

## **“Seeing through the eyes of the beholder”**

Rev. Terrance Jacob on Matt 11:16-19,25-30 at SALC 7/5/2026

### **Introduction:**

Looking for a house to buy or rent is not easy. Some of you moved to or near Williamson County relatively recently, like me - a year ago. We have seen some good houses and some really bad ones. There were houses we walked away from saying, “Who’d want to live there?” or “What a dump!” If you use Zillow or Trulia, online sites to search for houses, you receive updates on properties you may have looked at in the past. Guess what, those very houses that we had all but written off as even marketable, get sold everyday. Somehow, somebody sees something in these houses. The houses that we had considered “duds”, “write-offs”, even ugly... someone saw potential, even beauty in them!

19c author, Mary Wolfe Hungerford, borrowing from 16c Willaim Shakespeare coined the phrase, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” The person who beholds the thing, sees its beauty. How often we may not agree that something is beautiful or useful or of much value, but someone else grabs it with both hands!

### **1. God the beholder**

God grabs us with both hands. God, the beholder, sees us in all our brokenness, our struggle, our fallenness, our pride, our failures, our following the law of sin that Paul says he struggles with in today’s Epistle readying. God knows all that about us...

and He sees us - He sees us as beautiful. Our worth is not determined by what or who we appear to be, but by what God sees in us!

Jesus is not blind to who we are. He knows us. He sees us for who we are, yet he loves us. He grabs us with both hands. He holds us tightly so that no one can snatch us from His hands. He says to the Father (John 10:29) "Those that you have given me, no one will snatch from my hands."

## **2. A Royal Family**

Once we are in the body, the family of Christ, as we say in baptism; once we identify with Jesus Christ as Lord, King and Savior, we are special. Jesus loved us so much that he spilled his own blood for us; Jesus gave His life for us, so that we may have life - eternal. We who are in the body of Christ, by His blood, are royalty. Peter calls us "a royal priesthood" (1Pet.2:9). We that are in Christ are all a royal family - not just the residents of Buckingham Palace. Everyone that is in Christ is royal and special. But let's not forget royal priesthood, as Peter says, and priests serve. Then Peter calls us peculiar - stay with me.

## **3. The religious and self-righteous beholder**

So how do the religious and self-righteous behold others? Jesus calls them whining children. Does anyone here know what whiney children sound like? Let Jesus tell us in the Gospel (Matthew 11:17) "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance..." "We wailed (cried from grief) and you did not mourn

with us!” For the self-righteous religious people, everything is about their little world.

Now that world is not just small, but it is skewed. Jesus says in v. 18, John the baptist came neither enjoying good food nor wine, and they called John a demon. Now Jesus came enjoying eating and drinking and the religious call him a glutton and a drunk... a friend of the unsavory people - like the despised tax collectors and sinners - people who were struggling with their own lives. The self-righteous religious think they have it. So when they behold us, even Jesus, they see ugliness and people who are unacceptable... to them! Those Lutherans have just strayed from the truth - they drink, they love the gays and the other aphabets, the migrants and refugees, even the Moslem ones, they treat women as equal to men, the list goes on. What did Jesus do? He ignored their whining and he loved them anyway - even as he told them the truth, truth that hurts.

#### **4. Jesus understands what we are up against**

Jesus understands what we mortals are up against. The religious law and its protectors look over their noses at ordinary people. So Jesus says (Matt 11:28), “Come to me, all you that are weary (from trying to live up to those legal standards) and carrying heavy burdens (from guilt and feeling like failures), and I will give you rest.”

The law and we ourselves determine that we are not good enough. Sin in us, helped by the law, wants us to believe that. But Jesus says, “I see you!”

## 5. Finally, see through the eyes of the beholder.

If we simply stop here and feel good about ourselves because Jesus beholds us as wonderful, beautiful and regal, then this would have been a motivational talk - or the worst kind of motivational talk: the religious motivational talk that we hear mostly on TV sermons. It's well and good for us to feel good about how Jesus beholds us, but how do we also look through the eyes of the beholder? How do we see others? After we've been "pumped up" do we then look over our noses at others? That's puffed up. Now that would be infantile behaviour!

Jesus, the Son of Man, God Himself says (v. 29): "Take my yoke upon you, AND LEARN FROM ME..." What are we to learn from Jesus?... (v. 29 continues)... **"for I am gentle and humble in heart..."** Jesus does not want us to be all puffed up and sit on our high horses. But be gentle and humble in heart, having an attitude that sees differently from the religious bigots. Seeing the beauty of the struggling sinner or the stumbling saint, who may break the law sometimes. Walking alongside and never writing off anyone. No one is a dud, like we saw some of those houses as.

### **Conclusion:**

In v. 30, Jesus says "For my yoke is easy (the work that I give you is easy) and my burden is light." I do not expect you to earn anything. By grace I give it to you and if you "Come to me" (v. 28) I will enable you to also "See through the eyes of the beholder!" Let's pray: "Lord, Please help me see others through the eyes of Jesus, the ultimate Beholder. Amen."