

## **Do You Want to See? (The Moonwalking Bear)**

Luke 18: 31-43

#31 in "Jesus Stories" Series

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### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus—Son of David, we cry out to you. We ask that you would help us to see. Help us to preach. Have mercy on us, Son of David—Lord Jesus. Amen

### **Introduction**

It's come to my attention that some of you are not comprehending everything in each sermon. And so, before I begin to preach, I'm going to have you do an awareness exercise. Please obey the instructions on the screen.

#### [Awareness test](#)

"This is an awareness test"

[The screen shows two basketball teams, one dressed in white, the other in black.]

"How passes does the team in white make?"

[Approximately 10 seconds of footage is shown of both a black and white team making passes.]

"The answer is 13. But...did you see the moonwalking bear?"

[The video clip is rewind and the clip starts over. There is, indeed, a man in a bear costume that dances through the scene. He doesn't stand out, on account of the low light and the fact that he looks like one of the players dressed in black. And calling his dance a moonwalk is...generous.]

"It's easy to miss something you're not looking for."

How many saw the moonwalking bear?

How many have seen tests like this and so didn't count the number of passes – so you could see the moonwalking bear?

So it does make a fascinating point and that is we see what we expect to see. We see what we focus upon.

### **Message**

I'm sure you've seen one of those pictures before that if you place it about eighteen inches from your face and, instead of focusing on the picture, you focus your eyes beyond the picture, you'll begin to see a three-dimensional image pop out and often the picture has some sort of motion. The hidden image is there all along, it's just that you can't see it in two-dimensions.

Maybe there are realities we just can't see in three dimensions, but they're really there. Maybe something has a leash on the monster. You just can't see it, if you focus on this world.

We see what we expect to see.  
We see what we focus upon.  
We see what our minds can make sense of.  
That's why optical illusions are so fascinating.

[Image of an optical illusion that can look like a duck or a rabbit depending on how you look at it]

Is that a duck or rabbit or a duckbitt?

[Image of a painting of stairs that creates an optical illusion and you can't tell which direction the stairs go]

Where are these staircases going?

Our minds are constantly trying to make sense out of what we see.  
And if we can't make sense out of what we see, sometimes we just prefer to not see.

Lucille Goodyear reported to Paul Harvey news that she'd been having all kinds of trouble driving to and from work. She says it used to be easy: "No traffic problems . . . No mad rat race. . . But now, Wow!! Cars are coming from all directions." She says it's been that way ever since she got her new glasses.

My mom told me that one day when she was a little girl, my grandpa came in from the fields for lunch. He was white as a sheet. He proceeded to tell my grandma that while he was on the tractor, a saucer shaped metal object – like a spaceship – a UFO – came and hovered over him and then suddenly left. She remembers my grandpa totally unnerved and then remembers that after that day, he couldn't remember that anything unusual had happened. He couldn't make sense out of what he saw, so he didn't see, he forgot.

In the movie *Shutter Island*, Leonardo DiCaprio is insane! But he begins to remember (he begins to see) that he is a murderer, but he chooses not to see. He gets a lobotomy.

In the movie, 23, Jim Carey is haunted by the number 23. As the film progresses, the viewer realizes that it's all related to the fact that Jim Carey murdered a woman and then hid the truth from himself. All he remembered was 23. The movie ends with the Bible verse Numbers 32: 23 plastered on the screen. "*Be sure your sin will find you out.*"

Ever since I was a boy, I've often wondered: "What would I do if I accidentally killed someone or God forbid, I did it on purpose? Would I even allow myself to see it?"

Helen Keller once said, "There is a blindness far worse than mine, those who can see and choose not to see."

I think that's true and yet I'm not sure we can blame people for that choice, for they are literally unable to handle the truth. Jesus said, "*I am the truth*" Can you handle the truth?

Well, anyway, now that you've taken the awareness test – let's look at our scripture.

