**2/28/16 A New Vision Mk 10:46-52**

I will admit that it wasn’t until my 50’s that I got to see Disney world. We actually went because friends of ours had just been there and were wondering if the Animal Kingdom at Disney was really what Africa was like. We were offered a good deal to go and so we went to check it out. If you ever get a chance to go to Disney one tip we were given is while we were checking in we asked if it were possible to get a free upgrade. They said they couldn’t upgrade the room but they could upgrade the location. They put us in a room that over looked the grounds where the animals were fed every day so we had a glorious time morning through evening watching all of the animals come for their food and then stay and graze. It was great. As for being like Africa, somehow staying in a room with air conditioning, hot running water, and food anytime you want it does not remind us of being in the bush, but we loved being there!

As we toured Disney World we got interested in how this all came about. Who had a vision to put a theme park together for family’s to come and enjoy? On Main Street they have the history of Walt Disney’s life and we learned the vision for all of what we know today as Disney came from one father trying to find and safe and fun place for he, his wife and two daughters to have fun. That was the basis of the vision.

The King James Version of Proverbs 29:18 warns us that without a vision, the people die. The reverse positive of that is with a vision the people thrive. Like Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision in his “I have a Dream” speech:

*I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.*

That one dream is one as a nation we are still trying to up to and into.

My best friend in high school and I had a saying we actually put in our yearbook, “not to decide, is to decide.” Meaning, you can go through life and let the whole world decide for you. Go with the flow, follow what everyone else is doing or what everyone else wants you to do, or you can begin to make your own choices in life, your own dreams and follow them, as best you are able.

What are your dreams in life? What is your vision? Have you ever asked yourself what is it you really want in life? Blind Bartimaeus did! If I were to retitle this sermon it would be “A Blind Man With Vision!” Bart knew exactly what he wanted.

We don’t know how he had heard of Jesus or the other healings Jesus had done, but we’re pretty sure he knew about them and had a plan. When he heard Jesus was traveling through and at this point in Chapter 10 of Mark Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for the final time, heading toward what we now call Palm Sunday and Holy Week. He had his disciples with him and crowds were constantly gathering and following him.

One can only imagine that once Bart heard the commotion coming up the street and found someone who would take the time to answer his question, he was told it was Jesus and Bart put his plan into action. He began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” The crowd around him began to shush him maybe thinking don’t bother Jesus he has more important things to do. Or maybe even close family members around him embarrassed that he was calling out, drawing attention to himself. Whatever the reason for the shushing, it made Bart more determined in his plan of action and he cried all the louder, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped and told the crowd to call him. Was the crowd so dense that Jesus couldn’t walk over to the man or was this a test to see how serious Bart was to get to Jesus? Scripture tells us when Bart was told the master was calling for him, he sprang up and threw off his cloak (getting rid of anything that would encumber him) and went to Jesus.

And then I love the question Jesus asked Bart next because so often when we see someone we perceive is in need, we so often assume we know what they need or even try to tell them what they need. Jesus simply asks him, “what do you want me to do for you?” Bart answers that he would like to see again. A reply that leads us to believe Bart was not always blind, but knew what it was like to see at one time. Jesus’ grants his requests and tells Bart that it is his faith that has made him well. Regaining his sight, Bart follows Jesus on the way.

What is your dream? If you don’t have a dream, why not? We believe God called Jeremiah in the womb and by age 14 he was learning what it meant to be a Prophet and Moses at age 80, so in my book that means you are never too young or too old to have a dream and to have a call of God upon your life. God wants you to listen to the passions and desires of your heart and use those gifts for the building of God’s Kingdom.

I will admit growing up that one of my favorite movies was the Sound of Music. In it the story builds to the scene where Maria has run back to the abbey to hide. The Mother Superior finally calls her in and tells Maria the abbey is not a place to hide. God does not call us to go hide with our lives instead God calls us to follow the dreams God has given us, as she sings the now famous words,

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream,
Follow every rainbow,
'Till you find your dream

It is one of the questions I hope the search team is asking our pastoral candidates. What is the dream they are following? What is it they believe God has called them to in life? Do they even at this early stage, based on all they have read about FBC, have a dream, a vision for FBC? Does their dream match FBC’s dream?

I don’t know if you took the time to read the vision, mission, and purpose statements of FBC that is in our church profile for our pastor candidates to read, but I’d like you to hear it today:

5.1 OUR VISION AND MISSION (from profile)

Presently the church describes itself as “FBC: a Family by Choice.” The current **vision** statement is that “FBC is an all-inclusive, community friendly, mission based church--serving God through Christian discipleship--locally and around the world.”

Our **mission** is to take the Bible seriously (not necessarily literally), to wrestle with questions of personal and social meaning in a modern world, and to learn and live the ways of love through Jesus Christ.

The **purpose** of this Church is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. To that end, we publicly worship God as truly spirit-filled members of the community who have been freed from bondage through acceptance of God’s grace through Jesus Christ. We seek to share this “Good News” with all those who have need of its message and will strive to provide continual growth and nurturing for all who have joined our fellowship and outreach.

May God continue to guide FBC and each of us as we continue to live and to share this Good News to everyone we meet. May you have the courage of Blind Bartimaeus to follow the dreams God has given you. Amen.