



Fourth Sunday in Lent, Year A

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Gospel Text - John 9:1-41

John 9:1-41

¹ As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know

who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

SERMON TEXT:

You sit in the chair at the eye doctor’s office. The lights dim. The machine lowers in front of your face.

“Which is clearer?” the doctor asks.

“One... or two?”

They flip the lens.

“One... or two?”

You hesitate. They look almost the same.

“Two?” The question is obvious in your response.

“Alright. Now which is clearer?” the doctor asks again. “Three.. or Four?”

You’re not even sure there’s a difference.

“Three.. or Four?”

And then – click – the lens shifts, and suddenly the letters snap into focus. You didn’t even realize how blurry your vision was until it wasn’t.

A couple of weeks and a new prescription later, your eyes finally adjust and you start to notice the world in a way you hadn’t seen in a very long time, maybe ever.

John 9 is about that kind of moment.

It’s about blindness... But not the obvious kind we expect.

As Jesus walks along, he sees a man blind from birth.

Before anyone speaks – Jesus sees him.

The disciples, though, see something else. They see a theological puzzle.

“Rabbi, who sinned? This man or his parents?”

They assume suffering must be someone’s fault. Someone must be to blame. That’s how their system works.

And already we begin to see the deeper blindness in this story.

We are blind – and often we don't know it.
We want explanations.
We want causes.
We want neat answers for painful things.

But Jesus refuses the blame narrative.

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned."

And then he says something extraordinary:

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Light has entered the scene.

Mud. Water. Washing. And the man comes back seeing.

But here's where the story gets interesting.

The miracle is simple. The aftermath is complicated.

The neighbors argue.

The Pharisees investigate.

The parents panic.

The man keeps repeating the same testimony:

"One thing I do know – though I was blind, now I see."

Meanwhile, the religious leaders – the ones certain they see clearly – are unraveling.

They know the law.

They know Moses.

They know how Sabbath is supposed to work.

And because they are so certain they see clearly, they cannot recognize what is happening right in front of them.

Jesus' final words are piercing:

"If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

This is the deepest law in the text:

We are blind – and we often do not know it.

We assume our perspective is clear.

We trust our categories.

We defend our systems.

We decide who is in and who is out.

And we can be deeply religious... and still miss Jesus.

But here is the Gospel.

Before anyone understood anything – Jesus saw the man.

He did not see a sinner.

He did not see a case study.

He saw a person.

And even more tender – after the man is thrown out of the synagogue, after he loses his place in the community – Jesus goes looking for him.

“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

“Who is he, sir?”

“You have seen him.”

That line matters.

“You have seen him.”

Sight is no longer just about eyes.

It is about recognition.

Relationship.

Revelation.

The man who once sat in darkness now sees more clearly than the experts.

In baptism, God opens our eyes.

Not because we have figured everything out.

Not because our theology is flawless.

Not because we see perfectly.

But because Christ claims us.

In those waters, God says:

You are seen.

You are known.

You are my beloved child.

And something shifts.

The world is still complicated.

Pain still exists.

Systems still resist grace.

But we begin to see differently.

We begin to see ourselves not as defined by shame – but by promise.

We begin to see others not as problems – but as beloved.

We begin to see suffering not as punishment – but as a place where God's work can be revealed.

And that leads to the call.

The healed man doesn't have sophisticated theology.

He doesn't win the argument with credentials.

He simply says:

"One thing I do know..."

He doesn't speak with arrogance.

Not certainty.

Not spiritual superiority.

But with humble witness.

"One thing I do know – I was blind, now I see."

To live as people whose eyes have been opened means:

We remain humble about what we see.

We stay open to correction.

We let Christ keep healing our vision.

And it means we become light-bearers.

If Christ is the light of the world,

then those claimed in Christ carry that light into dark places.

We refuse blame narratives.

We notice the overlooked.

We stand beside those pushed out.

We trust that God is still revealing mercy in surprising places.

Because once you've encountered the light,

you cannot live the same way again.

So maybe the question for us is not:

"Are we blind?"

The harder question is:

Where might we be blind and not know it?

Where might Christ be trying to clear our vision?

Where might God be inviting us to see differently?

The good news is this:

Even when we do not see clearly – Christ sees us.

Even when we are uncertain – Christ finds us.

Even when we are cast out – Christ comes near.

We are blind and don't know it.

Christ sees us, heals us, and finds us.

And by grace, we live as people whose eyes have been opened.

"One thing I do know..."

May that be our confession.

Amen.

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