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For those of you who wear glasses, can you remember the first time you put them on and how the world suddenly appeared? ... I began wearing glasses in elementary school, and I remember how the world suddenly looked more brilliant, how shapes seemed more distinct and less blurry. The only way for me to see the world clearly is through the lens that bends the light into my eyes.

A few months ago the antiglare coating on my lens began to deteriorate, and suddenly the world became a blurry landscape as I tilted my head side to side to find a clear spot of vision through my glasses.

I finally made an appointment with the eye doctor, and within a week I was wearing a new pair of trifocals. The world appeared sharper, but I mumbled to myself, "Let me see again," for the lines between the three lens seemed distracting, distorting my vision and causing confusion. Luckily I had the option of upgrading to the gradual lens that avoid the lines, and when I put them on yesterday, I exclaimed, "Now I can see."

Although Bartimaeus' story was much more dramatic than mine, I could sense a bit of his frustration when he exclaimed, "I want to see!" When we first meet this blind man, he is sitting along the road, begging for alms. The narrator tells us that his name is Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. A quick Google search of his name revealed that some have suggested that one could translate his name as meaning "unclean." If the narrator was suggesting this blind man was unclean, those passing by would have avoided him, for if they touched him, they would become ritually impure. For Jesus to reach out his hand to this unclean man would have been an act filled with scandal.

But one could also translate the Greek words *son of Timaeus* as meaning "son of the honored or valuable." Could the narrator have used this intentional word play to remind us that one unclean can become valued through an encounter with Jesus?

This blind man's life was transformed in his encounter with Jesus, from sitting along the road

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unable to see to “throwing off his cloak,” which may have contained the coins that people had thrown in his lap. The man jumped up, regardless of the coins he may have lost, and although still blind, he found his way to Jesus. Somehow he knew this Jesus could help him, and when Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus exclaimed, “Let me see again!”

How many times have you wished you could see something you were unable to see? Maybe you’ve always wanted to travel to some distant place, wishing you could sight-see in another state or other country. Well, thanks to Google street view, you may get to see those sights, for through the amazing technology of attaching sophisticated cameras to the top of cars and even attached to bicycles, Google is providing online street-level 360 degree views around the world, from the streets in your neighborhood to taking a trip along U.S. Route 66 to visiting Mexico City to traveling to Italy. This technology adds another meaning to the phrase, “I want to see.”

This past week Google found another way to help us see things we may not have been able to see—this time in the Grand Canyon. Since you can’t drive through this area, they found a clever way to help us see without using cameras mounted on cars or bikes. Through cameras strapped to the back of hikers, we will soon be able to walk along virtual paths and see scenes in the Grand Canyon we might not normally see.¹

Soon you will be able to see most any site in the world from the comfort of your computer, but I doubt the technology will ever help us see other things we often wish we could see in the future, such as the results of an upcoming decision that we will face in a little over a week. Both presidential candidates have been offering us a picture of what our country could be like if we select him as our President. They want us to see the world through their particular lenses, to see their particular version of the truth. Wouldn’t it be great if we could see into the future the results of both possibilities, and then cast our votes for the future that appears to

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work the best? No matter how we vote, the future remains uncertain. I wish I could see!

I sometimes wish I could see how the way I live might impact the world around me, especially in regard to the environment. How does using less paper allow more trees to live? Or how does recycling aluminum cans protect our resources? Or how does lowering my thermostat reduce the consumption of energy supplies? I wish I could see!

And then I wish I could see even the larger picture—how might the increased oil production in our country affect my children and grandchildren's future? Unknown to me, the U.S. has been increasing our oil production over the past several years that by next year we could be producing as much oil as Saudi Arabia: 11 million barrels a day.² That sounds great, doesn't it? Becoming less dependent on other sources of oil and creating more jobs here at home? I wish I could see the long-term results, however, of new technology used to get this oil, such as hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking. The process involves pumping water

mixed with sand and chemicals into the ground to fracture the shale formations to release oil. Some suggest that this process can pollute the ground water and can end up in what we drink. I wish I could see!

Like Bartimaeus, any one of us may feel as though we are sitting beside the road, unable to see what's going on. It's tempting to get discouraged as we wait along the road, unable to see what's happening. As Bartimaeus learned that Jesus was approaching, he could have sat there waiting for someone else to help him get to Jesus, or he could have sat there complaining that he could not see. Sometimes when we can't see what's going on around us, we may feel as though we cannot do anything to make a difference, using our limited vision as an excuse to not do anything.

When Bartimaeus jumped up, all he asked was that he could see again. Listen to his conversation with Jesus through *The Message Bible*:

Jesus stopped in his tracks. "Call him over."
They called him. "It's your lucky day! Get up!
He's calling you to come!" Throwing off his

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coat, he was on his feet at once and came to Jesus.

Jesus said, "What can I do for you?"
The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

"On your way," said Jesus. "Your faith has saved and healed you."

In that very instant he recovered his sight and followed Jesus down the road.

Before Bartimaeus could see, he decided to do something. The path was not clear, though he trusted that somehow this Jesus could help him, and he jumped up, letting go of his secure location along the road, and risked an encounter with Jesus. Jesus replied for Bartimaeus to be on his way, to follow him down the road, and that his own faith had helped him recover his sight.

When things don't seem to be going the way we want, or when we can't see what's going on, like

Bartimaeus, we can't sit around and wait for someone to make a difference. He reminds us to jump up and meet the risen Christ, for through this encounter we gain the courage to follow Jesus. Through our faith in Christ, the struggles of the world can be healed, even if we can't see exactly how things will work out. So jump up. And follow!

¹ Steve Henn, "Google's Street View Goes Into The Wild," October 24, 2012, www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2012/10/24/163499448/googles-street-view-goes-into-the-wild

² Jeff Brady, "Could U.S. Produce Enough Oil To Rival Saudi Arabia?" www.npr.org/2012/10/24/163565485/could-u-s-produce-enough-oil-to-rival-saudi-arabia