

Sight: As one who wears prescription lenses, I know things are not always what they appear. My optometrist will show me a line with four or five letters on it and ask me to tell them what they are. If I get it right, he goes to the next line, the lines become smaller and smaller as I can read them. When I am no longer able to read them, the letters start to become fuzzy and indistinguishable. I wear contacts and over time my optometrist has asked me to do different things depending upon how my eyes have changed with age. One night during vacation Bible school, my right contact lens tore, and it began irritating my eye, so I removed it. The remainder of that night I worked with the kids with only my left contact in, and the kids were looking a bit fuzzy as I taught them.

How we see things is often indicative of the lens in which we see things. These lenses are often biased based on our beliefs, perspective, and a lifetime of experiences. If you pay attention in any way to the news you are aware that what is being presented is often presented with a political, social, or financial bias. It is infuriating when we know that news should be simply the reporting of events, activities, etc. The intent and purpose of news was never to manipulate the audience to think, feel, or believe one way or another.

How many of you believe in love at first sight? I am not sure I believe in such a thing any more; however, there was a time in second grade I fell in love with the cutest girl in my class. She was Greek, and I was Greek. She was smart, and I was Greek. At recess, she always seemed to find a way to be around me, or at least that is what 7-year-old Louie thought. If you would have asked me, I would have told you that I was going to marry that girl. Louie and Leah forever, at least that is what love at first sight had be believing. At the end of second grade, she moved away – to Greece. When I was in 7th grade, she moved back, she was pretty, pretty sure she did not want to have anything to do with me. Love at first sight can be dangerous in that way.

One of my best friends is a man by the name of Doug. When I speak about Doug, I usually refer to him as Moses. He could be mistaken for a member of ZZ-Top or a Hells Angel. To those who do not know Doug, he might be more than a little intimidating. He is tall, looks a little rough, typically wears sleeveless t-shirts in the summer, and has relatively large biceps. If you saw him walking down a dark alley you might go to the other side of the street to avoid any interaction with him. If you did, you would miss out on hearing about Jesus, the love of God, and meeting a teddy bear of a man who has a genuine love for people. First impressions of people are not always what they are cracked up to be.

Each of us seems to have differing degrees of hindsight, oversight, foresight, and insight. Those who can learn from past experiences and apply that learning to everyday life are said to have hindsight. Anyone who has ever served in a leadership role in any capacity is called upon to give oversight to a group, organization, or department. Foresight is the ability to see how things are progressing and know what may need to be done to be prepared. Insight is the capacity to gain a deeper level of understanding of people, circumstances, and systems to enhance one's ability to serve.

13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi's son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. 15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" 17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." ~ Mark 2:13 – 17

Throughout Scripture, we hear the prophets proclaim, “They have eyes to see, but do not see.” God was at work, He had foretold the people what to anticipate and expect, but when the time came, they missed what God was doing. They had a vision problem of biblical proportions. Only as they repented and returned to God would they ever be able to see what God was doing and what it would mean for their lives. The Pharisees in Jesus’ day were amongst those who were spiritually blind. They were scholars of the word of God, but they were unable to see Jesus for who He is. Their biases, preconceived ideas, and notions of the Messiah became blinders that hindered their ability to see the truths in the Old Testament unfolding before their very eyes.

Their perspectives and prejudices led them to see Jesus as a friend of sinners. As though somehow His association with “sinners” would contaminate Him, His life, and His ministry. These were the very people (sinners) that Jesus entered our world to save. The Pharisees were sinners, none of them were sinless, but they did not see their sin on the same level as the tax collectors and sinners of the world. Over time they had dismissed, belittled, and ignored their sin as they paid greater attention to the sin in other people’s lives. Jesus is a friend of sinners because there is no other kind of person in this world.

In this story, here in Mark, the Pharisees could have seen the grace, forgiveness, and love of Christ being extended toward sinners and rejoiced in the good things that God was doing. However, that is not what they saw. All they could see at that moment was a righteous man, a man who was gathering quite the following, ministering to sinners the Pharisees would have avoided. They had become spiritually blind to what God was doing, what He wanted to do, and who their promised Messiah would be. They saw what they believed to be the worst in Jesus because that was what they wanted to see.

Do you need to have your sight tested? How would you know? The best way to answer that question is to consider how Jesus saw people, how He ministered to them, and how He loved them. If our sight is not consistent with what we see in the life and ministry of Jesus, we need to ask God to give us a new set of lenses to see others as Christ sees them so we can minister in this world in His stead. We must be sensitive to the reality that we may have eyes, but we are not seeing things from God’s perspective. We used to sing a song when I was a child with the simple lyrics that said, “Oh, be careful little eyes what you see. Oh, be careful little eyes what you see. For the Father up above, is looking down in love, so be careful little eyes what you see.”

Serving Our Lord Daily,
Pastor Louie Pantelis



FATHER'S DAY UGLY TIE CONTEST
Congratulations to our winner Denny Curry!