

“WHAT DO YOU SEE?” / MIRACLES 1

Reporter to Ray Charles: You’ve been blind since 7. Do you ever feel like you have missed out on life, not being able to see?

“It’s not whether you see or don’t see – you do. The question is – ‘What do you see?’ ” – Ray Charles

Some see - **something – where there is nothing.** They start businesses, companies, colleges, movements. - **Visionaries**

- **complex formulas and high level equations** and understand them with ease. - **Nerds or Geniuses**

- **a need and do nothing.** - **Lazy**

- **a need and do something.** - **Servants**

- **problems and chaos** and take advantage of the situation for their own gain. – **Politicians**

- **hurt and pain** – and they bring real comfort and care. – **Compassionate**

What does all this “seeing” – have in common? – *belief or faith.* To see – in this way is to believe what you are “seeing” is right, true, or real – even when others doubt. To be a visionary or a servant, a genius or compassionate – you have to believe what you see needs to be acted upon. I am going to ask you to look at something this morning – and the question that I want you to ask over and over is – **What do I see?** I am going to take us to an event that many believe is the most significant event ever in the history of the world: the Rez of Jesus Christ. People definitely have different views of this event, but no matter how you see this event, I’m asking you to go with me and answer this 1 question –

What do you see? Three people are going to see what we see and you will get to observe how they respond to the question as you respond to the question - **What do you see?** Ready?

JOHN 20:1 - (1) Mary Magdalene - follower of Jesus, who had not been a religious person. Many think she was a prostitute before she met Jesus. What we are sure of is she was an outcast in her community when she met Jesus.

This is 3 calendar days since Jesus was brutally executed in front of her eyes. She saw him murdered. She comes to his tomb to lay flowers, pay respects – not sure – but she comes and what does she see “the stone ad been taken away.”

JOHN 20:2 – *What she perceived or concluded or what she believed - from what she saw was that Jesus was gone. From one thing she saw – the rolled stone – she concludes, she believes - Jesus is gone.*

Some of us have observed one thing over the years and reached some conclusion about Jesus.

- *You heard growing up the Rez was an example of love – so the Rez has become like a fable that teaches a lesson about how we are to love sacrificially. Jesus might be real but the Rez is just a myth of sorts to teach us how to love.*

- *Your mom was treated badly by church bc of your parents marriage – so you don’t even care about Jesus.*

Jesus might be real – even his resurrection could have happened but what does it matter. Kind of how many think about life on other planets. Maybe there is life – maybe there isn’t, but it just doesn’t matter to me or affect me.

Or maybe the thing you saw was more practical

- *the things you have heard and read make Jesus and all his claims seem pretty out there – like Harry Potter.*

If tomorrow, you got an email with the subject title: Inheritance notice to (your name) from Thompson Law Firm in Macon, GA and you opened it and it said a relative had died and left you an inheritance of \$400,000. (You don’t recognize the name.) The directions on the email said – open the attached PDF file to see what the details of the will and what you need to do to claim your inheritance. What would you do? 1) It’s a relative you don’t know, 2) we live in an age of scams – could be a virus waiting to invade your computer as you open the attached file, but 3) it is \$400,000. What would you do? You probably wouldn’t just delete it! You would look into it bc the offer is just too much – too great to not look into it. What if the REZ of Jesus was real and what it gave was great. Doesn’t matter how cynical you are – you would look into it. No matter why you’re here – I’m glad your looking. Don’t let what you believe be based on 1 observation. Let’s keep looking...

JOHN 20:3-5 – (2, 3) **Peter and John** 2 close followers for 3 ½ years. After they hear Mary’s story, they race to the tomb & John wins. Peter is probably older and heavier. Whatever the reason – John gets their 1st and “looks” in but doesn’t go in. What does He see? The burial cloths they had wrapped Jesus in. What he saw did not make him go in.

What do we see in John? **A stunned man – who can’t bear to go in side and really look around at this moment.**

JOHN 20:6-7 – Peter finally arrives (probably wheezing) and blows right past John into the tomb and it says, “he saw” everything – the burial cloths and the face cloth in a separate place – folded? The word “saw” means he looked and was trying to draw some conclusions, he was theorizing. What? If grave robbers took Jesus (common profession of the day.), why would they leave the cloths, probably the spices, and take him naked. If some other disciples took him – why no covering? What happened? **What do we see in Peter?** **Questions – and from what we can tell – all he has are questions and grief.**

JOHN 20:8-9 – John now goes in and “saw”. He saw and believed – had faith. Had faith in what? That Jesus was alive – yes. That Jesus was God – yes! But even more. The word believed – means to wholly trust oneself to something. Like – sitting in this chair is to trust it will hold me but more fully it would be to sit in this chair while Nik Wallenda carried

me across the grand canyon. That is the meaning of this word belief – to wholly trust oneself to another. Something happened inside John, when he went inside the tomb. This belief would radically change his life-

- 1) from doubting and hopelessness – to a working faith that leads him from ...
 - 2) fear to boldness - from
 - 3) hiding to going and telling others that Jesus had risen from the grave
 - 4) that the Resurrection power of Jesus Christ was greater than all the brokenness of this world.
- That Jesus was greater than storms, disease, broken relationships, corrupt rulers, and most feared of all – death.

