

Can You See?

John 9:1-38
Acts 16:16-34

*I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord;
Yes, I will remember Your wonders of old.
I will meditate on all Your work,
and muse on Your mighty deeds.
Your way, O God, is holy.
What god is great like our God?
Psalm 77:12-14*

Today's Gospel lesson describes one of the innumerable wonders wrought by God, through which Christ's love for suffering men is shown, and His divinity once more revealed.

"As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from birth." Shortly before this, while He was in the Temple, the people had taken up stones to throw at Jesus because He had spoken the truth. And yet, while wicked people were thinking only how they might destroy Him, Jesus was thinking only of how to do good to men.

There in the Temple was a man blind from birth, asking for alms. None of the wicked persecutors of Christ, the shameful leaders and elders of the people, took any thought for this poor man. Even if one of them threw a few coins into his cup, this was more to make a parade before men than out of love and compassion for the man. The compassionate Lord stopped by this man, ready to be of real help to him.

Christ's disciple's asked, "Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Let us remember that not long before this incident, Jesus had healed a paralyzed man at the Sheep pool, and had said to him: "Sin no more, or a worse thing may come upon you." (John 5:14). Jesus was clearly telling the people that there are consequences for our actions. And that we do bring suffering upon ourselves. However, in this case,

of the man born blind was unclear, and the disciples were asking for enlightenment; "Who sinned?" There is a reference in Holy Scripture that God sometimes allows suffering to come to children because of their parents sins (1 Kings 11:12; 21:29). This may seem unjust only to those who have become accustomed to regard men as separate entities, completely cut off from one another. Yet we are taught by the Apostle that we are all connected to one another ... when one member hurts, we all hurt.

Jesus answered their question, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him." An early Christian teacher, John Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.) says, "that he sinned, or his parents, in this case is not the cause of his blindness."

Jesus made it clear, this man was born blind, "so that the works of God should be revealed in him." He was telling the people that God has made each of us for His purpose and for His glory. Even our weaknesses, God chooses to use to show His strength. We have nothing in or of ourselves in which we can boast ... except to boast in God power and glory at work in us.

As Jesus continues to teach the people, He turns the subject to the brevity of time and life, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night comes, when no man can work." And He uses this situation with the man born blind to demonstrate His purpose on earth – that in doing good, He is showing to all people the power and greatness of God.

Since men's hearts are basically evil and men are motivated by jealousy and a desire to get even – while Jesus' motivation is for mercy and truth. Men took up stones to kill Him, and Jesus continued to offer the bread of life to them.

While it is day! – that is, while life lasts. The night comes! – that is, death, when no man can work. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," say the Lord Himself.

As long as He is in a man's soul, He is the light of that man.

As long as He is in the midst of a group, He is the light of that people.

As long as He is in a school, He is the light of that school.

As long as He is in the place of business, He is the light of that business and its workers.

Anywhere from which He withdraws His presence, a total darkness prevails.

The human soul without Christ becomes a place of hell.

A people without Him becomes like a pack of famished and raving wolves.

A school without Him becomes a poison-factory of folly.

A place of business without Him becomes a place of grumbling and hatred.

And think of hospitals and prisons without Him – they become dark caverns of despair!

Indeed, whoever thinks on the days of his life, of days without Christ, and days with Him, this man has in himself a witness to the truth of these words of our Lord, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Then, when Jesus had finished speaking, He spit on the ground, and made a little paste with the dirt and with this anointed the blind man’s eyes, and said, “Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.” He went, and washed, and came back seeing.

All that the Lord had said, in the presence of the blind man and the disciples was for the purpose to open the “spiritual” eyes of the blind. Jesus was again showing that it is much easier to open the physical eyes of the blind than it is to open the spiritual eyes of the spiritually blind.

How meek and obedient the blind man was! He did not only allow the Lord to smear his eyes with mud, but then so treated, he immediately obeyed the command to go off to the Pool of Siloam and wash. The Lord was teaching obedience. It is impossible to separate Faith and obedience.

The blind man did not know “how” it was that he could now see. He answered those who asked, “I went and washed and now I see.” This was all he knew and could say.

The wicked Pharisees were not happy in learning that this blind man could now see, rather they were now even more angry than before. They accused Jesus as being of the devil, because He did not keep the Sabbath, by doing the “good work” of healing on the Sabbath. They brought in the man’s parents, threatening to banish them from the Temple. The parent did not know how their son could now see. And turned the focus back to their son, who replied to the repeated questions: “Since the

world began it has never been heard that nay man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing.”

The Pharisees continued in the dark cloud of unbelief and hatred, even in the light of Christ the Savior and His divine actions. Light is truth – darkness is falsehood. Light is love – darkness is hatred. Light is power – darkness is the absence of power.

The Gospel for today began with light and now ends with light.

Later, when Jesus found the man again He said to him, “do you believe in the Son of God?”

The man born blind had passed the first test: he had shown himself obedient when the Lord said, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam.” That was the test of obedience.

He then passed the second test: the test of persevering under the temptation to deny the power of the One who had healed him.

When confronted with the third and final test – the greatest test: that of true faith – “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

He answered, “Who is He, Lord, so that I might believe in Him?”

Jesus said to him, “It is He who is speaking to you.”

The man said, “Lord, I believe.”

As his bodily eyes had earlier been opened, so now were his spiritual eyes. He looked with both his bodily and spiritual eyes, and there before him was the God-man, God in human flesh.

Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?

Let us pray:

O Lord Jesus Christ our Savior, we believe that You are the Son of God and the Light of the world. We, together with the choirs of angels and saints in heaven, and with Your whole Church on earth, worship You, O most gracious Lord. You and Your Father and the Holy Spirit – the holy Trinity consubstantial and undivided, now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*** Though I have preached this sermon, I am not the author. With regret, I am unable to locate the name of the person who is the originator, to whom I’m indebted.*