



April 27: I know one thing for sure: I was blind . . . now I see_| Luke:24: 36-47 by Curtis Rieck

I once was lost but _____, was blind but now I _____.

How many of you wear contact lenses or glasses or have to wear reading glasses sometimes? Well this should go pretty well cause it seems like we have a whole church full of blind people!

I remember when that day came and I tried on a pair of the lowest readers they have at the store and it was like, **Wait! What! It's a whole new world. A new fantastic point of view...(sing)**. I remember buying them and going home to Linda and saying, everything, everything is so bright. When did that happen?

About 3 weeks ago I was cruising the internet killing some time and there was this thread that popped up about a kid who was colorblind and I watched it and *I just got so emotional*. Well guess what, I found out there were thousands of these videos as I fell into the rabbit whole of watching almost all of them over the course of what was probably like 3-4 hours. Have you ever done that? Well, I brought the first one so I could share it with you this morning. The first one went like this...

And seriously, that was just so emotional for me, I found the whole concept just so inconceivable to me, a person who has seen colors forever. It was amazing, like everything changed for that young man in an instant. He didn't know what he was missing because he couldn't understand really what a color was. So he puts on those glasses (make motion) and everything in the world changed for him.

Now, friends, That's almost exactly what Easter did.

I remember when I asked Jesus into my heart and it was like the whole world changed, like I was seeing color for the first time. I stood up in a youth meeting among my friends and I said I need Jesus and it was like I was seeing for the first time. That's why the song says "I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I _____."

And a lot of people in this world will say "**OH well, there's not much too faith...I just don't believe it**" and I tell you it's because you're not wearing the lenses of belief. And isn't it true that, if your like me and you use readers, there are many times when someone says "hey, look at this," and they hold out their phone to you and you find yourself running around the house going

“where’s my glasses.” Cause I think sometimes we take off our belief and then we forget where we put it.

When the Resurrection happened the disciples had lost their glasses. They were doubters, they were skeptics. They had just watched the person they followed get brutally killed. The person they thought was going to be the savior and change everything, they watched as nails were hammered through his hands and feet and a spear was plunged into his side.

They thought he was going to rule, to be the new king...and then his heart stopped. And before they had belief and now they had nothing. (LONG PAUSE)

And a few days later Jesus shows up and it changes everything. In an instant they went from “I LOST MY GLASSES” to hope-filled and full of joy. They saw through what the church often calls resurrection eyes. That means seeing the world with an attitude of, though I go through pain and I go through suffering and even if I experience death, there is hope and victory of the other side.

(Read verse 24) Imagine you go to the funeral of someone you love and your at home the next day and the doorbells rings, you go and open the door and there...is...your..friend. That would be one weird, weird, weird evening.

Here’s the thing, remember when we were talking about losing your glasses? Well sometimes life can knock the lenses of faith right off your face.

At youth groups always had a rotations of what we called “Summer Adventures,” Church trips. And there were just enough so you would have a different experience every year until you graduate. One of them was a trip to a camp in the mountains about 40 miles from _____ . At the mid point of that trip we loaded everyone up and surprised them with a full day of whitewater rafting, serious whitewater rafting. On this one trip the water level was high so the guide, took us for lunch at this spot that had this high, high cliff. After lunch he said anyone who wants to jump off the cliff come with me. So, it was pretty much all the boys and we started hiking up to the top of the cliff. Once I got there is was pretty clear to me that this was just NOT going to happen. I guess I forgot my lenses of adventure and was wearing my lenses of fear, like brown streak in my swimsuit fear. One of the boys said, AWWW, just go to the edge and look at it then if you don’t want to do it you don’t have to. Well, I didn’t need to walk to the edge to know my answer but I did. Remember these are all high school boys. So I go up to the edge and I’m looking over and the boys were right behind me...AND YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS GOING. Boom they push me and I go flying over the edge and it’s not like one of those cool T.V cliff divers, its like flaying arms and I’m nearing the water and I remember GLASSES! And they’re just WHOOV, WHOOV, WOOV and they’re gone. For those of you who have been to the mountains, aren’t they beautiful? I have no idea.

I've gone through some traumatic stuff in my life, often by my own poor choices, that have just knocked the lenses of belief right off my face. I mean, I think most of us start off as believers, when were kids, believing that God is real and Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. But then life happens, and sometimes it slaps you so hard that your lenses of faith WHOOV, WHOOV, WHOOV, and they just get knocked off your face.

If that's how you feel this morning, then I have good news for you, I have good news. The disciples get you, because that's where they were at. I want you to know that I get it, I understand how you felt, I have been there, I know what it's like because the lenses of faith have been knocked off my face to. AND IT'S MY HONOR TO SAY TO YOU ON BEHALF OF Jesus this morning, GOD'S NOT DONE WITH YOU! Just because the disciples went through a time of lacking faith and despair, it didn't mean that God was done with them. He was just getting started with them, He had so much more, you hear that, HE HAS SO MUCH MORE.

He has no condemnation, there's no anger because they had lost faith, He just carefully, patiently, lovingly shows them He's alive. He goes look at my hands- touch them. Look, see, watch , show. It's the same thing He's doing for you. IT'S THE SAME THING HE'S DOING FOR you.

Let me ask you, remember back to when you first believed. Did God begin to do things in your life, and you noticed things happening and your life began to change. If that happened for you raise your hands. That's awesome, we remember. This is one of the things that's crazy to me, people say OH THAT JESUS THING DOESN'T WORK, I JUST DON'T BELIEVE IT. But the only people who are saying that is the people that are not wearing the glasses of faith. Everybody else is like, Well, if you just put the lenses on...People always say, "I'LL BELIVE IT WHEN I _____." But the Bible always says, if you believe it you will see it.

Psalm 23:6, one of the great verses of promise in the Bible says "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the lord _____."

That means even when you get the lenses knocked off your face, if you will keep living in faith, believing that God is good and has a plan for you, if you trust in Him you will go through pain but on the other side of pain you will have victory because Jesus conquered the grave. That's why I can remain this day as a Christian, because I can see with my eyes of faith.

Those who are not believers, in the end there is nothing more to see. But I see a future. I see victory. There is hope, there is more. There's a second part to that verse. It says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the lord _____."

Some of us, just like He did with the disciples Jesus is trying to get your attention, He's trying to paitiently show you but you have to look. If you just put on the lenses of belief you will see how good He is. That's the real thing right there isn't it..

My question is when did you put the lenses on, when did you first believe? Remember what that was like....but everyone gets their glasses knocked off by life, and there has to be a moment when that happens when despite of the pain, in spite of the struggle, in spite of the hardship you say: I...CHOOSE...TO...BELIEVE

That first happened for me at 17, like that kid who put on those crazy glasses, and he could see color for the first time. Ya know why you're here this morning? Maybe it's because God wants you to see again. He wants you to believe it again. He wants you to trust Him again. After the grave there is victory. After hardship there is hope.

Maybe you've had the glasses knocked off. Maybe the time for you is right now, this could be the moment where you choose to trust God again. You did it as a young person, I offer you this chance to re-affirm a belief in Christ.

Dear God, it's Easter again and I choose to believe. Forgive me for my lack of faith sometimes, thank you for dying for my sins. I trust that you have good things for me and my life. Take me to heaven when I die and show me good things now when I open my eyes. I trust You with my life. In Jesus name.