, every time I read this I'm paying attention. There's a whole bunch of different characters in the story. Who did you find yourself gravitating towards? Who did you find? Just say again. The man, part of mass the blind man. What a strange moment. Hey, sit down and be quiet. And they're like, oh, good, good news for you. Jesus is calling you. Let's go like. This just changed fast. Yeah, so paying attention to those that were on Jesus.

Yeah, mine was the crowd, the crowd.

No, wait. Yeah. That's a pretty intimidating, bold move. Who else were you paying attention to? Maybe some of the same. Maybe it's some different. Well, I want. I want to notice together three different. Characters in the. And the first one is some of you were noticing as you read through this, you were just drawing to pay attention to blind bartimus, right? Which is this this crazy? Story here is this blind man who's sitting by the road. There's a whole lot of movement happening around him and he is crying out for help. He's crying out to be noticed. He's crying out to have Jesus pay attention to him and I think in this story one of the things. That it captures. Is the deep longing that many of us hold to be seen. The deep longing for someone to actually stop. And pay attention to us. To see where we are and to see. What is happening? And I think about how hard it is to be the one who is longing to be seen. And to actually ask to be seen like what a risky thing that is. But I had a moment literally last week where I was trying to tell a story about some things that happened in my family to some friends. And I was trying to tell it in a way that there was something in the story that I. Wanted. It was really. Important to me that this part of the story was how it was seen. And my wife was there with me, with friends, and she jumped in to help me tell the story. Except the portion of the story that was important to her was different than

the portion of the story that was important to me. So I'm in this moment of going. I want my friends to see this about the story and what ended up being seen was what my wife, the portion of, so, which was also true and valid. It just was not the part of the story I wanted to be seen. And in that moment, I was not my. Best self and what I actually did was I. Was like fine. Like that, let that let that be the. Story because it is. When when there has been an overlooking, when there has been a dismissal, when there has been a moment where I have this longing to be. And I actually have felt overlooked. I have felt pushed to the side. It is really difficult. To keep asking. Please stop and see me. Please stop and see me. So while there is a longing to be seen. Right. And this we are made for connection, we are invoke created for connection with God and one another in moments when we aren't. When that longing is not being met, there is also a natural instinct in us to move us to protect ourselves to men. It's it's actually too painful to try to be seen. I've been down that road. I've tried to tell stories. Before they get misunderstood, someone else jumps in and tells my story for me, and then they don't even see who I am. I'm just going to sit quietly. I'm just going to back up and actually I in that moment last week, if I'm honest. I tried a couple of times and then I shut down and then I stormed off, angry. If I'm just being honest about that, I was like, fine, you know what? I I am literally going to. I will shut the whole thing down. Because trying to continue to be seen is is actually really hard. So there's a longing to be seen. That we see embodying imparted mass. There is a risk in being overlooked and literally he's in this moment where the followers of Jesus. Or saying we don't want to see.

Right.

That that's a hard moment for me. That actually some of the people that I most want to be seen by are the people who actually are supposed to be the people seeing me. And end up being the people who dismiss me and push me down. And so then there is this temptation that I have to protect ourselves, to protect myself, and to whether that's shut down or escape or back away. And the invitation. In the way of Jesus and I look at Bartimaeus and go and he took a risk again. Like he, he spoke up. He said, hey, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Then he was shut down. And then he chose to risk again. And I think there's some of us who are very familiar with this experience and actually have been shut down enough that we've stopped risking. Said it's not worth it. The other character in the stories, and I'm going to lump disciples and those following Jesus because they're all standing around Jesus and they're all walking around with Jesus and there's an element to what they're doing that makes a lot of sense to me. Like you think about the moment that they're in, where Jesus is, they they have devoted their lives to Jesus, and Jesus has communicated to them. A this run that we're on is about to end. Like I'm I am about to die and and the anxiety that would be and actually when I read the story, I think there's probably two different dueling anxieties that the disciples have. One is they have been practicing being on mission with Jesus like they are following Jesus. They are walking with Jesus. They literally have been one place to another place, to another place. Walking with Jesus. They are on mission. There's purpose for them. And they are on their way to Jerusalem, also on their way to Jerusalem with a whole bunch of anxiety like this might not go bad. There is risk right in in moments of danger and risk, we enter into a place where we we protect ourselves. That's the biological wiring that is competing with God's created intent for us to walk in connection and. Here you have the disciples who are on a mission with Jesus walking to a place that Jesus said. This is where I want you to follow me to. And they are so focused on their own anxiety and on their own mission. They actually fail to see the people around them. That in this moment, it's almost like their mission blinded them to the. People around them. And I think there is a longing in all of us. For purpose and to be part of something and to be on a journey together and to