Luke 18: 31

*And taking the twelve, (like the twelve tribes of Israel) he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, (the city of Peace – the hope of Israel and, according to the prophets, the "joy of the whole earth" Psalms 48:2) and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.*

*"See, (Idou–Look–Behold–See!) we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished" ("will be finished," telesthesetai from teleo)*

***Everything* written about the "Son of Man" will be **accomplished**.**

That's an absolutely incredible statement! So, like the crowd in John 12, we want to ask, "Who is this Son of Man?" And, "What was written about Him in the prophets?" It's interesting that scholars today aren't entirely sure what Jesus meant by "Son of Man." In Scripture, "Son of man" does mean son of a man, which basically means every ordinary man or woman. And yet, in one place, in the prophets, the phrase refers to something or someone that appears to be rather extraordinary. In Daniel 7, Daniel has a vision and sees God (The Ancient of Days) surrounded by fire. The principalities (beasts) of this world are defeated and disarmed, and then, in verse 13, we read:

Daniel 7: 13-14

*I saw in the night visions, and behold, (look – see this), with clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people (It's literally all people) (King James Version- "**that all people**") nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

Amazing! This Son of Man is given a dominion, such, that **ALL** people should serve Him.<sup>1</sup>

Such that "*Every knee will bow and every tongue give praise.*" Daniel sees a UFO (an unidentified flying object), a thing very difficult to incorporate into his present map of reality, yet

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<sup>1</sup> Some modern translations say "all peoples" like all sorts of people groups, but the Hebrew is "*all people*" and we can tell that Daniel means "*all people*" for in Daniel 3:4 King Nebuchadnezzar issues an edict using the same language that all people should worship his golden idol. Daniel sees that all people will not worship the idol, but all people will serve and worship this Son of Man.

a thing he must incorporate into his reality. In fact, in Daniel 2, he had interpreted a dream about a stone *“cut by no human hand”* that struck the images of the kingdoms of this earth destroying them and growing into a great mountain that filled the whole earth. And that must be the Son of Man and His Kingdom. Incredibly on his mountain- that's Mt Zion and Jerusalem.

Incredibly, in chapter 9, Daniel seems to prophecy exactly when this will happen, 490 years:

Daniel 9: 24

*...seventy weeks of years for Jerusalem to finish transgression, to put an end to sin and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal vision and prophet and anoint a most holy place . . . after “an anointed one” (a Messiah) is cut off and has nothing.*

When you do the math, it works out to about 30 or 33 A.D. And that's the way the early church understood the prophecy. And that's the way Jesus seems to have understood the prophecy, for at just the right time, Jesus says, *“See! We're going up to Jerusalem and everything that's written about in the Prophets will be accomplished.”*

You may remember that on the tree in the garden Jesus lifted his head and cried, *“It is finished”* before the mountain moved and tombs were opened like Daniel prophesied in Daniel 12: *“The time of the end.”* And Jesus is the end. *“Everything that's written about the son of man.”*

Now, I suppose that would even include the things written about the Son of Man in the New Testament, the things Jesus said about the Son of Man. In Luke 21, Jesus tells His followers about a great tribulation and that when they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies they are to know that its destruction is near and flee to the mountains. Jerusalem will be destroyed and people *“will see the Son of Man coming with power and in great glory.”* Then Jesus says, *“Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all has taken place.”*

One generation would be 70 A.D. Now that's led many to argue that the early church expected Jesus to return in 70 A.D. and that they were greatly disappointed because He didn't return in 70 A.D. The people that say this claim to know this because they didn't see Jesus return in 70 A.D.

About 150 years ago, John Darby, and millions in Britain and the United States who followed him, began to argue that Jesus and Daniel basically got it wrong—that there was a gap of at least two thousand years in Daniel's seventy weeks of years. And so Israel would have to be reconstituted, and Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt in order to be re-destroyed in order that Jesus, the Son of man, could come back and claim His kingdom.

[Image of Christians who have been taken captive and are about to be martyred by radical Muslims]

If you're ever tempted to think theology doesn't matter, let me remind you of a few things in this picture. The fellows in black are part of the Islamic State. They believe Jerusalem belongs to them – while many Jews argue that Jerusalem belongs to them. Both Jews and Muslims reject the idea that Jesus is the Son of Man.

