

## Walk in the Light

- [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)
- [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)
- [John 9:1-41](#)
- [Psalm 23](#)

I love the readings this Lent. They are all wonderful conversations. Two weeks ago Nicodemus came for a conversation about being born again, then last week the Samaritan woman was offered springs of eternal water and realized she was talking to the Messiah. This week's story of the blind man, his neighbors, parents and the authorities is almost like an Abbott and Costello sketch.

We are reading from John's gospel, and John chose what he put into it as carefully as any novelist. Each of these stories is intended to tell us more about who Jesus is, about the spiritual life and about how people respond. He set the stage in the prologue and each of these stories amplifies something that he said there. Let's refresh our memories once more. The prologue says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

At the beginning of today's reading, Jesus says, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John has returned to his theme of the light coming into the world and the world not recognizing it. The unnamed blind man was living in the dark but Jesus opened his eyes so that for the first time he could see. His blindness was no-one's fault but was an opportunity for God's grace to be demonstrated. Jesus brought him light.

The darkness of blindness cannot obscure the light. "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people."

Futurist Peter Russell has written a fascinating little book called "From Science to God." In it he compares the unusual properties of light with those of consciousness. He describes our consciousness as being like a flashlight – when we shine it on something we see it. We can only know what we see in the light of our consciousness, everything else is obscured. I think we can safely assume that John is speaking in this story of the blind man far more about human consciousness than he is about physical blindness.

We may all see the same thing but the way we look at it varies – our interpretation of what we see is based on many things such as past experience, attitudes, beliefs and fear. John writes, "The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who

used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”

Some people saw the newly sighted man and said it must be someone who looks like him because they, understandably, could not understand how this man who had never seen was now able to see. Others were apparently able to accept it more quickly.

In the first reading from 1 Samuel we were reminded that God sees things differently from us. Samuel was told. “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him [as king]; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

So Jesus came to bring us the light of God so that we might see not in a benighted human way but with God-consciousness. And that light is also life. So our life is sustained and springs up in the upwelling of eternal life when we are able to see with God’s eyes, when we see through the light not of human consciousness but of the God of forgiveness and unconditional love – and of limitlessness, outside of time and space.

I wonder how God looks on our situation today?

From a human perspective things are pretty grim. All over the world, people are getting sick and many are dying. The economy is tanking and many are without income, including members of our own parish. We cannot easily travel to be with those we love. And the light on the horizon is a bit wavery, because no-one knows whether we will develop substantial immunity to this coronavirus as we have to others, or when a treatment will be found, let alone an inoculation.

But from God’s perspective, well I wonder. God is no Pollyanna. She does not wear rose tinted spectacles. I am sure that God grieves with us the loss of income, stability, health, friends and family. I am sure that God is right beside us in the lonely and difficult times just as he is in the good times. As the psalm says, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

But our God surely sees our lives in a different way than we do. Since life continues beyond the grave, I am sure that God sees these difficulties as momentary rather than monumental. It is difficult for us humans to have long-term vision, which is one of the reasons it can be difficult to take this pandemic seriously enough or alternatively we can allow it to overwhelm us. Just like giving up smoking or other drugs – you know it’s the right thing to do but in the moment, just one more can’t hurt. We are so tied to the immediate moment. Will I have enough today and in the next weeks? quickly takes priority over care for those around us and over restraint in the paper goods section of the store. The daily bad news stops us seeing that things will be better though different in the future.

God takes the long view. God knows that, whatever happens, God's grace will abound. As Jesus said, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him." The whole of this creation was born so that God's works might be revealed. You and I were born so that God's works might be revealed. That's how precious we are. We are, each one, God's creation, held in God's grace and love.

When we look at one another with the eyes of God we see that each one of us is beloved, each one of us is beautiful, each one of us is walking around shining like the sun. When we look at the pandemic through the eyes of God we see that there is suffering, there is fear, there is panic but we also see opportunity for God's grace and love to be made manifest. We also see opportunities for the light to shine in the hearts and minds of God's people so that we may be a transforming power in the world.

There will be an after – there will be a day when this pandemic is in the history books, just like the 1918 Spanish flu. What we are building now is what that 'after' will look like. The light has come into the world, let us pray that our eyes will be opened so that we too can see with God's eyes, so that the light of our consciousness becomes the light of God's consciousness, as we become more and more the Christ-like beings we were created to be.

Let us live this week, let us live this life "as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true."