

Sermon John 9 1 41 4th S in Lent

Sermon: 4th Sunday in Lent

Text: John 9:1-7,13-17,34-41: Jesus heals a man born blind (v.v.1,2)

Theme: Who sinned? Who is guilty?

Goal: To recognize that we all are sinners (blind) and that by Jesus' grace only we receive forgiveness (sight)

Dear Friends,

Introduction: The question the disciples raised about the blind born man is a very common question among us as well. We are always looking for a reason why something happens to us or to somebody. Cause and consequence is a natural law. If I throw something up, it will fall down. And so we try to explain everything that happens according to this physical rule. If someone is ill, he must have done something bad to suffer that sickness...

In some cases this is the truth: If one is a drunkard and suffers from liver disease, it is the consequence of his drunkenness. If someone smokes and he becomes sick in his lung, this is the consequence of the smoking. If someone lives a promiscuous life and becomes a HIV/AIDS infected, this is a consequence. If someone overspeeds with his car and suffers an accident, what should we think? ...

But this is not a rule in every case; and we know it as well. Jesus gives another explanation to the question raised by the disciples: “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

I – Sin is in the root of all illnesses and problems in the world

Anyway, sin is in the root of all illnesses and problems in the world. Of course, we cannot relate any specific sin to a specific problem or tragedy. What about the tsunami in Japan? Have they committed more sins than other countries, so they deserved a tsunami? NO! We cannot

say this!

Two tragedies happened in Jerusalem during Jesus' time(Luke 13:1-5): A tower fell on 18 people, killing them; and the governor Pilate killed some Galileans while they were offering their sacrifices. When Jesus was questioned about these, He answered: “Do you think that (these people) were worse sinners than all the others? That they were more guilty than all the others? NO! I tell you. But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Illnesses and tragedies are signs that our life is short and can come to an end in one second! As all of us are sinners, the way Jesus proposes to avoid eternal condemnation is repentance and faith in Him as the forgiver and Savior. Jesus didn't come to the earth just to give us a good example of life, but He came to pay for our sins and to reconcile us with God, His Father. The Lent Season is a specific time to think about this, how much it cost to Jesus to give us eternal life.

The blind born man and his parents were sinners. But his sickness was not a result of a specific sin of one of them. Jesus said: “This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”

II – Jesus removes sin and guilt

The healing of that blind born man caused a big discussion among the church leaders. They called him, they called his parents, they discussed among themselves what had happened. If they accepted the miracle, they had to accept that Jesus was the promised Messiah; because giving sight to the blind was one of the signs of the Messiah. But they wouldn't recognize it!

Jesus condemned them and called them as “spiritual blind people”, because they had eyes but they didn't see. Spiritual blindness is worse than physical blindness.

On the other hand, Jesus gave further support to the healed blind man to strengthen his faith. After the man was expelled from the synagogue by the Pharisees, Jesus looked for him and introduced Himself to him.

“Jesus wanted to finish the work which He had begun in him. He wanted to confirm his faith and provide him the needed knowledge. He asks him the all important question: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” Son of Man was the term Jesus used of Himself, a term taken from Daniel 7:13. When the man asked “Who is He?” he wanted further instruction. Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of Man. The man confessed his faith and worshiped Him. He now knew His Savior and acknowledged Him as the Messiah. He now saw Christ in the light of the Old Testament prophecies. The blind man has come out of his spiritual blindness as well. He saw in Jesus His Savior and recognized in Him the Messiah. This contrasts with the stubborn blindness of the Jews. Thus God displayed His glory in this man.” (LCMS p. 60).

It's worthy to hear these dialogues in the Gospel again: “Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” - “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” - Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” - Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.”

Jesus always comes to save the humble and weak. He looked for the blind man; He looks for us. He introduces Himself in the Bible and He opens our eyes to see Him and to believe in Him. We are not able to do it by ourselves. Martin Luther explains it in a very clear way in the explanation of the Third Article of the Creed: *“I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers together, enlightens and makes holy the whole Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus in the one, true faith. In this Christian Church, He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day, He will raise me and all the dead from the*

grave. He will give eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. Yes, this is true!”

III – The new life

God displays His glory in us as well. As children of God, we shine God's light through our lives into the world, “that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:16).

Paul wrote to the Ephesians 5:8-10: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.”

“The worse blind is the one who doesn't want to see” says a proverb. The biggest sin is not adultery or corruption; there is forgiveness for these sins when repentance and faith follows. The biggest sin is to not believe, the spiritual blindness. If someone doesn't want to be healed by Christ, how can he see? If someone likes to be in darkness, how can he hope for the eternal light? As he lives in darkness, he will die in darkness. This was the case of the Pharisees, in spite of their knowledge of the Bible. They rejected Jesus and His love.

Let us look always to the mercy of our Lord Jesus and see how He calls us from spiritual blindness to light, to follow Him in all our lives until He takes us to the throne of His and our Father. Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle
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