The men in orange are Christians and they believe Jesus is the Son of Man – who said *“My father's house is to be a house of prayer for all people,”* who taught: *“Destroy this and I'll rebuild*

it with body broken and blood shed.” These Christians believe that (in the words of Isaiah) they are to “speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned. They believe a New Jerusalem is coming down from God.

But the men in black hate the men in orange. In the video, they call them “crusaders” for in the middle ages Christians (using that term) tried to take Jerusalem by force and now they argue that (in league with the Jews) Christians are still trying to take Jerusalem by force. It seems that many Christians are, for they don’t believe that “everything written about the Son of Man in the prophets happened two thousand years ago.” They think it still needs to happen and with our help it could happen.

And so men kill people trying to take Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is the people they kill. Well, I’m just saying theology matters, for what you think you see, or don’t see, determines everything you do.

And now I should probably add: I really don’t know what the kingdom of the United States is to do about this situation. But I do know what the Son of Man and His kingdom has done and does do about this situation. Jesus said, “*See? We are going up to Jerusalem and everything written about the Son of Man in the prophets will be finished.*” And on a tree, in the Garden, in Jerusalem the Son of Man lifted His head and cried out, “*It is finished,*” and Mt. Zion began to shake, and the tombs were opened (just as Daniel had prophesied in chapter 12) and Matthew 27:53, “saints came out and went into the city” (Old Jerusalem and New Jerusalem).

Well, the supreme weapon of the men in black is killing.

The supreme weapon of the men in orange is dying in the name of Jesus – the Son of Man.

Jesus said to His disciples, “*I will come for you and take you to where I am going.*” I believe that last week, these twenty-one men saw the Son of Man coming on the clouds of Heaven with great glory and this day–today–they are with Him in paradise. . . in a New Jerusalem in a new heaven and new earth. They stand before the Son of Man. And I think that last week, the twenty-one men in black also saw the Son of Man. Yet, they may not have recognized Him, and if for a moment they did, they probably shut their eyes. They saw Him, for He was there suffering in the men in orange (and maybe even in the men in black).

Well, Jesus said to His disciples (Matthew 17:12) “*Elijah has come and they didn’t recognize him so it is with the Son of Man.*” It’s like the Son of Man is coming all the time, but we don’t recognize Him. Yet one day, all will see Him. As Zechariah prophesied “*All will look on the one whom they have pierced.*” One day the man in black will see Him in glory, and if they haven’t yet learned to trust Him, they will run in terror calling to the mountains and rocks “*Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.*” (Revelation 6:16) Yet even those that run and hide in outer darkness are part of the dominion given to the Son of Man. So eventually they will see Him truly and so will serve Him, will bend the knee and worship.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In John 12, Jesus says “*Now is the judgment of this world and when I’m lifted up I will draw all people to myself.*” The crowd says, “Who is this Son of Man that must be lifted up – on a tree and draws all unto himself? See? Even the men in black belong to the Son of Man.

Luke 18: 31, So Jesus says, “See?”– “Can you see?” “*We’re going up to Jerusalem and everything that’s written about the Son of Man in the prophets will be accomplished.*”

You know, if you read Scripture carefully you’ll see that the early church (Matthew, Paul, Luke) was not disappointed. They didn’t think they were wrong about the end of the age, and the return of Christ, and the Son of Man receiving His kingdom.

- In Matthew 28, the resurrected Christ says to His disciples, “**All** authority (power) *has been given unto me.*”
- In Matthew 26: 64, Jesus says to the religious leaders, “*From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of Heaven.*”
- In Acts 7, as he’s being stoned to death, Stephen sees Jesus on the clouds at the right hand of power.
- In Acts 8, Rabbi Saul, who helped stone Stephen, sees Jesus coming from Heaven as a brilliant light. Jesus basically kills Pharisee Saul and creates Saint Paul. Jesus blinds Saul and then Paul begins to see.
- Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians that the “*manifestation of his presence*” “*destroys the anti-christ* (the “Lawless One”).
- In the Revelation Jesus appears to John and the glory makes him fall as if dead until Jesus comes to him and says, “*John, don’t be afraid it’s me and I got keys.*” Then John sees him coming in a multitude of ways as old Jerusalem is destroyed and the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven.
- Saint Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10: 11 that we are “*those upon whom the end of the ages has come.*”
- Hebrews says, “Jesus appeared (past tense) at the end of ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

