

March 26, 2017
Fourth Sunday in Lent

“Blindly Seeking Jesus”

John 9:1-41

There are a whole lot of people saying “We see,” these days, and a lot of it seems pretty ridiculous. Most recently, learned and open minded people have been saying, “We see that humankind falls into a many-faceted and diverse range of genders.” Apparently, they don’t know the simple and obvious difference between a man and a woman. Politicians just love to say “We see how to fix this problem!” Yet often they don’t know it wasn’t a big problem to begin with, they weren’t needed to fix it and that things became exponentially worse because of their taxing, regulating, and bureaucratization of whatever it is.

The worst example though is people claiming to see great truths of life and the human condition, but they don’t know God. We’ve got social justice warriors running rampant for various causes, some important—some absurd, but most of it based on human reason; and often a human reason that is based on no foundation of objective truth, because there is a denial of such a thing as objective truth—everything’s relative. It’s funny and tragic, lots of “smart” people are saying “We see...but we can’t really know.”

You know. I hope you know. What do you know? And do you let people know what you know? (Uh oh. Evangelism sermon. Don’t you just hate those?) Well, this isn’t necessarily an evangelism sermon, but kind of sort of, yes.

In looking at John chapter 9, obviously, the main point is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, for only one of God can heal a man born blind and Jesus is clear that the very reason this guy is born blind in the first place is *“that the works of God might be displayed in him.”* But who sees this? Who knows this?

The Pharisees think they see, for they have the Law of Moses and they think that’s the way to God. Yet they don’t really know when it comes to Jesus; there was a division among them. Who is the guy who really knows something? It’s the formerly blind guy! *“One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”*

This guy doesn’t yet know the full truth about Jesus. He thinks Jesus is some kind of prophet. But he most certainly is willing to share what he does know. And what he does know is so monumental, so life changing, that he is willing to share it even in the face of opposition. He even gets kind of audacious, sarcastically asking if these Pharisees wish to be Jesus’ disciples also! And he is not afraid to point out the silliness of their opposition to the truth: *“Why, this is an amazing 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 if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”*

We can learn a lot from this guy!

Do you know everything about heaven and hell, God and eternity, every lesson and aspect to Jesus’ teaching and parables and St. Paul’s run-on sentences in his thirteen epistles? No. But you know what you know. You know the creed. You know that God is your Creator. You know Jesus Christ redeemed you by the cross and empty tomb. You know the Holy Spirit has called you and keeps you in the faith that receives God’s gifts of forgiveness and salvation. You know what you know. Be bold about it! Be bold about it even in the face of opposition from the world.

Why? *“For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”*

Because you can! Because you know what you know and it is the truth—the truth that saves!

The world you live in today is swamped in a denial of the truth, even denial that there is any truth to be had. But you have that truth; Jesus Christ the Lord dead and risen for the forgiveness of sins. This truth isn't the answer to every question about God, but it is the truth that saves!

You not only *should* boldly walk in this truth—you *must* boldly walk in this truth! It's way too dangerous not to. A little before our epistle lesson today St. Paul writes, *“You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.”* Elsewhere Paul often writes against turning back to the legalism of the Jews. Basically, he is saying that it's extremely dangerous to be going through life living as if we don't know what God has made us to know—Jesus Christ!

You live in a world that in all sorts of ways is trying to tell you that sin isn't, God isn't, and therefore forgiveness isn't needed and the cross of Christ isn't necessary. They “see” things according to the flesh; humankind's desire to be god unto itself. If you are willing to go along to get along and act like you don't know what you know; what exactly is it you're acting like you don't know? Who is it you're acting like you don't know? Think about that.

Want some concrete examples? Evolution. No god, just a big bang, some amino acids and billions of years. But it's “science,” right? Don't want people to think you don't believe in science, so deny what you know, and act like there's no God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Success. It's a dog eat dog world out there and you've got to look out for number one, get ahead by hook or by crook and take no prisoners. That's the way to success, right? You can get on board with that, but you kind of have to deny what you know, that the Christ set the example of perfect love in humility and service to the needs of others; the Christ who calls you to bear your cross and follow Him.

The good life. Oh man, does the world love to tell you it sees what the good life is! Money! Sex! Celebrity and popularity! Good looks, good health, good times, good friends, good this, good that and good the other thing! Let's party! But you know the truth: “Taste and see that the Lord is good!” If you're going along to get along with the life the world calls good, inevitably the life to which you know you are called by the Holy Spirit is going to suffer.

Don't give up the truth for a lie. Can you imagine if this once-blind guy, under the pressure of the Pharisees and his community saying “we see,” if he denied what he knew to be true, squeezed his eyes shut never to be opened again and said, “Never mind, I'm still blind”? That's stupid. And that's you if you would give up what you know, what you're called to in Christ, in order to get along with the world.

Be this guy! Jesus has healed your blindness! The Holy Spirit by Word and Sacrament has made you to know the way of forgiveness and eternal life. You now see! Please, don't be seeking to blend in, be at peace with and know the way of the world. You know and are known by God as beloved child and friend. What can be better than that?

The world claims “We see” how things are...apart from Christ, apart from the truth which is Christ. Jesus' words are still true, *“But now that you say ‘we see’ your guilt remains.”* That's the worldly wise who claim “We see! We see! We see!” but never know the truth; the God who sends His Son to take away the sin of the world. The tragic thing they never see, is that their guilt remains.

Live the truth you know: you were blind but now you see. You see Jesus crucified and risen and know that in, by and through Him, your guilt is no more before God. Be that truth to the world that they might stop with the "I see! I see! I see!" and instead want to know the truth; the Jesus who shines in you.

Amen.