

# "He Opened My Eyes"

John 9:1-41

2 March 2008

The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor  
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## John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 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, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

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?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 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." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 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." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 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."

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 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 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." 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. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

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." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 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?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

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. Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Prayer.

Today's gospel slowly  
Almost painfully

Unfolds for us  
In such a way  
That it is a perfect metaphor  
For Lent.

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Lent begins in darkness;  
 Total, complete,  
 Black-as-the-blackest ink  
 darkness.  
 The darkness of the wilderness  
 Is cast by the devil  
 And all its evil.  
 Jesus resists,  
 And we are given hope  
 That He just might be the light.  
 Perhaps the world does not need  
 To wait in darkness anymore?

Indeed, as Lent unfolds,  
 Light appears  
 Slowly, but surely,  
 And progressively  
 More and more light creeps in.  
 The penitent disciple of Christ  
 Goes through an awakening.

Nicodemus sneaks away  
 Under cover of darkness  
 To come and inquire of Jesus.  
 You must be changed  
 Born from above,  
 Jesus teaches him.  
 For all those who believe  
 Will be saved.  
 The first sliver of light  
 breaks into the darkness.

The water at Jacobs well  
 Is replaced with living water.  
 He is that living water;  
 Drink him in  
 And never thirst for more.  
 And His light is lifted up.  
 And today,  
 His light increases its intensity  
 Such that even those born blind  
 Still can see.

This is not a miracle story,  
 Although, it begins with a miracle.  
 This is a story of enlightenment  
 Coming to a man born blind.  
 Receiving his vision  
 Is just the beginning of his  
 Spiritual awakening  
 And awareness.

First his neighbors are amazed,  
 But they don't know what to do with him.  
 So they bring him to the authorities;  
 The religious authorities.  
 (How's that for neighbors!)  
 His sight divides the opposition.  
 Some noted Jesus didn't observe the  
 Sabbath.  
 Others wondered how a sinner could be  
 blessed.  
 "What do you say about him?"  
 they asked.  
 "It was your eyes he opened,"  
 they accused.  
 (And we were led to believe  
 they were the authorities!  
 If they were the authorities,  
 Why would they have to ask?)  
 He said, "He is a prophet."

Ah! Here we have it:  
 The second sign of this man's  
 Spiritual awakening.  
 The one who Jesus healed,  
 Who had his vision given to him  
 For the first time,  
 Has now moved beyond the literal.  
 He has made his first statement of faith:  
 He is a prophet! He says.  
 He is a prophet! He says  
 To a less than receptive audience;  
 One that has homicide in its future.  
 The light shines brighter.

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Just as Jacob's well served as  
 A baptismal font  
 And Jesus became himself  
 Living water,  
 A means of initiation  
 Into Jesus' community,  
 So too has His saliva  
 Mixed with dirt  
 Spread on the eyes  
 And washed in the pool  
 Known as Siloam  
 (which means Sent)  
 become a baptismal rite  
 of cleansing,  
 of joining,  
 and of eternal life.

Unsatisfied,  
 And still divided,  
 They drag in his parents.  
 Fearing their own skin,  
 They only report the facts.  
 They do not draw conclusions.  
 The authority's flaw  
 Was to call this man back a second time.  
 With a diverse mix  
 Of sarcasm, logic, law, and lecture  
 Our healed man,  
 With a masterful stroke,  
 Demonstrates the fact that  
 He now stands in nearly complete  
 illumination.  
 "Never since the world began"  
 the new disciple speaks,  
 "has it been heard that anyone  
 opened the eyes of a person born blind.  
 If this man were not from God,  
 he could do nothing."  
 And with that,  
 They drove him out.

Jesus immediately seeks him out

To bring the circle full round  
 And to a close.  
 "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"  
 "Who is he, sir?"  
 Tell me so that I may believe in him."  
 "You have seen him,"  
 and the one speaking with you is he."  
 Illumination is complete.  
 The final sign of his spiritual awakening  
 has taken place,  
 with his words,  
 "Lord, I believe."

As Lent unfolds,  
 Light appears  
 Slowly, but surely,  
 And progressively  
 More and more light creeps in.  
 The penitent disciple of Christ  
 Goes through an awakening.  
 This is dramatically portrayed  
 During Good Friday's Tenebrae,  
 A service that begins in darkness  
 progresses with the lighting  
 Of successive candles,  
 Until its completion  
 with total illumination.  
 This journey is mirrored in  
 Our Gospel today.

Some of us love to muck around in  
 darkness,  
 Believing no one sees what we are doing.  
 Some of us love  
 the penance of Lent,  
 and would be content to remain forever  
 in it's half-lit world  
 filled with shadows and doubts.  
 Some eventually long to return to  
 darkness,  
 While others become restless  
 and eager to look ahead,  
 To what possibly may be further

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revealed.

We recognize the fact that  
Lent is not a place  
to make our spiritual home.  
Rather, it is the journey,  
And nothing more than a journey,  
Of increasing illumination  
That culminates when all is revealed  
By the eternal light of Easter,  
Emanating from the empty tomb  
Of our resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ.

Where there is light,  
There is only Jesus.  
And where there is Jesus  
There can be no darkness at all.  
Be in the light,  
Dear friends.  
Be in His light.  
Amen.

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