It sounds like the early Christians were not disappointed that the end hadn’t come, for they were convinced the end *had* come. Judgment had *already* happened, and the Son of Man had already received His kingdom just as described in Daniel 7: 13. And it gets weirder than that: The other place, that “Son of Man” is used rather conspicuously in the Old Testament is in Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel 37: 11 God says to Ezekiel, “*Son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel.*” They’re the bones of those that died never having entered the Promised Land and the city of Jerusalem. God says to Ezekiel, “*Son of Man prophesy to the bones*” say, “*Behold, I will raise you from your graves and bring you into the land and put my spirit in you.*” Prophesy, Son of Man.<sup>3</sup>

You see? It’s like...

1. The kingdom of the Son of Man *has* come.
2. The Kingdom is coming through us when we prophesy, when we speak the Word.

And it gets weirder than that, for clearly “Son of Man” usually means just “man” as in Psalm 144 “*Oh Lord, what is man (Adam) that you regard him or the son of man that you are mindful of*

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<sup>3</sup> So, in Romans Paul writes, “*All Israel will be saved*” and then, “*God has consigned all to disobedience that he may have mercy on all.*”

him?” Remember we are Adam and Jesus is the *Eschatos* Adam. In Ephesians, Paul makes it clear that we are all united under one head in Him – like a body, as if all humanity is hidden in Him. And so, what’s true about Him is what’s most true about you. As if God said, “*Let us make Adam in our own image*” and now “*it is finished.*” It’s as if creation, judgment, and salvation have happened and all things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ’s is God’s.

It’s as if...

1. The kingdom has come.
2. It is coming through you and in you.
3. You are it – You son of man.”

And Jesus says, “See?” “Do you see?” “Would you see?”

“Do you want to see the Son of Man (the moonwalking bear)?

Well, What do you expect to see?

What do you focus upon?

How do you make sense of Jesus?

I’m not sure you can make sense of Jesus.

But if you want Jesus, expect Jesus and focus on Jesus. Maybe He’ll make sense of you.

Well, I’d like to use an illustration I’ve used many times before and will probably need to use again in the near future.

In 1884, Edwin Abbott published a little book entitled *Flatland*.

Flatland is about two-dimensional creatures that live in a two-dimensional world.

You see, if we lived in Flatland, our world would be this and only this:

[Peter picks up a large piece of cardboard with circles, rectangles, and squares drawn on it.]

The only things we could perceive would be two-dimensional objects like squares and circles.

[Peter picks up a box—a cube and holds it against the poster board]

But suppose three-dimensional objects like spheres and cubes intersected our world. Well, we might “see them” but really not see them. I mean, we’d see a square but not a cube.

[Peter picks up a basketball—a sphere and holds it up to the poster board.]

We’d see a circle, but not a sphere. If someone said, “That’s a sphere we might say, “Okay,” yet have no idea what a sphere really was.

Suppose a cylinder passed through our world this way:

[Peter holds a can—a cylinder up to the poster board.]

We’d say, “Look at that circle!”

And suppose it passed through this way [Peter changes the angle of the cylinder]: We’d say, “Look at that rectangle!”

But now suppose someone was born into our two-dimensional world from a three-dimensional world, and suppose that someone said, "Look a cylinder."

We might look and say, "Oh, you mean that rectangle?"

He might say, "And look there it is again."

And we'd say, "You mean that circle?"

He'd say the rectangle *is* the circle, and they're both one cylinder and we'd say, "You're crazy. There's no such thing!"

He might say "*I and the Father are one*," and we might say, "You're crazy."

He might say, "*Love is God*" and we might say, "Nope, it's hormones and oxytocin."

He might say,

"Look the Son of Man has just disarmed the principalities and powers of this world."

And we might say, "Nope, that's just a dead, naked Jew hanging on a tree."

