

SEEING WITH JESUS' EYES

Matthew 9:35-38

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LISTEN: <http://www.fbcjc.org/sermon/seeing-with-jesus-eyes/>

I have a friend who pastored in a large university city. He was running on a very popular trail, often used by university students. One day as he was getting his miles in, he blew a knee, and crumpled to the ground in agony. As he lay there writhing, a young co-ed whisked by him, shouting, "On your right!" He said for the first time in his life, he understood what it felt like to be invisible.

Do you ever feel invisible and overlooked? Have you ever been guilty of overlooking someone else? These next words may be the most encouraging ones you hear all day, found in v. 36, "Jesus saw..." Really saw! When Jesus saw people, really saw them, what did he see? He saw individuals, harassed and helpless, like sheep with no shepherd. Do we really see people? I have a pastor friend who moved to a new community. As he visited with some church leaders, he remarked, "I wonder if any church is reaching out to people in that mobile home court on the west end of town." A person who had lived in that town all his life replied, "There's a mobile home court on the west side of town?"

Do you see them? Matthew calls them harassed (flayed, butchered, mangled, annoyingly distracted) and helpless (wounded and lying exhausted) [*Interpretation-Matthew*, by Douglas Ware, p. 108]. There is such a difference between the way Jesus sees others and the way our culture has conditioned us to see (or not see) them. The world sees the strong; Jesus sees the weak. The world sees those who are whole and beautiful; Jesus sees the distorted, the broken. The world only sees the healthy; Jesus sees the diseased. The world sees the successful; Jesus sees the failures. Shane Claiborne has said the problem is not that rich people don't care about poor people; it's that rich people don't know any poor people. And the same could be said about people unlike us—of other races or ethnicities. We don't know any. We don't see any. Because we don't have Jesus' eyes.

Harassed and helpless take on many forms. Someone buried under payday loans of 450% interest, allowed by Missouri law; a couple who has stopped working on their marriage and they are just existing; a lonely teenager, full of doubt and low self-esteem; a friend trapped in a chemical addiction; a person overwhelmed with a sense of life's futility, needing desperately to hear about God's love and Jesus' death and resurrection—that life can be about forgiveness and purpose and beginning again.

Do you ever wonder about the word "perish" in our most famous Bible verse, John 3:16? Someone has commented that "perish" could mean to have all the pieces of our life present but have nothing to hold those pieces together [John Killinger, *The Changing Shape of Our Salvation*]. The word "lost" can mean many things. It can apply to someone caught up in nasty sins, living in life's gutter. But it can also refer to someone who is respectable, community-minded, but who proudly believes she has built a bridge to God, as if our works can do it. Remember. Christ died for us because we can't save ourselves.

We've asked what Jesus saw. But another question imbedded in this text is what happened inside Jesus when he saw them? Verse 36 answers it beautifully. He had compassion (was moved deep in his being). **Only a God-sized love can heal harassed and helpless lives.**

Last week at our Churchnet Board meeting, guests from Cuba reported about the exciting work happening in Baptist churches there. In the past 25 years, God's work has grown more than in the previous 80. But he said because of the political situation, Cuba had been the outcast of the world, kicked to the side of the road. Yet in hunger, scarcity and neglect, the work of Christ has grown. And then he said, "We don't need pity; we need partners!" Yes! That's what Jesus was saying. God needs partners, too! (vv. 37-38). Let me ask you an honest question. Do the people of Jefferson City know how much God loves them? We will begin to see with Jesus' eyes.