What do you see in John now? What caused him to believe – to wholly trust Jesus?

JOHN 20:10 – Peter goes home – “seeing” – but not believing.
John goes home – seeing and believing – wholly trusting his life and soul to Jesus.
What do you see?

Back to our first character – Mary Magdalene

JOHN 20:11A But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, – She is weeping distraught, hopeless –

JOHN 20:11B-12 – But something moves her to look into this more ... So, she stoops, looks in, and sees – 2 angels.

JOHN 20:13 – They get in a conversation, which is weird in itself but grief does weird things to us. She has no belief that Jesus is alive – so who knows what she believes about who these guys are she is talking to. She does not see and believe – see just sees the emptiness of the tomb and has hopeless grief. Just wants to know where Jesus is.
Maybe you are where Mary was: no belief, just hopeless grief. The brokenness of this world is more true than the Rez. Watch and see how Jesus responds to Mary – to you...

JOHN 20:14 – As if she senses or sees someone else, she turns around and sees Jesus. She sees – but doesn't.

JOHN 20:15 – Jesus says to her – “why are you distraught – hopelessly grieving.” There are tears of laughter and joy. These aren't those. There are tears of sadness. These aren't those. Then - there are tears of hopeless, inconsolable, pain. This is what the word used here. Loud wailing – the kind of crying that hurts you to cry it .. and hurts others to hear it.

Then Jesus says one word **JOHN 20:16-17** – “Mary”. He calls her name and – she finally sees. She sees Jesus and believes. This term “rabboni” – meant teacher or master and in their culture it was a powerful highly respected name because it denoted one who taught the ways of God. Jesus had taught them – really, there is only one you should call “teacher” – God. She says teacher – because she sees – she believes – she wholly trusts - Jesus is God.

Notice the kindness and gentleness of Jesus to Mary.

- Mary, the ladies who followed Jesus, and the disciples had no countdown clock till resurrection. He told them I will rise.
- There is not faith, no hope, no celebration – just hopeless grief. BUT...
- Jesus doesn't scold or berate – just simply calls her name – and opens her eyes to SEE Him and believe.
What power full of kindness. (He had just risen from the dead) What majesty and mercy.

Mary runs to Jesus – probably falls on her face and grabs hold of his legs like a bear trap. Not letting go!
Jesus isn't saying you can't touch me. In a few days – he will tell Thomas to touch and SEE and believe.
Rather – he is saying – you don't have to cling so hard – I'm not leaving yet. My body isn't fully glorified to head home. I'm here, alive – and my REZ proves I'm greater than all the brokenness in this world – even your sin – so by faith in me – you are a part of God's family with me. My Father and your Father, My God and your God

JOHN 20:18 – Mary's response to the disciples: **I HAVE SEEN THE LORD.** I have seen him & trusted Him wholly.

What do you see? Look again ...

- 1) What did Peter see? – confusion, grave clothes, Jesus gone – he saw grief, hopelessness – he did not believe.
- 2) What did John see? – at 1st, stunned! Then, He saw the resurrection. He did not see Jesus but something in Him was given sight to believe Jesus had not only risen from the grave but that everything he said about being God and greater than all the brokenness of this world. And he believed, he trusted his life and soul wholly to Jesus.
- 3) What did Mary see? – At 1st - something, not sure what - but she was hopelessly overwhelmed in grief until she heard her name and then she saw and believed – trusted herself wholly to Jesus.

What do you see?

Maybe you're like John. You haven't seen Jesus but you believe – you trust Jesus wholly w life and soul.

Maybe you're like Peter. You see something, but don't believe. Maybe - you wonder if it even matters.
Maybe you're like Mary. You are deep in grief – the brokenness of this world is greater than Jesus.

Maybe you think – like Mary – if you actually saw Jesus – it would change you and what you believe. Maybe!
If you saw Jesus, would that really cause you to “SEE” that He is greater than this broken world – disease, storms, broken relations, corrupt rulers – death. / Some people – did see Jesus after the resurrection ... and never believed.

MATTHEW 28:16-17 (ESV) 16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.
17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. Many believe there were others there – but whatever the case – someone SAW Jesus, their eyes saw – and yet they did not see and believe Jesus was God above all.

10 times – Jesus appears after He rises from the dead. There are over 500 eye-witnesses. What's crazy – the first reports of his resurrection are from women. Why is this crazy – if you were going to make up a story in this culture – you wouldn't have women as your star witnesses bc they weren't even allowed testify in courts.