He might say, "Look the temple is being filled with fire."

And we'd say, "Nope, that's just a bunch of drunks having a party on Pentecost Sunday."

He might say, "Look it's the New Jerusalem coming down"

And we'd say, "Nope, that's just some hippies sharing their stuff."

He might say, "Look the slaughtered Lamb is being enthroned on the very Judgment Seat of God"

And we'd say, "Are you insane? All we see is the severed heads of twenty-three Egyptian men having died with the name of Jesus on their lips."

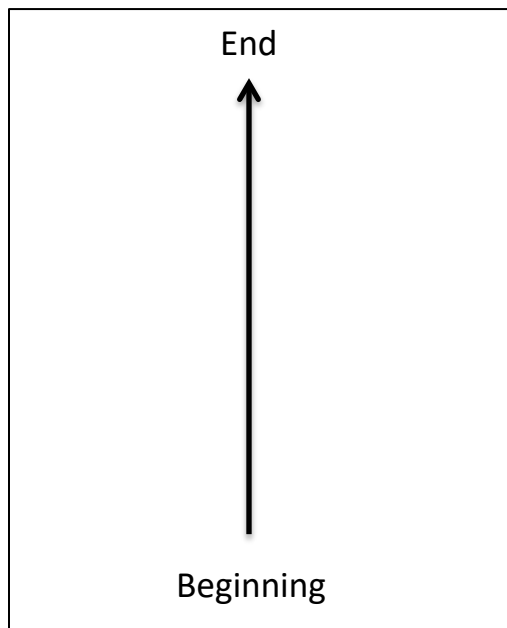
He might say, "*Look the Son of Man is coming on the clouds of heaven*."

And we'd say, "Are you crazy? All we see is death, destruction and despair and some folks rambling on about another world."

You know, physicists postulate multiple dimensions to reality. (It's the only way they can get the math to work.) Well, God made all dimensions including time.

So, imagine if we made time one of the dimensions in Flatland.

In other words imagine a time line [Peter picks up another poster board]:



Now God made the timeline. [Peter points to various



places on the timeline as he explains] God in Jesus entered the timeline as a Son of Man.

On a tree in the garden we crucified Him and He offered himself for the sins of the world.

He offered himself once and for all. Once and for all time.

And ever since that event Jesus has been “seated at the right hand of power and COMING on the clouds of heaven.” That can be one event from the standpoint of eternity and an infinite number of events from the standpoint of this world.

I mean, imagine if I was Jesus, and I said “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” and held Flatland an inch from my body. [Peter moves towards the timeline] Well, the Kingdom would be at hand at every point on the timeline.

And imagine if I said, “*Behold I am the beginning and the end. Behold I am coming*” and slammed Flatland into me. Well, I would be coming at a million different moments in flatland and yet it would also be the same moment in eternity. It would be once and for all.

Well, Jesus is coming all the time in the form of your neighbor, or a kind word, or a beggar, a hug or even a worship song. He is coming all the time and He is coming at the end of *your* time when His glory is revealed.

In Luke 21, He says, “*Watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, (and the cares of Flatland) and that day come upon you like a trap.*” “*Stay awake at all times that you may stand before the Son of Man.*” That is: See love now so that you may stand before the King of Love on that day and surrender to love with joy rather than run – hiding yourself in the dark corners of Flatland – the depths of this earth.

So, Jesus says, “See!” It seems to really matter to Jesus that you would *want* to see.

Luke 18: 31-34

*And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon, and after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.*

They did not see. It was hidden. Maybe they hid it? Maybe God in His mercy, hid it? There are certain things you can only truly see if you *want* to see them.

Now, in science, where we learn about objects, the idea that you can only see what you want to see is considered terrible science.<sup>4</sup>

However, in relationship, where learn about people, it’s a very different story!<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> At least until we started dealing with subatomic particles and light – but that’s another story. However, in relationships, where we learn about people, it’s a very different story.

<sup>5</sup> With people in relationships, seeing isn’t believing, believing is seeing.

