**John 9:1-41 (ESV)**

**1** As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. **4** We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; 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** Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud **7** and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. **8** The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” **9** Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” **10** So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” **11** He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” **12** They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” **13** They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. **14**  Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. **15**  So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” **16** Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. **17** So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” **18**  The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” **20** His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. **21** But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” **22** (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) **23** Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” **24** So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” **25** He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” **26** They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” **27** He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” **28** And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. **29** We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” **30** The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. **31** 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. **32** Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. **33**  If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” **34** They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. **35** Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” **36** He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” **37** Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” **38** He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” **40** Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” **41** Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

**“Behold Light For The Blind”**

 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Galatians 1:3-5). During Lent, we have been studying the “Great Deceiver” after mid-week worship. There is much deceiving by the devil in our Gospel reading from St. John. We see it with the disciples raising questions over a man born blind. We see it with the Pharisees questioning the blind man who could now see. We see it with the blind man looking at nothing good until the only freeing question was asked to him by Jesus. Deception is evidence of the darkness. We dare not deny the light of good news God gives saves.

 Yet, this is exactly what the Pharisees did time and again. It was never about faith, but always seeking to faceoff with Jesus. They despised His continual patience, bearing with them, wanting to love them. This event of the blind man happened just after those at the temple picked up stones to throw at Jesus. They could not stand what shined on them in their darkness to hear, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). But typical in mission work, where there are those who reject what God gives by the Gospel. There are others, or at least someone like in today’s text not too far outside the temple who God knows would gladly receive Him. The darkness is dark, but Christ leaves no question that HE is our light.

 Of course, the blind man from birth never saw a ray of sunlight. He could feel the heat, but not the brightness of the day. In the same way, the disciples were unable to see his situation for what it was. They felt the pain of physical blindness, but saw it as some kind of sin. There had to be a reason for the suffering, a way to explain such darkness. Jesus’ spoke the truth, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” In other words, God’s purpose was at work and Jesus alone saw the good for He was the Son of the Father. This served as an opportunity for glory in the Gospel and the good of that man. Not much glory came from spit and mud, but the blind man did not seem to take offense at what He could not see. Instead, he only heard Jesus and believed His Word, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.”

 Christ lets us hear His voice in the darkness of suffering. If we want to follow the common motto, “Everything happens for a reason.” We go the same way as the disciples into darkness. Trying to make sense of our all suffering or that of others can be very dangerous. Rather than looking at the blows of life, there is good but it only comes from Jesus. As an early church Father puts it, “One blow falls on the sinner for punishment only, not conversion. Another occurs for correction; still another happens not in order to correct past sins but for the prevention of future sins. Another blow happens neither for correcting past nor preventing future sins. Rather, the unexpected deliverance following the blow serves to excite a love more focused on the Savior’s goodness” (ACC). The cause of suffering in all shapes and sizes is hard to see and even harder to explain. Yet, like the blind man, baptism tells sinners to hear and believe the good news of the love that the Father has given us in His Son.

 If miracles are always supposed to be so grand and glorious, the former blind might have disagreed. What he saw was a world of darkness that fell upon him with questions coming at every angle. The light of love given by Jesus’s Word did not look so good from what He saw. First, the questions came from neighbors and friends. Then, this beggar of a man stood before the glorious self-made lives of the Pharisees. Then, his family took that step away abandoning him for their own protection. At last, he met the raging fear of the Pharisees against the One who healed him faithfully by His Word. Being twisted and pulled from one place to another, dealing with this person then that person, the blind man saw plenty of darkness. Rather than trying to explain it, he proclaimed the truth of what he knew to be a fact, “I once was blind, but now I see.” He even went so far to say, “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (John 9:33).

 Christ allows us to see darkness for what is in the world. The sad fact is the darkness may not seem so bad at first. A few questions here, a few question there. It comes with the gray way of the Pharisees. Looks good, but is empty inside. Where neither right or wrong, Law or Gospel, truth or error are meaningful only what I want to make it. “To this day, unbelievers beg the question about Jesus and challenge us to follow them in their unbelief…”(143). It is not going to get easier for the baptized like the blind man that was blessed to see. Christian marriages are suffering greatly. Confessing the faith appears half-hearted in churches. Living a godly life never looks the way we picture it. The darkness is more than threatening, but seeks to take away the light of Jesus. St. Paul tells the suffering Church, “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.” The Gospel is the call of repentance and faith that alone saves in Jesus, alone gives Jesus, alone rests for any on Jesus.

 The blind man could see, but loneliness and rejection left him without much to see. He might have longed for blindness rather than feel of such a barren life. Yet, this suffering too was still part of the promise he heard, “that the works of God might be displayed in him.” This man did nothing when Jesus came to him when he was blind. He would do nothing again when blinded by the darkness for St. John wrote, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” The man already had faced plenty of questions, but this time it came from Jesus. This question was actually the cure. Jesus never separates the miracles for the body as if they did not speak greater salvation for the soul. God was casting out all doubt and fear. His Word gave faith in Him as the true Savior. Once the eye aligned with what the ear heard. The man made the good confession and faithful worship fell down before Jesus.

 Christ seeks to remove the darkness for us only to see and hear Him. This is what Jesus does for, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” This is what He proves by His suffering and death. God was not blind to His way of the cross. Jesus faced the accusing questions, “If you are the Son of God come down from the cross!” He met the fullness of rejection from His Father and what came from sinners. He hung in deep darkness knowing no light or love. This is who we hear forgive while bearing our sufferings before the Word that saves. Who we look to see as the life lifted up for all on Good Friday. Who comes pouring out His glory of salvation as Savior at the Lord’s Supper. His victory over the darkness and resurrection from the dead is for the blind to see this promise of God. “And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them.” Those who see so well by their wisdom, love, or truth will be left blind. God is in the cross so faith always abounds and comes from Him. The darkness is dark, but Christ leaves no question that HE is our light. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.