

John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39 As Jesus was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that God’s works might be revealed in connection with him. ⁴I must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World.”

⁶After saying this, Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and spread the mud on the man’s eyes. ⁷“Go,” Jesus told him, “wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means “Sent”). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

¹³They brought this man who had been blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵So the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight.

“He put mud on my eyes,” the man told them. “I washed, and now I see.”

¹⁶Then some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath.” Others were saying, “How can a sinful man work such miraculous signs?”

There was division among them, ¹⁷so they said to the blind man again, “What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?”

The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

³⁴They answered him, “You were entirely born in sinfulness! Yet you presume to teach us?” And they threw him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had thrown him out. When he found him, he asked, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

³⁶“Who is he, sir,” the man replied, “that I may believe in him?”

³⁷Jesus answered, “You have seen him, and he is the very one who is speaking with you.”

³⁸Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” and he knelt down and worshipped him.

³⁹Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, in order that those who do not see will see, and those who do see will become blind.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. You’ve all heard the tale of the three blind mice, the story of three mice who were blind and lost their tails! Well, this account before us this morning could be called the tale of three blind men, or rather, one blind man and 2 groups of blind

men. You’ve got the blind man who could not see physically, the disciples who were blind to any conclusion other than the only reason this man was blind was because of his own sin or his parents’; and the Pharisees who were blind to their need for Jesus as their Savior. Through this account of such pervasive blindness, Jesus showed that he is the Light of the World — in the face of suffering and in the face of doubt he gives sight to the blind.

When the disciples saw the blind man, they immediately concluded that his blindness was because of sin. They allowed for no other possibility. They confidently trotted this warped theology out in front of Jesus, expecting a quick answer to their question and even more, the affirmation of their short-sighted thinking. **Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”**

It’s a reasonable question, isn’t it? I mean, why else are things like blindness and every other suffering and ailment in the world but because of sin? We’ve probably all given or at least thought this answer in Bible class or when thinking about the evils in this world that made their way into our lives: Why did this happen? Well, sin.

And while it’s true to a certain extent, we must be careful that we’re not walking around in the blindness of the disciples. The devil uses our sin and the sinful world around us to blind us to God’s love and purpose, to his glory and power. In that blindness, the things that we suffer are simply because the devil beat Adam and Eve and now we, and everyone else, God included, are along for the ride.

Jesus shines his light onto that dark thought. **“It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that God’s works might be revealed in connection with him.”** More than it just being a result of living in a sinful world, it was the opportunity for God’s glory to be revealed. And that’s how it has always been when it comes to sin. Throughout scripture the devil is never seen as being victorious. Not even in the Garden of Eden.

The moment after Adam and Eve plunged this world into sin and secured for each of us the inheritance of our sinful flesh upon our entrance into this world, the headline of the day should have been Devil curses World, Sin Dooms Humanity Forever, Devil Destroys Man’s Relationship with God. But those weren’t the headlines. Ever after that day we find page after page of not what Satan had done, but what God had done: God Reveals his True Glory. God Shows His Power. God Applies His Grace. God Restores Peace. God Announces Forgiveness.

God Promised to Send His Son. Not just to undo blindness, but all sin, God sent Jesus into our world. As the moon without the sun is dark, so too, would we be without Christ. But his perfect life for us gives us the bright perfection we need. His death on the cross blasts away every sin, and every shadow caused by sin, death and hell included. By rising from the dead we shine brightest of all knowing that no matter what happens in this life, no matter what we suffer, no matter what we endure, it will not be our end. God will be glorified, his power will prevail as we are raised from death to life on the last day.

So we can look at the suffering of this world *as the world does* — it's just the world we live in. We can look at it *as Christians struggling* with the blindness of the disciples — We live in a sinful world. That's all there is to it. Or we can view it all in the light of our Savior, Jesus — as an opportunity to see God's glory, his power, his mercy and grace. To live in his peace.

Even in the middle of something as widespread as coronavirus. Trust in the Lord that whether by the spread of it or the halt of it, his name *will* be glorified, his power *will* be seen, his peace *will* be our comfort.

Just look what he did here! He put mud on the man's eyes and after he washed it out, he could see. And so too, all who saw this miracle — they saw God's purpose even in the face of suffering — his glory, power, grace, and mercy shining through.

But not the Pharisees. There was a problem. It was the Sabbath, and the so called Messiah had broken it. He worked when he was supposed to rest. **Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath." Others were saying, "How can a sinful man work such miraculous signs?"**

And so they had found a reason to doubt that Jesus was who he said he was. It almost seems that they were looking for any little thing to discount his claims. Why?

Because a needed messiah meant that their supposed righteousness wasn't enough. If a messiah was needed then their lives, their law keeping, their standing among the people was a sham, a lie, a farce. If Jesus was the Savior, it meant they were just as sinful and guilty as anyone else. But if they could find the smallest excuse to discredit and dismiss Jesus, they could dismiss their own sin and guilt.

How blind they were! They overlooked the miracle of Jesus, the testimony of this man all based on their own righteousness. Jesus is a sinner - he

broke the sabbath. This man is a sinner, he was born blind. And just like that their blindness continued.

They were blind to the fact that every human being is a sinner, no matter how washed and clean, perfect and holy they may look on the outside. **All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** Even you. Even me. And yet here we are privileged to see God's glory.

In their blindness, those Pharisees threw the man out. It makes us wonder what must have been going through his head. He had this new found sight, but he had never seen Jesus. Where would his faith go from here? But here we see Jesus working a greater miracle than restoring sight to the eyes in his head. He opened the eyes of his heart.

When Jesus found him, he asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

³⁶**"Who is he, sir," the man replied, "that I may believe in him?"**

³⁷**Jesus answered, "You have seen him, and he is the very one who is speaking with you."**

³⁸**Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" and he knelt down and worshipped him.**

Just a day or so before the man was first able to see what the Pharisees could see, the world around him. But now the man could see what the Pharisees could not see — Jesus, the Son of God standing right in front of him. Though he had never seen him before — he was still blind when he was lead away from Jesus to the pool of Siloam — he saw him now and believed.

The Devil always tries to get us to not see our need for Jesus, to pass over him as if there are other things more important, pressing, or worth our time. But in the lenten season we see our need for Jesus more clearly than any other time of the year. And it's also in these times that the gospel shines brighter than ever too. As we find ourselves half way to the cross, we have this wonderful testimony from Jesus himself — He is the Son of God, our Savior. He is the Light who scatters the darkness of this world, the darkness of our hearts, in the face of suffering and in the face of doubts.

When the devil or the world causes you to doubt, when you are directed to yourself, at what you've thought, said, or did, you can say, but look what God has done. Look what he has revealed to us. By his grace, we who once were blind, **we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the**

angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

As we look to the future, we've got nothing to fear, whether it's what we see with our eyes, or know by faith. Jesus is our Light. In the face of suffering God will be glorified, our future is secure. In the face of doubts, in the Son of God, our Savior, our faith will rest secure. Amen.