In fact, there is a part of my wife that I wasn't allowed to see until she knew I wanted to see. In fact, until she knew that I wanted to see so very much that I'd enter into a covenant with her and give my life to her. I couldn't see it until she knew I wanted to see her. Until then, it remained hidden like the inside of a sacred temple. To raid that temple (taking carnal knowledge from that temple) is sin and death. But to worship Love at that temple is the very conception of life.

Luke 18: 33-34

*And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.*

It was hidden from them, and I don't think they wanted to see, and maybe we don't want to see. We don't want to see the New Jerusalem, for we're highly invested in the Old Jerusalem. We don't want to see Christ in us, the New Man, for we're highly invested in the Old Man. We don't want to see Jesus, that is *Ye-ho-shua*—"God is Salvation"—Jesus. We don't want to see "God is salvation" for we think we are salvation<sup>6</sup>.

You know, according to Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, just seeing the Christ destroys the anti-christ (Lawless one). "Anti-christ" doesn't just mean against Christ, but imitation Christ. And John writes that there are many anti-christs. It's the belief that we're saved by what we know. In John's day, it was often called Gnosticism – taking knowledge to save yourself – making yourself the Christ.

Well, just the manifestation of the *true* Christ destroys any imitation Christ that you or I have created. In the light of Christ I see that my will is not the Christ, but my will has actually crucified the Christ.

Like I said, I've always wondered how I'd handle the knowledge that I had killed someone. Would I refuse to see it— like in the movie *Shutter Island* and 23? Would I go insane? Would I go blind? When Saint Paul saw it, he did go blind, and then he saw a whole new world. In the presence of Christ I come to know evil for I have killed the Christ. I can know Good, that God in Christ let me. He forgave me. That's called grace. His grace is Life, Life from the Tree of Life – the cross.

It's incredibly good news. But it burns your eyes the first time you see it. Seeing Christ destroys your anti-christ. Seeing the true Man destroys your false man and creates your new man. You die with Christ and rise with Christ. So Jesus Christ is better than you thought, you are better than you thought and Jerusalem is better than you ever imagined.

Seeing Christ destroys your anti-christ.

Seeing the true man destroys your false man and creates your New Man.

You die with Christ and rise with Christ.

So Jesus Christ is better than you thought.

You are better than you thought.

And Jerusalem is better than you ever imagined.

Seeing Christ destroys your anti-christ.

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<sup>6</sup> if we're highly invested in the old Jerusalem consider our old man to be a success and haven't surrendered everything to Christ crucified on our behalf

Seeing the true man destroys your false man.

Seeing the New Jerusalem allows you to surrender the old Jerusalem.

History reveals that in 70 A.D. the Christian Community in Old Jerusalem read the signs of the times and fled the city when they saw the Roman Eagle standards and the armies beginning to surround Jerusalem. They could surrender old Jerusalem for they saw the New Jerusalem.

They saw the Kingdom that the Son of Man receives from the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:13 *"All people, nations and languages serving and worshipping Jesus forever without end."* They saw what John saw in Revelation 5 *"every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is within them praising the slaughtered lamb standing on the throne."* They saw the New Jerusalem and She is a Bride. She is not to be taken with guns, and armies, and tanks. She is to be received. She is a gift of Grace. All things are Grace. Christ is Grace, you are grace, and all creation is Grace. So, if you can't see Grace and don't want to see Grace, you're utterly blind, even though you think you see. So, in Luke 18, Jesus says to the twelve "See!" But they don't see. So who will see?

Luke 18:35-41

*As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Have Grace on me) And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"*

*"What do you want me to do for you?"*

Well, Jesus, he wants to see!!! Isn't it obvious that blind people want to see? Well, maybe not. I'm not so sure the disciples want to see. Clearly the scribes and Pharisees don't want to see because they think they already see. They think they know what the Christ will look like. They think they know what the righteous man looks like. They think they have built the city of God and deserve the city of God.

In John 9, Jesus says,

*"For judgment I came into this world that these who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind . . . If you were blind, you would have no guilt but now that you say "We see," your guilt remains."*

If you think you see, you think you can find the way.