1) 500+ eye –witnesses, 2) 10 written accounts of Jesus being seen, 3) radically changed lives that gave up their lives for Jesus. When other messiahs came and were killed – their cause ended and no others claimed to raise from the dead. **There is more evidence to prove Jesus lived, died & rose again than to prove the life of Julius Caesar.**

BUT – what we physically see doesn't cause us to see and trust wholly our soul to Jesus. Because Jesus did rise from the dead – there is a mountain of evidence. And this evidence can be a compliment to seeing and believing – but something happens to Mary to see – to actually see and it wasn't just seeing Jesus. Look with me again ...

JOHN 20:14 (ESV) Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. She sees – physically sees and yet doesn't even recognize much less see and believe – trust.

SEEING ISN'T ALWAYS BELIEVING (repeat) And no - I'm not going to quote the Santa Clause – “believing is seeing.” I think something else happened here to cause belief! 1) Jesus spoke to Mary & uncovered the issue.

JOHN 20:15 (ESV) Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

Why does he ask this? Is he quizzing a hurting lady. Really! No, I think He was gently challenging her view of God. **What is your view of God?** Jesus' challenge is the beginning of Mary seeing him for who he really is.

What is Jesus saying? 1) I see & care about your pain, & 2) as grand as your devotion is for me, your estimate of me, your view of me is far too small. If only you could see ... And in one word – she sees.

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” He calls her name- and gives her sight. Notice – she sees before she physically sees him. She turned She saw and believed before turning to look at him with new eyes and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!”

With one word – Her name – Jesus spoke sight into Mary's heart like he had spoke sight into blind men's eyes, like he had turned water into wine, like he had made the lame walk, the deaf hear, and even a dead man rise. But this was different than all those miracles. Why? Yes Jesus did many miracles before this but all led up to this miracle. Jesus had not come to make people's lives better, more comfortable – to give us a better quality of life. Remember all those he had healed would get sick again and even die again. NO – he had come to give us – you - life with Him now and forever that will never end. That would be stronger and greater than all the brokenness of this world.

Jesus rose from the dead – the greatest miracle of his life – of all time.

And – now he stands speaking to you and saying. Do you see the issue?

You live doubting me (Jesus) and my resurrection power. Your view of me – how you see me is too small. 1) I'm more than an example, 2) I'm more than relevant, and 3) I'm greater than all the brokenness of this world. Jesus is calling your name. Listen, if you hear it – He will give you new eyes to view Him and you will SEE & BELIEVE.

What do you see? When Jesus calls your name – you will see and believe He is God and that He rose from the dead to give you life with Him – now and forever.

What do I mean when I say, “do you hear Jesus calling your name?” You probably will not literally hear a voice. But what you will hear is a voice inside you that says – this is real. Jesus is real and He is God and He rose from the dead. You will sense a change in what you saw and believed just an hour ago when you walked in here & what you see and believe now. Do you? If so – Jesus says – trust your life and soul wholly to me and you will be my son or daughter. And, you will begin to know My God – your God, My Father – your Father. And you will begin to know the Rez Power of Jesus that is greater than the brokenness of this world.

HOW? – We simply talk to God who is here and who is listening and who has been speaking to you.

Pray: Jesus – I am a sinner. I need you and your resurrection power to make me right before God. I believe – I trust by your life and death and resurrection – I will be with You now and forever.

What do you do now? You tell someone. *Please, we baptized not to become a believer who is with Jesus. Rather – we baptize as the first way God tells us to tell others. So – some of you need to be baptized today.*

- 1) You have been a believer and never been baptized – walk in His Resurrection Power today and go to Brian when I tell you and he will help you get that done today before we leave – with all these friends and family.*
- 2) You just prayed for God to save, rescue you. You just believed Jesus rose from the dead for your sins to bring you to God. That is what it means to be a Christian. If this is you – you need to be baptized. Will you do you that now? I'm going to pray and when I finish please – go see Brian over here.*

For the rest of us – if you still don't believe – please, keep looking. God will reveal himself – keep looking.

Communion:

If you already believe and trust Jesus – but today you would say – this world's brokenness is bigger to me than Christ's Resurrection Power. Right now – confess this and turn - run to Jesus' power & mercy like Peter & John ran to the tomb as we take communion. Communion- is the place we again hear our name and see and believe the resurrection power of Jesus is greater than the brokenness of this world. We go to the table and see this: Jesus took all our doubt – but not only ours – all the doubt of the world as he was abandoned and not believed in by all. The cross and the empty tomb now give us a great exchange. The cross consumes our doubt – all of it (that this world is broken and overwhelmingly hopeless is true and that does cause us to doubt Jesus). But on the cross Jesus consumed this doubt for us. And out of the grave – He now gives us resurrection power and mercy that is greater than the brokenness of this world. As a body – we fasted and prayed coming into today and we asked God – let me know your Resurrection Power Go now and taste the power and mercy of God given to us in Christ's resurrection. Go!

END: Invitation and Blessing

Invitation: *I want to invite all of you to join us as we journey through this series on Miracles – as we ask the question – Does God still do miracles? (Show the Book.) Please, take one on your way out if you do not have one yet.*

Blessing – *I Peter 3:18 (ESV)*