

4th Sunday of Lent - Man Born Blind
March 19, 2023

During Jesus' time, the blind and others with physical ailments were considered a burden to the society. Most of them are left by their family and end up begging food and money in the streets. They were looked down upon as among the lowest class among the people. They have no wealth nor power for other people to respect them.

We would think, that if Jesus would notice anyone, it would be the rich. Instead, He sees even the least among society and this includes the blind man. As Christians, we have the assurance that no matter who we are, Jesus will take notice of us. Jesus sees us and cares for us and wants a close relationship with us.

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

The man was blind from his birth. He would have every reason to be angry with God and question God's goodness and love.

When asked by His disciples the reason why the man became blind, Jesus answered, so "that the works of God should be revealed in him." If it hadn't been because of his blindness, he wouldn't have encountered the Messiah!

The people were told that for those with such ailments, it was the results of the sins of their parents. We're not told how old the blind man was, but we do know that because of his condition, he was ostracized and shunned by society. He was even put out of his home by his parents and forced to make a living by begging. He had no idea of why he was born blind. But those who knew him blamed him for his own condition.

In many cases, those who are well and healthy are the ones who don't see the need for God. They already have a good life, so why would they need God? However, those who are weak, sick, and in need are the ones who are more likely to encounter God and seek help greater than themselves!

Jesus didn't promise any of us a life free of problems, but He ensures us that He will always be with us. Though we might be feeling defeated because of the many challenges that may come our way, we can still have the confidence that Jesus will see us through.

Why did Jesus spit on the ground and make clay to anoint the man's eye? Why not just wave his hand before the man's eyes, or say a word of healing to the man?

The Jewish religious authorities created their own rules for the Sabbath, and it was on the Sabbath when Jesus healed the blind man. The Jewish leaders taught that this

healing was prohibited on the Sabbath. Jesus took this as an opportunity to show the religious leaders and the people around Him how they had made the Sabbath a burden on the people.

For the man to be healed, he needed to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. He believed what Jesus had told him and so he also followed Jesus' instructions to the letter. But he didn't stop there - and even though it was difficult, he found his way to the pool and did as Jesus commanded,

Jesus was not just seeking to heal the man physically, but also spiritually. Believing in Jesus is only the first step. It must be accompanied by faith. The man would have not been healed if he didn't follow Jesus' instruction.

But there's a more dangerous type of blindness that has infected this world. The sight of the man Jesus healed could easily have been restored. **However, spiritual blindness is much more deeply rooted and much more difficult to banish.**

Neighbors of the (formerly) blind man gathered, but none would/could corroborate whether the man was truly blind from birth

While this man was healed, not everyone with infirmities has received such a gift. Jesus did not promise all of us a life free of worries and troubles. But He did promise us that 'He will never leave us nor forsake us' (in Deuteronomy 31:6).

The Pharisees were the epitome of self-righteousness.

The Pharisees were so self-righteous that they couldn't see how blind they were to the truth. They resented anyone who tried to usurp their 'power'! They believe they knew everything and didn't accept contradictions. All their lives, they'd been waiting for the Messiah to come and yet, when they have found Him, they could not accept His righteousness!

Yet, instead of rejoicing, the religious leaders were filled with jealousy, resentment, and anger. They immediately interrogated the blind man to *find fault in his story*. A lot of people doubted whether the miracle was real or not. So, the Jews called the parents of the blind man and asked, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

Of all the people, it could have been the parents of the blind man who could testify to the truth. Yes, the parents said nothing. They only say what they knew since they themselves could have not witnessed the miracle itself. They're fully aware that their son, who was blind, could now see!

His parents **feared the Jews**, because the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.

Based on their self-righteous judgment, they deemed Jesus as a Sabbath breaker and a sinner. Obviously, they are not trying to protect the people from deception, but rather, they are protecting their jobs and high status in society!

What a pity it is that many of us ‘Christians’ today are filled with the same blindness and self-righteous attitude. Have we ever used the phrase ‘my way, or the highway’, or ‘we’ve always done it this way’ attitude? Are we like the Pharisees who are so self-righteous that we can’t see how blind we are when we say these things. Do we resent others who try to reach us? Or do we believe we know everything and don’t accept corrections.

This is a part of our human nature that we must all overcome. The problem with blindness and self-righteousness is that it **BLINDS** us.

Jesus will not grant us eternal life if we don’t follow His commandments today.

If we wish to be the first in the Kingdom of God, we need learn to be the servants of all...we need to humble ourselves and answer Jesus’ call.

In God’s sight, we are all precious and that’s where our true value really lies. We might be last in this world, but we will be first in God’s kingdom.

GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES!

Deacon Gregory J Cecere

March 26, 2023