**Pastor Lloyd’s Sermon Notes for 06/03/2022**

**WHAT DO YOU SEE #6 - I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW - Mark 8:22-26**

We have looked at five different stories where the question is asked ‘what do you see’? I’m amazed at how people see different things in the same event. If ten of us went to a rugby match and then afterwards spoke about what we saw – we would have a range of different contributions. One might be the ebb and flow of the game, another the skill of the ball carriers or kickers, someone else might like the colours of the uniforms or the atrocious referee decision… we all watched the same event, but saw something different. When God asks us what we see - he asks for a *specific reason* – and that’s to help us *understand what he is saying or doing*. Now here is exactly the challenge – if I was to ask you the question – what is God doing in the World today? We would get a wide range of answers. Yet this question surely has to be high on our list of important considerations. Today’s message is entitled ‘I can see clearly Now’ – and it comes from a rather unusual story – a man born blind whom Jesus prayed for and it has a rather surprising outcome. It’s the only case in the Bible of where a partial healing took place in Jesus’ ministry. Let’s read together from Mark’s Gospel 8:22-26.

Today’s story is about a young couple in love who marry. And they embark upon a life together. Yes, there are adjustments to make, but mostly they do well. Life is good, they learn about listening to each other, sharing the joys and struggles that come with having to consider another person. They share new experiences, travel, promotion in their chosen careers, and make major financial decisions, they discover the intimacies of a shared life together. Then something happens, one day she has news…. that’s right, I’m going to have a baby! For nine months they await this special moment, plans are made, classes are attended, and everything possible is ready for this new life, a bundle of joy to come into their lives. And suddenly their World is turned upside down! It’s not quite what they expected, its messy, it’s painful, it’s tiring, it stretches them. How do you do this; breastfeeding, cleaning, nappies, washing, bathing, cooking, ironing, you spend time just listening to the baby to make sure it’s still breathing!! And then if I can just get some sleep!!! All the routines are gone, and hubby comes home and there is no tea cooked, the house looks like an explosion in a mattress factory, with nappies hung up in the lounge, those days of ‘just us’ have gone, their world is turned upside down.

Giving birth is not only painful, it is messy, it’s disruptive and there are no words to describe really what it does to you! But you know what, it is also a time of great joy with the pain…because of those moments when you creep into the baby’s room and just watch them sleeping, or hold them in your arms, and you go - it’s worth it!

Churches need to give birth too, birth to *new seasons* in their journey, to *new ministries, new dreams, and new chapters*. And birthing something does not happen without pain, and upheaval. We here at Ranui are in a season of birthing something, not for us – but for our future. Right now is a critical moment for our Church.

We tread a daily pathway between continuity and change. Now what has this to do with Mark 8? The man born blind got half his sight back…and then Jesus prayed and his sight was completely restored. Often in our lives and as a Church we don’t fully see what God is doing. We evaluate from how something impacts us, instead of asking the question God what are you doing here? And today I want to suggest that there are three things God might want to give us some more insight on. To fully open our eyes to.

**1. See ourselves as we really are**

Yes, we are loved, forgiven, and firmly located in the kingdom.

But we are still on the process of being put together… repaired and restored.

If we can just get our heads around this truth, it will help us relate to each other. We are called to walk together in unity and love and to overlook the faults and failings in each other. We are still frail and being mended. We need to ask God to speak to us about areas of our lives where we resist him, where we put our expectations on others. And we need the grace of God for each other. God is birthing his character in us…growing us and taking our daily experiences and filling the cracks of our pain with his gold. (Remember the Japanese vase). During this unsettling time where we cannot plan anything with certainty….God is teaching us about flexibility, adaptability, honoring each other’s views, - and quite frankly some people don’t like learning this. They want Church to be like it was without these extras. Many people would rather distance themselves from this kind of stretching. So, they stay home and watch from a safe distance…. Or change the channel onto something easier and more appealing.

Do you remember the Church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:16-18…. most of us remember that its condition was that it was neither hot nor cold - but there is a wonderful promise to that Church that is often missed…. where it is said – *let me give you ointment for your eyes* that you can have your eyesight healed and see yourself clearly. The Church at Laodicea would immediately know what God was talking about because they were famous for a special eye ointment that was made from a paste in the area where they lived, and people came from afar to get this special paste. Amazing that for this Church the Spirit was saying put some of your healing paste on your own eyes first so you can truly see your true condition. I’m glad that God sees us not only as we are but what we will become. Peter – I am going to call you the ‘rock’…because he could see what he was going to bring out in Peter’s life. So, when did Peter see himself in his weakness and frailty? On the beach in John 21 after he had denied Jesus three times. I need to get my eyesight healed so I can see clearly where I need to change.

