

1 SmartGlasses

How to avoid spiritual blindness!

2 Scripture

Then they came to Jericho.

As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging.

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many . . .

rebuked him and

told him to be quiet,

but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

3 Scripture

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called to the blind man,

"Cheer up! On your feet!

He's calling you."

Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

4 Scripture

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you."

Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

5 Introduction

Wearable tech is all the rage these days.

Smart watches can track your workouts, monitor your health, answer your phone ... and even tell the time!

Virtual reality goggles make you feel like you're inside the video game you're playing.

Chances are most people here tonight is wearing some kind of device that makes life . . .

a little more interesting,

informative or

convenient.

6 Introduction

Most of the tech we wear isn't really essential to life — somehow many of us made it to adulthood with watches that only told the time.

But for some folks, that piece of technology can mean the difference between life and death.

7 Introduction

New wearable technology for the blind and visually impaired has the potential to make a huge difference in the quality of life of those who must navigate the world differently each day.

Called "assistive technology" or "smart glasses," these devices act as a visual or audio assistant for those with low or impaired vision.

Which is most everyone in our Men's Small Group.

8 Introduction

NuEyes Pro glasses, for example, are lightweight glasses that uses cameras . . .

to magnify images up to 12 times, as well as

provide the ability to change the color and contrast of the image the person is trying to observe.

These glasses provide those with low vision

the opportunity to see objects more clearly and

even come with a bar code scanner and

optical character recognition to recognize and read printed documents aloud.

9 Introduction

Aira smart glasses use a different approach for those who are completely blind.

They use a built-in camera that is wirelessly connected to a trained assistant who can provide spoken feedback to the person wearing them, helping them identify objects or read documents.

It's like having a constant pair of eyes guiding the blind person through the world.

10 Introduction

Both of these pieces of technology are currently new and expensive, but like most tech advances, they will likely become

less expensive and more mainstream over time ... and

be game changers for those who need them.

And while smart glasses can help a person with sight, they — like most technology — can't help that much with real spiritual insight, which is even more important.

11 Introduction

The blind beggar Bartimaeus could have used some of this wearable tech before he encountered Jesus, but Mark reveals that this blind man could actually see more clearly than . . .

most of his peers and

even some of Jesus' own disciples.

12 Spiritual Smart Glasses

Jesus and his disciples were passing through Jericho, getting ready to make the 15-mile trek from there up to Jerusalem.

Jesus had warned his disciples three times that he was going to Jerusalem to die, but each time they failed to understand what he was talking about.

However, after Jesus warned his disciples the last and third time, James and John decided to ask Jesus for a special favor.

13 Spiritual Smart Glasses

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." (Mark 10:35)

"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. (Mark 10:36)

They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (Mark 10:37)

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" "We can," they answered. (Mark 10:38–39)

14 Spiritual Smart Glasses

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. (Mark 10:39b)

These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." (Mark 10:40)

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. (Mark 10:41)

According to the Dictionary, "indignant" means to feel or show anger and annoyance at what is perceived as unfair treatment.

15 Spiritual Smart Glasses

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. (Mark 10:42)

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (Mark 10:43-44)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

Even though these disciples had been with Jesus a long time, they still didn't see the truth about who he was and where he was leading them.

16 Spiritual Smart Glasses

This is why the story about blind Bartimaeus is so remarkable.

A blind man without the aide of 21st Century technology is able to see things that Jesus' disciples couldn't.

When Jesus passed by, and Bartimaeus began to shout out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He was declaring both Jesus' true identity and purpose.

17 Spiritual Smart Glasses

Throughout the gospel, Jesus continually tries to keep a lid on the "messianic secret."

But it's now clear that it won't remain a secret much longer, and Bartimaeus is, ironically, the one who sees the truth.

"Son of David" does call to mind the kind of messiah that will be a military ruler like the original King David.

But Bartimaeus also sees that this Son of David is one who comes with various forms of mercy—to those who emphatically humble themselves before him.

18 Man Born Blind

In the Gospel of John, we have another story of a man healed of blindness.

This man we are told was blind from birth.

While Jesus' disciples want to connect this man's infirmity to someone's sin, Jesus uses this man to reveal the hidden workings of God's glory.

Jesus says, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:4–5)

19 Man Born Blind

Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam." (John 9:6)

So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. (John 9:7)

His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" (John 9:8)

Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." (John 9:9)

20 Man Born Blind

Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.

"He put mud on my eyes," the man replied,

"and I washed, and

now I see." (John 9:15)

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." (John 9:16)

He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (John 9:25)

21 Man Born Blind

Then they hurled insults at him and said,

You are this fellow's disciple!

We are disciples of Moses! (John 9:28)

We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." (John 9:29)

The man answered, "Now that is remarkable!

You don't know where he comes from,
yet he opened my eyes. (John 9:30)

22 Man Born Blind

The "Man born Blind," continues to speak to the Pharisees with awesome amounts of "spiritual insight." He says . . .

We know that God does not listen to sinners. (John 9:31a)

He listens to the godly man who does his will. (John 9:31b)

Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. (John 9:32)

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. (John 9:33)

23 Man Born Blind

Then Jesus appears on the scene and says the following . . .

"For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

24 Eyes that See

Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew, The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance.

Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

This is why I speak to them in parables: . . .

“Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.”

25 Eyes that See

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

26 Eyes that See

So then why are people so spiritually blind?

According to the Apostle Paul, They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Ephesians 4:18)

In fact, Paul says in Romans 1:18-32, that this willful hardening bring about a form of God’s wrath, which produces in people all kinds of foolishness, sinful desires, sexual impurity, shameful lust, and all kinds of perversions.

Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death,

they not only continue to do these very things

but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)

27 Blessed are those who See!

Both “Blind Bartimaeus” and the “Man Born Blind” were unique.

While they were both physically blind, yet they weren’t spiritually blind.

Instead, they had spiritual insight that was far greater than the leaders of Israel and even some of Jesus’ disciples.

However, this kind of reaction to Jesus’ ministry and teaching wasn’t unusual .

28 Blessed are those who See!

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 11, Jesus denounced the generation of his day as fickle, faithless, and always finding fault with the messengers that God sends them.

He also in this same chapter, denounced several cities in which most of his miracles had been performed.

He said woe to you Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. In fact, Jesus said it would go better for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom than those three Jewish cities.

Then after Jesus says all of this, he raises his voice to heaven and says,

“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. (Matthew 11:25–26)

29 Blessed are those who See!

For those who have understanding, spiritual enlightenment is the gift of God, which allows us to have faith.

Without it gospel truth is a riddle—a sign that God’s wrath is on that individual.

So then, if you have come to know Christ you are special. In fact, you are very special.

Not because of anything you have done, but because God has found someone who doesn’t think more of themselves than they should.

The humble in heart and contrite in spirit ask for mercy and they will find it in abundance, but the proud and arrogant go away empty.

30 Conclusion

Having Spiritual Glasses that enables us to know, understand, and receive the truth that is in the Gospel is huge.

Therefore, let us not allow anything to harden our hearts against God's Holy Spirit.

When God puts his finger on something in our lives that he wants us to change, the quicker we yield the better it will be for us.

For we will be filled with the knowledge of the secrets of kingdom of heaven.

31 Conclusion

So then, let us get rid of all stubborn pride or bitter envy.

For there is special place of intimacy with God for the humble.

Also, let us not be friends with the world and learn their ways as they fight over what they think are limited resources.

God who is great in mercy, knows our needs and will richly bless us with all things. In other words, stop complaining.

For his eye is on the sparrow, his banner over us is love, and the peace he gives is not temporal but effective in all circumstances.