

✠ John 9:1-41 ✠

**IN NOMINE IESU**

Not everyone is born physically blind. But everyone is born spiritually blind. That is, everyone is born without true knowledge of God, true fear of God, and true trust in God. There are none who are righteous. No one seeks God. All are born blind.

But into the world came the light of the world. He came in grace and truth. And though we are born blind, hostile to God and not deserving of grace and mercy, our Lord Jesus Christ pities us and opens our eyes so that we see and begin to walk in the light of the knowledge of the wisdom of God beheld in the face of Jesus. He is the light of the world, and just as our physical eyes behold creation by the medium of light given by the sun, so our spiritual eyes behold the Father by the medium of the Son, who illumines the face of the Father that we should see God.

The man born blind from birth was not the only one whose eyes were opened that day. His neighbors and friends, the Pharisees and even his parents all had their eyes opened to the truth that Jesus is the One sent by God. That does not mean, of course, that they believed this truth, but they certainly saw it; it was certainly plain for them to see.

Jesus did not open the man's blind eyes in a corner or in secret. He did it in the temple courts where all could see. He sent the man off through the crowds with mud on his eyes to wash in a public pool among people who knew him. The Pharisees and others who did not want Jesus to have opened this man's eyes questioned whether he'd been blind or whether it was a different man, but in the end, no one really doubted that he had been blind and no one doubted that he could now see. They only doubted who Jesus was. Was He a prophet sent from God? Was He the Christ promised in Moses and the Prophets? Or was He an agent of evil sent to confuse the people? The eyes of the blind man were not the only eyes opened to the truth that day, but he was the only one who began to see.

And so it goes with preaching and the Word of God. Jesus continues to do the work of His Father while it is day, before the night falls when no one can work. He continues to make mud from earth and His spittle and rub it in your eyes, telling you to go and wash in the pool of His water. He continues to invade your personal space, intruding into your privacy, shining light into the dark corners of your soul, demanding obedience; forcing His way into your heart. It is messy business, making you see, for your heart is stubborn and your sin is comfortable and easy.

But Jesus does not look at your sin or your rebellion. He is not concerned with how great your sin is or how strong a hold it has on you. He is greater than your sin and stronger than the evil one. He looks only at you, the object of His love. He does not want the night to fall upon you before you see. For when night falls there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth and many will say, Lord, Lord, but He will answer, depart from me you workers of iniquity, I never knew you. For though your eyes were opened you did not see and though you were exposed to the light you remained in the dark. Repent.

And so the work of God goes on, baptizing and teaching, preaching and eating and drinking, in order that you would see clearly to worship the Son of man, the One sent by the Father.

But so also do preaching and teaching and administering the Sacraments go on so that those who see will become blind. For Jesus comes to give sight to the blind, and to blind those who see. And so for some, this hour on Sunday morning, and whenever they hear the Word of God preached and taught, serves to blind them; just as it blinded the Pharisees.

The Pharisees knew the Scriptures; they knew the oracles of God. And so they thought they could see the truth. They had intimate knowledge of God's prophets and the Law. And they knew they were right. They were right that Moses commanded them to keep the Sabbath.

It just goes to show you that intimacy is not the same as knowledge. Sometimes you wake up in the morning and discover it's not Rachel but Leah lying there next to you. Surprise, surprise. And it goes to show you that being right isn't always the same as being true. For if I speak in tongues of my fathers, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or clanging symbol. If I can recite the Bible chapter and verse, and quote St. Paul better than he does himself, but have not faith, then I am only a Pharisaical hypocrite and a phony. If I am so afraid of being laughed at that I laugh at repentance; so zealous for doing it the way we've always done it that I reject the truth and neglect my brother; if I am so eager to please and pacify that I destroy the foundation of faith, then I'd better stop and see if, while bragging about my 20/20 vision, I'm well on my way to losing the very sight of which I boast – if it hasn't slipped away already.

Our Lord comes to call sinners to repentance, not the righteous. That is why, strange as it may seem, 'tis better to be blind around Christ than seeing. Those who are well – or think themselves well – have no need of the Great Physician to heal their blindness. He came to make you who think you see, blind; and you are blind, to see. It is little wonder that it is the blind men in the Bible who teach us how to beg and cry out for mercy from the Son of David. So make this man blind from birth my teacher, for he understands what's important, the mercy of God in the Son of man. That is all that matters – the mercy of Jesus.

Nothing else matters to you but Him. He came to make you who are blind, seeing; you who are deaf, hearing; you who are dead, alive; you who are nothing, everything He wants you to be. He makes children of God out of the brood of vipers; saints out of the unholy stuff with which we dirty ourselves day in and day out.

Our Savior speaks in tongues of mercy and forgiveness. Forgiving us those things of which we are ashamed and giving us those things which we are too ignorant to know we need. If we are blind then we will be led by Him. If we are blind then Jesus will guide our hands to read like Braille the marks of the spear and nail. If we are blind then we will depend wholly upon His sight to guide us into the kingdom of heaven.

And then He will open our eyes and we will see His face; the face pressed against His mother; the face set toward Jerusalem; the face sweaty with blood and tears; the face beaten and bruised and covered in ungodly spit; the face that shone on Easter morn, all for you. And in that face you see no hint of regret, no trace of disappointment, only a love that is immeasurable and pure.

We are born blind that the works of God may be shown in us. Blessed are the blind whose eyes are opened; blessed are you who behold the light of the world in the face of Christ Jesus.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.  
✠ AMEN ✠