

## **A Study in Contrasts, Part II: “When It’s All About Wholeness”**

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden  
for 1<sup>st</sup> UMC, Grand Junction, Sunday, October 27, 2024

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ website or by clicking this link and finding the date of the worship service in which it appears:  
<https://www.christianworldmedia.com/wordstream/fumcgj/search:->

*Scripture Text: Mark 10:46-52 [NLT]*

### OPENING

This is the second of a simple, two-part series that comes right from the Gospel of Mark itself. I call it *A Study in Contrasts*. Last week the sermon title was “When It’s All About Me”, with the Scriptural focus on the self-absorption of James and John. This week, it’s “When It’s All About Wholeness”, with the focus on Jesus and what happens when we are motivated by His example. Quite a contrast, we’ll see, from the example of James and John.

### TO THE SCRIPTURES

(\*Description of how the passage for today follows immediately on the heels of the one from last week about James and John and serves as a stark contrast to their self-absorption.

(\*Jesus has just said, “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,<sup>44</sup> and whoever

wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else” (Mark 10:44).\*)

Then, in the healing of blind Bartimaeus, Mark shows Jesus doing the very thing he exhorted His followers to do just two verses prior. But, Jesus’ actions were not just about healing a blind man; they were also about demonstrating the opposite of self-absorption: Seeking the betterment of others. And they resulted in making whole someone whose life was severely limited by his not being able to see. In today’s world, blindness is challenging enough; in Bartimaeus’ world, it made one a beggar with no chance at living a full life.

The other thing the juxtaposition of these narratives in Mark’s Gospel does is demonstrate that even though James’ and John’s eyes were functional, they were blinded by their own ambition and self-absorption and were unable to see the larger scope of what it meant to follow Jesus – their vain boasts to the contrary notwithstanding.

Following Jesus means giving oneself to Him and His priorities and doing what one can to be a force for good, a voice for betterment in the lives of others.

### SERMON THOUGHTS

FUMC has been committed to a ministry with this very foundation for years, and Anna is going to share the pulpit with me this morning and tell us all about it. We had an amazing day yesterday seeing the fruits of

faithfulness and generosity, to the praise and glory of God!

### ANNA'S PRESENTATION

I looked up the definition of “wholeness” and this is what it said: the state of forming a complete and harmonious whole; unity.

Such a beautiful definition.

When I look at wholeness, I think of the game of Jenga, with all the blocks: Once stacked up and all together you have a sturdy block tower, but start removing the blocks and the tower becomes weak and eventually falls.



We are like the blocks, each of us has its place and when we come together as a whole, the work we can do is incredible. Jesus reminds us that we all need each other. No one person is more or less important, and we need to make sure that we are taking care of each other and including each other so that we can be whole – like our whole Jenga tower.

This weekend was a prime example of wholeness within our Church and our community. “Project Pallet” started months ago, starting with fundraising, then ordering, and then receiving 12 pallets of diapers

and wipes. All of those who helped yesterday please stand; we could not have done it without you!

And from the wholeness of what we accomplished yesterday, we’re able to provide wholeness to our community. With our help, families don’t have to choose between diapers and food, or a utility bill.

Families struggle to make ends meet, and the diapers and resources that we can provide can bring wholeness to the families we serve, and that is such a beautiful thing. I want to share a video of yesterday and what an incredible day it was!

### CONCLUSION

(\*Circle back to the sermon title of “When It’s All About Wholeness” and the blessing it is to be a part of Jesus’ work in bring about wholeness in others by helping where we can, even with something as “earthy” as diapers and wipes.\*)

On to **All Saints Observance** and **Offering**, done like communion with our procession.