**2. See our World and our place in its mission**

Secondly, we need to see clearly our personal mission, what SHAPE we are, what God’s call upon our lives is. Each of you are called to ministry as I am! I’m going to call this your life purpose. Exactly what that means for you is for you to discover!

**SHAPE** is an acronym.

S (Spiritual gift)

H (Heart desire)

A (Natural Ability)

P (Personality)

E (Life Experiences)

Many of us have some idea of what gifting God has given to us... but like this man’s healing in Mark 8 it’s not fully clear, it’s in the process of becoming clear. I’m going to share a message on this before I leave at end of the month.

When Jesus prayed a second time for this man – his sight was completely restored. There is no greater fulfillment in life than being the person God made you to be and finding your SHAPE, and how that fits in the kingdom of God. At times discovering who you are is painful, messy, mistakes are made, your worn out and tired, but when you hear someone pray for healing for the first time, or have the privilege of blessing someone with hospitality, or when you share a word with someone to encourage them and their face lights up. You are connecting with your life mission, your shape and your gifting design. Lord I can see something but not sure what it is yet…. make it clear…open my eyes to see what your calling is for me in the World that I live in. Lord make it clear to me, help me to really see what you have for me…men like trees walking are not enough, yes, I have a hunch of what it might be but I really need to know. Doesn’t it surprise you that Jesus himself had to pray twice for this to occur…you know what, that to me says something…it says that sometimes clarity comes over a process of time, sometimes the person needing to see needs to take that journey towards getting the insight…there was purpose in the need for a second prayer for the person being healed. There are further insights to get, there are more opportunities to grasp, there are more appointments for you to discover.

**3. See God for who he truly he is**

Paul reminds us that in many ways we see now through a dark glass, we see forms and shapes of what is to come but there will come a day when we see clearly face to face. We will see why some things have happened in our lives…. some of the painful things, some of the loss and even the tragedy. Meanwhile we worship what we can see and know of God…. What do I know about God that is for sure? – He is love and He is good. He has a purpose for my life and for each of us – fulfilling. His timing is right and perfect – even if it’s inconvenient! I can worship on these three things. You see I don’t have to have all my questions answered to my satisfaction before I worship? Even if I have a number of things that perplex me. How long has it been since you really were captivated by God in worship, experienced something powerful inside your heart when you worshipped? Yes, we have some time when we can see partially.

Back to our parable. Giving birth – it’s messy, it’s painful but there’s nothing like it. I still remember holding our first baby in my arms, an incredibly special moment. Seeing new people come to faith and being baptized…like new spiritual babies. Seeing people discover their shape and their life mission. Hearing people pray for the first time….share their growing issues. Listening to the dreams of people for their lives and hearing them try to work out where God fits into that and what difference that makes.

And when Jesus prayed for him – his sight was completely restored.

I’ve always wondered about the verse where Jesus says to Peter

*“Satan has desired to sift EACH of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you Peter that your faith might not fail.” Luke 22:31*

How could Peter’s faith fail? When he experienced walking with Jesus like he did?

Well, I think Peter’s faith could have failed through:

- *Unmet expectations* – things that he thought Jesus would do but didn’t

- *Disappointment* – things that happened to him that he thought shouldn’t

- *Failure* at some key moment – when he should have been strong

- *Compared* himself to others – and their giftedness or journey

- *Pressure* of what God expected of him

- *Captivated* by something else that seemed more enticing or important

*- Cynicism* of the spirit – blunted enthusiasm by life experiences

- *Misplaced affection* – something or someone else who captures your heart

Do any of these sound familiar to you? I can see but, it’s like I see men as trees walking, they are not clear. I need more clarity…and Jesus says to me and you – *let me pray for you!*

*Lord I will go anywhere for you, I will even die for you…. Peter before the day is over tomorrow you have denied you even know me three times.*

See ourselves as we really are….*not strong, but frail and growing.*

See our mission in this World…… *Peter, come on from now on you will be catching men…. upon this rock I will build my church…*

See the Lord and worship him…. *Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord I do. – Then feed my sheep.* But Lord what about that other guy who betrayed you? That’s not your concern Peter –you follow me.

So, here are the six messages – about ‘What do you See’?

1. Recalibrate your thinking – Not by might, but by my Spirit – Zechariah
2. Review my horizon....rain coming…Elijah servant…small cloud.
3. Report your sightings….See giants or mighty God? Caleb/Joshua
4. Reconsider a God who is for you… Elisha – lift up your eyes!
5. Revive your bones, muscle, skin, and breadth…Ezekiel’s dry bones
6. Review the clarity of your life purpose and gifting…Mark