

INI - SDG

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

March 27, 2011

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Hecla, SD

Text: John 9:1-41 *Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4 "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5 "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. 8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" 9 Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." 10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." 12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." 13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 "but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." 25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." 26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" 28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29 "We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened*

**my eyes! 31 "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" 36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." 38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him. 39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." 40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."**

Theme: "The Works of God Revealed"

- Seeing
- Confessing and worshiping

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus, who once were lost, but now have been found, were blind but now see,

As we read through John 9, what struck you as the most remarkable event of the chapter? It's quite a bit longer of a sermon text than we are used to. Yet it is quite easy to follow the narrative which the Holy Spirit has preserved for us today. Was there anything that struck you as we read through it? Certainly the man born blind receiving his sight is pretty remarkable! He is even amazed as he says in verse 32, **"Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind."** That is pretty amazing! There is no record of anyone being born blind in the Old Testament receiving their sight. Never from the beginning of the world until Jesus healed this man, has anything like this ever happened.

Imagine how amazing it would have been for this man born blind. He had never seen the face of his parents. He had never seen a sunset or the stars in the sky. He had never looked upon the amazing colors and shapes of God's glorious creation. He didn't even know what his house looked like or the Temple he worshiped at. Since there was no real work a blind man could do in those days, he had to rely on the love of his fellow Jews to survive. He sat outside the entrance Temple or city gates and ask for handouts from passers-by. But all this changed when Jesus came into his life and gave him sight.

Yet, I would argue that this man receiving sight is not the most remarkable event in our text! Let us look closer at this portion of God's Word to learn some spiritual truths as we see the work of God revealed in the life of this man born blind. We will see the work of God revealed in this man's seeing, confessing, and worshiping. May the Holy Spirit strengthen our spiritual eye-sight through His word, that we may see Jesus our Savior more clearly with our eyes of faith.

SEEING

*“Isn’t this the one who sat and begged?” “Nah! Can’t be! That man was blind, this man can see!” “It is him! I recognize him! But how did this happen?”* You can imagine the confusion and excitement as the friends and neighbors gathered around this man born blind to find out what happened to him. Even his parents seemed dumbstruck by what had happened to their son. The man born blind has only a limited idea of how this had happened. ***“A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”*** He knew Jesus had given him his sight, but he didn’t know where Jesus now was. The last contact he had with Jesus was while he was still blind and Jesus told him to wash the clay off in the pool of Siloam.

This amazing event had to be brought to the attention of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were supposed to be the spiritually enlightened ones of the day. They begin their inquisition of this man born blind. They too wanted to know how this man was now able to see. The man born blind again repeated the events that had transpired in very simple, straight forward terms, ***“He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”***

The Pharisees were divided about Jesus doing this amazing thing. Some ignored that which was right before their eyes and said, ***“This Man (Jesus) is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.”*** Some were offended that Jesus had supposedly done work on the Sabbath by spitting on the ground, making clay, and applying it to this man’s eyes. Then He told this man to do unnecessary work by washing his eyes in the pool of Siloam. This was a violation of the rules they had added to God’s Word about the Sabbath. Others replied, ***“How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?”*** So they ask the man who was healed what he had to say about Jesus. ***“What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?”*** To which the man said, ***“He is a prophet.”***

But this was not enough. They thought this was all a hoax and that he wasn’t really born blind. So they called his parents to testify. His parents were afraid to tell what they really thought - that Jesus had healed their son who was born blind. They were afraid to say that because the Pharisees had already threatened to excommunicate from the synagogue anyone who confessed that Jesus was the Christ. So they told the Pharisees to ask their son themselves, he was old enough to answer for himself.

So again, they call the man born blind to testify. They continue to badger him with questions. One is not sure what they were hoping to get out of him. Were they hoping he would say Jesus was a horrible person and did not really heal him? Were they maybe hoping that he would say that Jesus called upon Beelzebub to heal him? We’re not sure. One thing is for sure, the ones who claimed to have spiritual sight, were blind to what was right before them and refused to accept what their eyes were seeing - the work of God revealed in this man.

Yet what do we find with the man born blind? Verses 30-33, ***“Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”*** Do you now see the truly remarkable event that unfolds in our text? While it is remarkable that Jesus was able to give this man born blind his physical eyesight back, the truly remarkable work of God that is revealed in him is the spiritual sight God gave this man. Though this man has not yet seen Jesus with his new eyesight, with his eyes of faith he clearly saw Jesus for who He was. ***“He is a***

**prophet. ...He is a worshiper of God and does His will. ...this Man is from God."** He saw Jesus as a Man sent from God and doing God's work.

We often wish we could have seen the miracles Jesus did. We wish we could have seen Jesus give sight to the blind! But the work of God revealed in this man born blind has also been revealed in you. God has given you the same spiritual sight He gave this man. You see Jesus as the Son of God, sent to be your Savior. You see Jesus as your Substitute who came to do the will of God in your place. You are no different than this man in our text. You were born spiritually blind, but have been given sight. Paul said in our New Testament lesson, **"You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord."** (Eph 5:8) Like this man, though you haven't seen Jesus with your physical eyes you have heard His voice and with your eyes of faith you see Him just as clearly as this man born blind. This is the work of God!

