

Reflection for October 12, 2025

Blinders – Inspired by Philippians 4:4-9 and John 6:25-35

Sometimes the inspiration for reflection comes from the most unlikely places. That happened earlier this week as I was preparing for our first United Church 101 meeting on Wednesday afternoon.

I thought I was organized, notes were in hand, and my power-point was ready. I moved some tables around in the hall to project my presentation on the wall so everyone could see. The computer was connected to the projector, everything turned on, but to my chagrin, no image was projected. Odd I thought because there was light coming out of the projector lens. What the heck was wrong?

I ran a video and could hear sound coming from the projector, so I knew it was working. I examined the instructions and clicked a few buttons. Nothing. I rebooted the computer, still nothing. I tried using the function keys on the computer keyboard (they provide a myriad of functions), still nothing. It was maddening. I had wasted the better part of an hour. Well I thought, I will just have to use my computer and everyone will have to gather close to look at it.

Exasperated, I took Duffy for a short walk. When I returned, I thought, I wonder if Kade would have any idea what I might be doing wrong? I called him and he was just back in town. He offered to come by which of course I graciously accepted. A few minutes later we are both examining the projector. Sound, yes. Light from the lens yes. But the light was very dim and not shining on the wall. What in tarnation was going on?

And then the penny dropped. The Lens Cap was still on! Yes, it was light plastic and translucent. And it was pushed in with a bayonet type mount. I pulled it off and, voila, Huston we have liftoff! A bright image was now on the wall. I had 10 min to spare before we were to start. But it took me 20 to relax.

How often is life like that? How often do we wander about with our eyes clouded like we have blinders on? How often do we not see the forest for the trees as the saying goes?

Paul in his message to the people at Philippi and John in his gospel account speak about that. At least, I hear them posing a similar question. Why are you walking around like you have blinders covering your eyes? God, light, love and holy presence is around you all the time. The gifts of the spirit are in plain view.

Don't be anxious says Paul, ***"the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*** ***"As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you."***

Do the things I have done. Tell the stories of Jesus. Spread the good news of the healing power of forgiveness. Tell your friends how good it feels to be accepted for who you are. Experience what it feels like to be loved unconditionally. Take off your blinders like I did when I finally realized what a fool I had been, before I accepted Jesus in my heart.

John speaks about the bread from heaven, the bread that gives life to the world. It is not a physical bread like that Moses prayed for and received, it is not the unleavened loaf to be broken and shared among friends, it is bread which gives life to the world. It is not material, like things we chase or are distracted by. It is a spiritual bread which binds together the broken-hearted, lifts the depressed out of their despair, brings forth modest hope to the lost or abandoned.

If you are looking for something material, you have blinders on. The answers are not found by aggression, or oppression. The resolutions to conflict are not at the end of a smoking gun. Those things bring only more pain and suffering.

The answers we seek to healing are found in love. Paul experienced that and tried to get his followers to see that vision. Jesus was love walking the earth. Love wanting to burst forth in the world in ways it had not before. He knew it was in each person but often masked by ego, often buried under the rubble of societal pressures and expectations, often overwhelmed by circumstance.

Open your eyes, Jesus says, and see the beauty of a world filled with kindness and generosity. Do as I have been doing says Paul, spread Jesus' message to your friend and neighbour. Let justice and peace flow down like a river.

The blinders we often wear can prevent us from being the kind of disciples we want to be. What I think is most tragic about that, is that it can stem from a lack of believe in our own value, when we don't believe in our own gifts. When we don't understand how special we all are.

How can we treat others lovingly if we don't love ourselves. It is like we are the projector I spoke about earlier. The light is on but there is something occluding the lens and it can't get out. The beauty, vibrancy, and grace within us all is sometimes unintentionally shadowed by our perceptions. They can sometimes prevent our love life-light from getting out.

Last week I was away in Naramata to begin a 2-year program called "*SoulGuiding*." The first phase of this program is called "The Inner Way" with the specific focus of "bowing to one's inner work." The "Inner-Work" is getting to know oneself intimately.

Now that might seem to be fairly simple. You all know who you are don't you? Well perhaps not as well as you think. Because most of us are a little self-critical. (Some of us are really self-critical). There is a little voice inside us which causes us to wonder and question. And our inner responses can be less than affirming. "I really am not very smart. I could never do that. I'm fat and unattractive. I think I could be a better partner, husband, wife, sister, brother. I'm not very handy. I don't think people like me very much. I'm not a good provider. I'm old and useless. And perhaps the worst, I'm a failure."

The negative self-talk can hover over us like a dark cloud. When that happens two things occur. Your own inner love-light is diminished, and you are unable to be light and love for others.

So while I haven't read this or learned this from the SoulGuiding program directly, it seems to me that we need to feed ourselves, our inner being with "I Am" statements. And we need to repeat them frequently.

How about trying, "I am a bright and shining star. I am clever. I am a fun person to be around. I am compassionate and caring. I love a good laugh. I am clever and accomplished. I am a good partner. I am a good organizer. Perhaps you could say, yes, I am wrinkly, but I am still beautiful. How about I am a good listener, and I am a good provider."

This kind of soul food strips off those blinders that keep us from enjoying the world and from loving ourselves. That is so important because when we love ourselves, we are much more able to know the peace of God in our hearts, and from there we can spread it to a needy world. Thanks for listening this morning, Amen