If you're blind, you must trust that the Way will find you. If you're blind you must live by Grace.

Luke 18: 39-43

*“Son of David, have mercy on me!” And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him “What do you want me to do for you?”*

He said, *“Lord, let me recover my sight.”* The blind man wants to see because he has no faith in his own vision. He’s already lost his vision – his view of reality.

*He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” And Jesus said to him, “Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.” (literally: “Your faith has saved you”) And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

Jesus was literally his vision. *“We walk by faith and not by sight.”* So if you think you see, perhaps you’ll soon go blind. In just about six days the *disciples* will all go blind. They will all lose sight of Jesus. They will lose sight of themselves and lose sight of the Kingdom. Judas will betray him. Peter will deny him. They will all be scattered and they will long to see . . . then in the darkness, they will see . . . the Light (Ultimately, I believe that even Judas will see the Light, for *“the light shines in the darkness.”*) Actually it’s in the darkness that we come to fall in love with the Light.

Years ago, after giving a concert in a famous church, Bill Man was ushered into a back room where a blind, deaf, mute woman was waiting for him. Through her assistant, she asked him to sing a song. She stood five inches from his face and placed her fingers over his vocal chords as he sang, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” A tear ran down her face and as he finished, indistinctly through the lady that was with her, Helen Keller said, “I was there.”

It’s in the darkness that we fall in love with the Light. Jesus is the light.

Ultimately, we will all see Jesus and worship Jesus. But that day, (before the twelve, even before the crucifixion and resurrection) a blind beggar saw Jesus and worshipped Jesus. His faith had saved him. So, if you think you see, perhaps you will go blind. And if you think you’re blind, I mean by that, if you haven’t seen what you expected to see—what everyone else seems to see, if you can’t seem to focus on the things of this world, if you can’t seem to make sense out of reality, well maybe Reality is about to make sense out of you.

If you feel lost in darkness, just call out “Jesus Son of David, Have mercy on me!” In fact, do that all the time. In fact, let’s do it together now: “Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me!”

### **Communion**

And so that darkest of all nights, the Son of David took the bread and broke it saying, “This is my body broken for you.” I know it looks like bread, but that’s what He said! And He took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me.”

See this! [Peter points to the communion table] Every moment see this! Keep the eyes of your heart focused on this. [Peter points to the communion table] I really struggle to do this. But Jesus is constantly saying to me, “Peter, see this! Look for this!”

You cannot make sense of this, but this is making sense of you. In Jesus’ name, believe the Gospel. And if you don’t believe, well then pray, “God help my unbelief.” I think He’s doing that all the time. In Jesus’ name let’s worship.

## **Benediction**

I think Jesus is asking, “Do you want to see?” And we all say, “Yes! I want to see! I want to see my leg grow, like when you did that healing thing. I want to see myself win the lottery. I’d love to see that heaven thing and you coming on the clouds and all that! I want to see!” But I don’t think that’s what He wants to hear. I mean He does that stuff; I’ve seen it, and if you haven’t I’m sure there’s a good reason – don’t worry about it. I think He does that stuff, but I think that might sound a little like this to Him: “Would you turn a trick for me? I’d just like to see the outside, Jesus.”

You know it says Jerusalem is a Bride.  
And inside there’s a temple.  
And in the temple there’s a Holy of Holies.  
And in the Holy of Holies there’s an ark that contained the law.  
And over it was the Mercy Seat, which covered the law.  
And the blood of the Lamb is sprinkled on the Mercy Seat.  
The inside of that Holy of Holies is Grace.  
And I think that’s why you’re in this world.

God is asking, “Do you want to see the inside of my temple? Please! Want to see the inside of the temple? Do you want to see me? And when you get me...oh yeah...we’ll do all that stuff; it will be awesome. But do you want to see *ME*?”

So, I hope you get this: God really is in charge. God really is Love that is expressed in Jesus the Christ. You are on a journey through this Flatland, and you will find yourself in some very dark places. And when you find yourself there, in those dark places, long for the Light, for your Father in Heaven is longing to show you the Light. In Jesus’ name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don’t be shy about informing us of errors.*