follow a mission together. And there is a temptation. That we would actually silence others who inhibit our forward movements because it slows the journey down. And we have this story at blind Bartimaeus sitting on the road going. Will someone see me? And the disciples who were following Jesus ago, like man, we got a mission. We got somewhere to be. We got something to do. Like, why don't you just sit down? Stay down, be quiet. We'll pass you by. Keep living your life. I had a. One of my most painful experiences in ministry years back, I was running some youth clubs at some local middle schools and it was so fun. I had a barrel of. I don't even know if I'd be allowed to do this now, but I had some foam noodles like pool noodles that I cut in half and I put in a barrel cause I had a bunch of like 6 and 7th grade boys that were. Bouncing off the walls. After school and so I taped the square in the middle of the cafeteria into the gym, and that was our ninja zone. And so if you walked into the ninja zone, you were fair game. For noodle wars and so, kids would come in, just grab a noodle and just, like, slap the crap out of each other with a noodle. And it was phenomenal. Burn off some energy. They got to feel like super tossed and strong. And it was wonderful. So I loved running these clubs that I had. A group of high schoolers that would come help me do it. And one of the high schoolers, his name was Michael, and he was 16, and we had walked with him through some heart issues and some heart challenges. He had actually had a heart transplant due to some of his his stuff that was going on and a couple years later I actually was doing his funeral because of some of the heart complications. So he passed away at 18. And I remember as. I was preparing to give his eulogy. This moment with Jesus. Where Jesus drew my attention. To the way that he had placed Michael in my life for me to see Michael. And I got so wrapped up in what I was trying to accomplish. With these clubs and I was pumped that. I had 40% of the student body at my club hearing the stories of Jesus, which is great. It was phenomenal. It's wonderful. Wasn't a bad thing. In this moment where Jesus, like you missed Michael. Like you missed him. You were so excited. About the vision and the dream, the journey that I was taking you on. That you actually missed. The person who was standing on the side of the road going, Jesus son of Dave, would you have mercy on me? That was a really hard moment to come to realize. I mean, my tendency. To be part of something, to be part of a big vision. Runs the risk that I will get consumed in that and won't see the people around me. And the invitation for us is actually to take time to listen. Not just to hear right cause clearly the people around Jesus hurt him because they silence him. They stop talking. So they heard him talking. It wasn't like he was hollering, and no one it even registered it registered. But they didn't stop and actually listen. And I want you also to notice. In this story, Jesus. Who has all of these things going on is on this mission. I mean, he he's holding the fact that he is headed to a spot where he is going to die. That is a. If there is a moment in a season of life that we are most prone to protect ourselves. Knowing that someone is about to kill me would probably be high on that list. But so Jesus is in a moment. We're like, it would make sense if he's starting to, like, protect and keep himself safe and like, let's accomplish things. And let's check off. The list of things that need to. Be done and Jesus is walking surrounded by this. And when he heard blind Barnabas, the story says that Jesus. Stopped and stood still. He just stopped. And he stood still. And then he told the disciples who had been and Jesus is so kind, because in the story I mean I he could have reamed out his disciples and I'm like y'all are. Like literally, you know, I'm here to help people. Y'all are missing, he he just goes. Hey, almost just like subtle. Like, I just want you to know that I saw you missing this guy because what Jesus didn't say, he didn't say. Hey, Bartimaeus, come on over here. He actually told this disciples. Hey, I'm gonna. I'm going to let you redo this right with with my girls. We with the phrase that we use is let's try that. Right. Oh yeah, that's that is not how we do it in our family. Let's try that again. Let's back this up. Let's try saying that again. Let's try engaging in that activity again. Let's you fall down. You want to try that? Let's try it again. There's almost

