



Spec-saver

Just before the 1988 Winter Olympics, a programme on the television featured some blind skiers being trained for slalom skiing – as impossible as that sounds.

They were paired with sighted skiers, and were being taught how to make right and left turns.

When that was mastered, they were taken to the slalom slope, where their sighted partners skied beside them shouting, *left!* and *right!*

As they followed these commands, they began to negotiate the course, finally reaching the finish line, depending solely on the sighted skiers' help. Trust or catastrophe – that was their choice.

What an incredibly vivid picture of the Christian life this is!

In this world, we are actually *blind* about what course to take until we learn to rely solely on the word of the only one who gives sight to those who will hear — God Himself. His Word gives us the direction we need to finish the course.

Spec-saviour

Matthew (Levi, the tax collector), has often been portrayed (in some medieval art), as a person with glasses on the end of his nose – so that he can read his accounts closely and keep *an eye* on his money.

This also portrays his short-sightedness or inner blindness.

Jesus *looked* at him. He looked into his heart, and saw something totally different. Where others saw a miserable money-grabber and thief, Jesus saw a person hungry for true riches. And in doing so, he turned a money-grabber into a good steward. He saved Matthew, and showed him true riches!

When people show that they like us, our hearts grow amazingly.

Matthew, for his part, and in his utter joy, threw a party to celebrate his new-found riches / life.

His pen was no longer used for counting ca\$h. Instead he wrote the story of the One who set him free.

TRUE RICHES
good stewardship

Isaiah 58

If you remove from your midst the yoke, the clenched fist and the wicked word ⁽¹⁾, if you share your food with the hungry and give relief to the oppressed, then your light will rise in the dark, your night will be like noon.

Yahweh will guide you always and give you relief in desert places. He will strengthen your bones; he will make you as a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins will be re-built, the age-old foundations will be raised. You will be called the Breach-mender, and the Restorer of ruined houses.

If you stop profaning the Sabbath and doing as you please on the holy day, if you call the Sabbath a day of delight and keep sacred Yahweh's holy day, if you honour it by not going your own way, not doing as you please and not speaking with malice, **then you will find happiness in Yahweh** ⁽²⁾.

Luke 5

Jesus went out, and as he noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax-office, he said to him, "Follow me." So Levi, leaving everything, got up and followed Jesus.

Levi gave a great feast for Jesus, and many tax collectors came to his house and took their place at table with the other people.

Then the Pharisees and their fellow teachers complained to Jesus' disciples, "How is it that you eat and drink with tax collectors and other sinners?" But Jesus spoke up, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I have come to call to repentance; I call sinners, not the righteous.

cleaning your lenses

I'm sure that we all know we have certain blind-spots in our lives. We need to *clean our lenses!*

It's a + exercise, not a – one, as it helps to build us up spiritually.

The question is – ***are we willing to remove anger and harmful talk from our lives this Lent?*** ⁽¹⁾

If we are – then ***what will we do with the happiness we find?*** ⁽²⁾

Perhaps we might think to use it to build up St Michael's by encouraging a friend or acquaintance to come to mass with us . . . ?