Hi,

Today’s updates:

* My Sunday class will be week six of the series, *The New Testament in Seven Sentences*. As usual, it will be on [my own Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/scottengle).
* The links to my on-line classes, the video recordings of the classes, the class audio podcasts, and the archive of these daily emails can all be found at [www.scottengle.org](http://scottengle.org/scotts-weekly-classes/). All the postings are up-to-date.

We’ve considered a servant’s heart and hands; today, we turn to a servant leader’s head.

***John 13:12-15***

**After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.**

***Habakkuk 2:1-4***

**I will stand at my watch-post, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.**

Vision . . . leader . . . the two words go together. Many people would be skeptical that the words *servant* and *leader* go together, but *vision* and *leader* . . . you betcha. In their book, *Lead Like Jesus*, Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges present Ken and Jesse Stoner’s three part framework of what makes up a compelling vision:

1. “*Your purpose*. What business are you in? Where are you going and why? Or in terms of your family, what is your family all about? Where is your family going and why?
2. *Your picture of the future*. What will your future look like if you are accomplishing your purpose?
3. *Your values*. What do you stand for? On what principles will you make ongoing decisions?”

This is all good stuff and you can certainly see all three at work in Jesus’ leadership. Jesus understood his purpose and stayed committed to it even though it led to a horrifying death. Jesus certainly had a clear picture of the future. No rose-colored glasses for him; Jesus knew the confrontation to which he was leading his disciples. And, of course, Jesus also grasped the bigger picture, the promise that the day of salvation was arriving in him and his God-given vocation. Thirdly, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God, kingdom values we might call them, in much of what he said and did.

Yet Jesus’ disciples, those who spent the most time with him, remained largely blind to all this. There are many examples we could look at, for the disciples’ blindness is a large theme in the synoptic gospels. Here are a few examples:

1. Though Peter eventually names Jesus as “the Messiah, the son of the living God,” soon thereafter Peter cannot yet comprehend that Jesus’ vocation will take him to his death. Peter even tempts Jesus with avoiding it, as if Jesus needed any more temptation to turn away from such a horrible path (see Matthew 16:21-23).
2. Right before Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, some disciples jockeyed for privileged positions (Matthew 20:25-28).
3. And, of course, Peter’s three-time denial and the disciples’ abandonment of Jesus when he is arrested by the authorities.

The disciples just never seem to get it, and the question that has always troubled me is “Why?” The disciples are with Jesus day in and day out, but they just don’t “get it.” How could I, living here in Texas 2,000 years later, ever hope to “get it.” Admittedly, I take some comfort in the disciples’ obtuseness, as it makes me feel better about my own weaknesses. Yet, I’m still left wondering why the disciples couldn’t see and asking myself what it means for my faith, my discipleship, and my own leadership.

Why wasn’t Jesus able to bring his closest disciples to the place they would be after his death, resurrection, and ascension: preaching with great power and courage? Might Jesus simply have been a poor leader, unable to communicate in word or deed the vision that he wanted to share with his disciples. That thought seems at least mildly blasphemous, but still the question remains.

*Swapping glasses*

Perhaps we are confused by the disciples’ blindness because we underestimate the enormity of the change laid before them. And, in the same way, we underestimate the transformation entailed when we come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The image of the disciples being blind is a good one, for it draws us to the question of vision. I’m not speaking merely of where we are going or even where we are now . . . it is a question of seeing things as they really are . . . seeing the true nature of reality, looking through right-seeing glasses.

The disciples had what is often called a “worldview.” Jesus had a worldview. You and I have worldviews. A worldview consists of our answers to the most basic questions of life. A worldview is our understanding of how the world works. If you are ever in an argument with someone and things reach the point where the person exclaims in exasperation, “Well, that’s just how things are!,” you’ve run right into their worldview.

The disciples lived within the world of second-temple Judaism. They lived under the thumb of the Romans while awaiting the day when God would finally step in and put things right, when God would keep all the glorious promises found in the writings of the prophets. And, as typical second-temple Jews, the disciples just *knew* that this great day would be ushered in by the arrival of God’s right-hand man, the Messiah, who would swoop in with power and might and wonder and glory. Everyone would see it, even the hated Romans.

Consequently, Jesus didn’t just want his disciples to see more clearly, he needed them to swap one pair of glasses for another; one way of seeing and being for another. He wanted them to adopt a wholly new worldview, to see that God’s saving power would be manifested in sacrifice and faithfulness, not power and might and wonder. We fail to grasp the gospels if we fail to grasp the radical swapping of worldviews required to see the truth about Jesus.

This is in large part what Paul means when he writes, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

This mind-renewing, glasses-swapping transformation can be as difficult for us as it was for the disciples. We think we know how the world works when we really don’t. We think we are seeing the truth when we are not. Indeed, again like the disciples, were it not for the work of the Holy Spirit, we would never be able to see the world as it really is. And even with the Spirit’s help, it still takes training and time to grow into our new glasses.

*A leader’s vision*

Written during the final decades of Jerusalem before its demise at the hands of the Babylonians, the book of Habakkuk focuses on a problem we all share. How can we believe that things will really be put right in a world filled with so much wrong? Or to put it another way, how do we really trust in God’s justice when the world is so obviously unjust?

The vision given Habakkuk in today’s passage is a guarantee that God will put things right, that God’s saving justice will remake all of creation. And we are to trust that God will do what God has promised to do (“the righteous will live by faith” v.4).

But still, that doesn’t answer all our questions. We do live in an unjust world, filled with wrongs and tragedies. What is to be our response? How do we really live by faith? In his commentary on this Habakkuk passage in the *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Theodore Hiebert writes:

“The righteous, the sincerely religious, those who long and work for justice and righteousness receive the strength to go on, not because the world itself is just or because it rewards those who work for justice, but because these persons possess a larger vision of the way things should be. They possess the vision, as did Habakkuk, of God’s just reign.”

This is the question we need to ask ourselves: “Do I possess the vision of God’s just reign?” Jesus tried to help his disciples to see the truth of God’s just reign, i.e., the kingdom of God. He wanted them to see that, contrary to the way they thought the world worked, the words *servant* and *leader* actually do go together. Yes, the Messiah would wash their feet.

I’ve come to believe that our transformation into the people God desires us to be entails a massive change in the way we see things. The key is to see that God’s just reign is not just about the future, it is also about the present. 2,000 years ago, Jesus of Nazareth ushered in God’s just reign, this kingdom of God and it is not just in our hearts, it is reality. Philip Yancey writes about the rumors of another world in a book by that title and he is right, there is another world every bit as real as the keyboard on which I’m typing at this minute. Just because I can’t see it, doesn’t make it less real.

Learning to see God and God’s reign in all things won’t happen overnight. But if we are going to lead like Jesus, we have to commit ourselves fully to the transformation of our vision. You might begin simply. When you watch a movie, ask yourself what the movie had to say about ourselves, this world . . . about God. This goes for any movie, not just the obviously God-oriented ones. What worldview is the movie presenting? How closely does it align with a Christian worldview? The world wants to shape us into its mold; God wants to shape us into Jesus’ mold. Whose glasses will we wear?

‘til tomorrow, grace and peace,

Scott