Through the written word and the spoken word, God help us to hear your Living Word, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

I WANT TO SEE, Mark 10:46-52

Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do you?”

Bartimaeus answered, “My teacher, let me see again.”

As I read this healing narrative, I am always struck by Jesus asking, “What do you want me to do for you?” This line holds so much as we consider the work of healing and liberation. All too often we assume the needs of other people, and this is generally very well intentioned. But these assumptions have led to readings of scripture which assume that all people with a disability want to be completely cured of it, which would not be true for all people. These assumptions can also lead us, when we are in positions of power, to assume what marginalized communities most need.

Jesus offers us a helpful model of putting the agency and power in the hands of the care seeker. “What do you want me to do for you?” What do you need? What would bring you closer to flourishing? Bartimaeus has the opportunity to define for himself what his healing looks like, and in this case, it is a curing of his blindness.

We might ask Jesus for something similar…

Jesus, let me see again. Let me see *you.* Let me see as you see.

Jesus, let me see again. Let me see *you.* Let me see as you see.

I am often in need of clarity, of spiritual insight, of signs or guideposts along my path.

In our preaching series on spiritual practices, I want to offer a practice of seeing.

One of the spiritual practices I engage most regularly is *visio divina.* You are more likely to have heard of *lectio divina*, but even that might be an unfamiliar term.

*Lectio divina* is an ancient practice of praying with a text. It has origins with the desert fathers and mothers who spent time meditation on biblical text. Over time St. Benedict instituted the practice in monastic life and eventually the practice of prayer and interpretation was solidified in a 4-part process.

Reading, meditating, praying, and contemplating allow for a Spirit guided bible study great for individual or communal practice.

Stemming from this tradition is the practice of *visio divina* using images, or audio divina using sacred music. The same practice might be translated for any of our senses!

Rather than telling you about it, I prefer we engage the practice together. I hope you’ll try it with me!

Guided practice:

Let’s take a look at the stained glass around us. Whichever direction you are facing in the space, take a look at the stained glass near you or across from you.

Wiggle in your seat if you need to, move around in the space if you need to. It works for us each to encounter our own image for this practice. God can speak through any image!

The first step in a *visio divina* practice is to take in the fullness of the image. Look at the whole window before you. Notice what is being depicted in the window? Notice shapes, colors, and lines.

Next focus in on a particular aspect of the image. What catches your eye?

Is there a color you are drawn to?

Does a particular piece of the image that sparks something for you?

Is there line that or block of glass that you want to narrow in on?

There are no right or wrong answers, simply acknowledge where you are being drawn today.

Spend a couple of breaths focused on that spot.

In our third step, we begin to wonder about how God is speaking through the piece of the image that has drawn our attention.

Why do you think the Spirit guided you to that detail?

Do you sense an invitation?

Are any memories coming up for you? What emotions come to the surface?

What is stirring with in you?

Finally, we ask ourselves, what our response is to this conversation with God.

What do you need to pray for? What do you need to offer to God for guidance and care?

Is there an action you wish to take? Is there a word you need to share?

How is God encouraging you or guiding you?

AMEN.

*Visio divina* won’t always offer something ground breaking. Not every day will bring us miraculous new insights. But it is a *practice…*it is a habit we can adopt, a spiritual muscle we can build, so that we are ready when an insight does come.

In the healing of Bartimaeus, Jesus tells him, “Your faith has made you well.” Bartimaeus experiences a sudden moment of literal sight, an incredible miracle! I also think it is the *practice of faith* that makes us well. This spiritual wellness, or connection God, comes through ongoing practice; it is incremental and sometimes goes without our detection. Through engaging in some of the many ways of prayer and worship we are slowly changed and brought in right relationship with God and God’s people. Other the course of time we can begin to see as God sees, to recognize the belovedness of each and every being. We can begin to God in the face of our neighbor.

When Jesus asks what he can do for me, this might be one answer:

Jesus, let me see again. Let me see *you.* Let me see as you see.

Amen.