this moment where Jesus is going. Let's try this. Again, hey, disciples. Bring him here. In the shift in the disciples of some you know are going like hope. The very person. And like I've I've been in that moment about like. Going like ho. Here is someone like I just got called out and I'm gonna engage in in trying to sit and go like well, maybe no one saw me do it. Like maybe maybe it can slide through, but either way, they went and they brought my Artemus. And says Jesus stood still. And then it says that Jesus asked him a question. And the question itself is so fascinating to me because he asked Bartimaeus, what do you want. Me to do for you. What healing do you want? And I I every time I read that story, I sit and. Ah, feel like it's fairly apparent what he would want you to do for him. Like his name is Blind Bartimaeus. The story title is blind bartimus. It feels really obvious. That she was like a simple thing and and literally, I mean, he's clearly blind on the side. There was someone had to lead him to Jesus. So all of the. Evidence was there. So it would have been a simple thing and Jesus could have been like, hey, bring him here, I'm going to restore your sight and. Jesus just acts and heels. But the story says that Jesus stopped. It says that Jesus invited. And then it says that Jesus asked a question. That Jesus was curious. And as we think about the way that we are made for connection. And our proneness. To protect ourselves for a whole lot of different reasons because we've risked and it's gone poorly. Because we're anxious about the things that are happening because we're caught up on mission, there's all of these really real reasons. That we're going. To get pulled into a spot where. We protect ourselves. And what Jesus models? As he stops. It just stops. So let's slow down here. We're just going to stop. Everywhere to notice what's going on. I I mean, and we're in a crowd. I mean, Jesus stopped and it's like. I just imagine in my head like the trickle. Down like like and people like 810 rolls back going away. Wait, we're slowing down. What is happening? They have to now start to pay attention. What is happening here? So Jesus stops and he invites. And then he asked the asked the question, what do you want me to do for you? Because I think as humans. There is a tendency for us to assume, based upon what we're seeing and noticing, and often it's not bad data we're collecting, but that we would know the deep longings of someone's. So let me let me offer you what you need. And Jesus actually creates a moment where he says part of me is I I actually just. Want to see you? I want to let you tell me. What matters to you? I can make some assumptions and my assumptions in this. Moment probably are. Right. And actually what he asked for was to have his site restored. So it wasn't like he's like ohh I have this other like actually the longing that he had was what was pretty obvious. But Jesus still allowed him to bring it out. And tell him so. This is where. We'll land the plane on. This is I. There is a longing for many of us to be seen. Some of us. Have given up even trying because it's. Really hard sometimes. And so there's an invitation to take some risks. Actually invite other people to see us. Invite Jesus to see us. I think there's a tendency that we have sometimes to get really caught up, both in good purpose and mission, but also in our own fears and uncertainty of what is coming. That cause our vision to narrow and we miss people. And the invitation is to stop. And to pay attention. And I think there is a tendency that we have to provide solutions before people. Ask for them. And there is an invitation for us to actually allow the people around us. For us to be curious. Because in curiosity and in seeing, this is actually where connection forms. If Jesus had just said hey, bring bartimaeus to me, bartimaeus, you're healed on your way, no connection is restored in that moment. There is just a solution to a problem. What Jesus created was a moment where Bartimaeus was seen. And I often wonder what it was like for bartimaeus. That Jesus stopped. That he invited that he was curious. And then, as bartimaeus, his eyes open. And he saw Jesus looking at him. This man who had stopped. And stopped the whole crowd. Who had seen him? Who invited him? Who was looking at him and who was curious about him. I wonder what it was like for Barnum, Mass, to see those eyes looking at him. Someone will pray and then we can go from there, but Jesus. May you

strengthen us to be people who reengage the longing in us to be seen. For those of us who are weary. Would you strengthen us to take a risk? To keep calling out. For mercy and for being seen. Jesus, for those of us. Who get caught up in our own fears and in our own purpose, and even the mission that you have invited us to in a way that causes us to overlook others. Jesus, would you forgive us? Jesus, would you help us to slow down? To stop to see. To invite to be curious. That the deep experience of connection. That of being connected to you and being connected to one another, that you place so deep in us from the origin of time. That Jesus, you would continue to breathe life onto that place, that you would restore us and strengthen us. And Jesus make us brave. And your name? Amen.