### CONFESSING AND WORSHIPING

It is striking to see how everyone seems to have abandoned this man born blind. His neighbors and those who had previously seen that he was blind, were very interested in how he was able to gain sight. But once they hear that Jesus had healed him, they bring him before the Pharisees and there he stands alone to explain himself. Then his parents are called before the inquisition. They are only willing to say that he was born blind, they don't want to stick out their necks and suggest that he was miraculously healed by Jesus. They too abandon him before the Pharisees, saying, **"He is of age; ask Him. He will speak for himself."** John explains that they said this because they were afraid of the Jews and afraid they might be excommunicated from the synagogue.

This too is quite remarkable, isn't it? We would think that everyone would be overjoyed and ecstatic about this amazing miracle that had taken place in their midst. We would expect that especially his parents would be giving glory to Jesus for healing their son! We would think the Jews and Pharisees would want to meet with Jesus and glorify God for the great thing He had done for this man. Yet this healing seems to be a matter of controversy and offense, more than a matter of joy. This shows us the sad spiritual condition of Israel at the time of Jesus. God was at work among them and, more than anything, they seem troubled by it.

But the fact that this man was abandoned by his neighbors and parents, makes the work of God in this man's life all the easier to see. We have already seen how the work of God was revealed in his life by his faith in Jesus. But faith in Jesus is never alone, is it. It is always accompanied by good works. We see the fruits of the work of God revealing themselves in this man's confession and worship of Jesus.

While his parents are afraid they will be kicked out of the synagogue, their son with his new eyes of faith does not hesitate to confess Christ publicly to the Pharisees. When they continue to badger him about how he was healed, the man born blind almost becomes a bit sarcastic with them. Verse 27, **"I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"** When the Pharisees reviled him and said that they follow Moses but not Jesus because they do not know where he is from, the man born blind continues to confess and defend his faith in Jesus. Verse 30, **"Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He has opened my eyes!"**

The work of God is revealed in this man as we see him confess and defend his faith in

Jesus. In the end he is excommunicated from the synagogue for confessing that Jesus was sent from God. While everyone else seems to treat this man like a pariah, Jesus does not. Upon hearing that he had been excommunicated, Jesus deliberately seeks out the man that had been born blind and said in verses 35-38, ***“Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.*** Here the work of God is revealed in the confession and worship by this man. He believed Jesus is his Lord and the Son of God and he bowed down and worshiped Jesus as his God. This is the work of God! This man didn't care how everyone else felt, he knew Jesus was his Savior.

Every time you confess your faith in Jesus, the same work of God is revealed in you! Paul writes to the Corinthians, ***“No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”*** (1 Cor 12:3) It was the Holy Spirit who was at work in the heart of this man born blind and led him to confess his faith in Jesus before the Pharisees and before Jesus. It is the same Holy Spirit that leads you to confess the same thing. After Peter gave his rock-solid confession about Jesus, Jesus said to him, ***“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”*** (Mt 16:17) Faith and confession are the work of God! It is the work of God when you tell your friends, your neighbors, your relatives that you believe Jesus is the Son of God, sent from heaven to take away all your sins, and give you the gift of eternal life. It is the work of God revealed in you when you stand here in church and publicly confess your faith in Jesus by one of our creeds. This is the work of God revealed in you when you confess that you see Jesus as your Lord and your God!

And we cannot but join this man born blind in worshiping Jesus as our God. We cannot help but worship Jesus who gave His life for us to save us. The fact that you are here this morning, is revealing the work of God in you. We must sing to Him. We must praise Him. We must pray to Him. Believers have done this from the beginning. Abel offered sacrifices in worship to God. David wrote countless psalms of worship to his Savior God. Daniel would go to his room three times a day to pray to God. The man born blind bowed down and worshiped Jesus as His Lord and Savior. This is the work of God revealed in us that we confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and worship Him as our God.

So what is the most remarkable event in our text? It is Jesus giving sight to those who do not see, but not in the way we first expected. We first thought it was remarkable to hear that a man born blind was able to see with his eyes. But as we looked deeper into our text we saw that the work of God revealed in this man was the faith God created in His heart. Faith which saw Jesus his Savior. Faith which freely confessed itself in Jesus. And faith which worshiped Jesus as Lord and God. And this is the very reason why God caused this man to be born blind in order to reveal the work of God in him. We praise God that He has worked in us as well. That we who were born spiritual blind have been given the sight to see Jesus as our Savior from sin, confess Him to one another and throughout the world, and worship Him as our Lord and God. May the Holy Spirit ever give us 20/20 vision for our eyes of faith, that we may always be looking ***unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*** (Heb 12:12) Praise be to God for this amazing work which He has begun in us! Amen.