

Is there anything worse than being blind, blind even from birth? Our text gives us the answer. Yes there is. Being blind but not knowing that you are blind. Refusing even to accept the fact that you are blind.

The blind man used to sit as a beggar we're told. He did not pretend that he wasn't blind. He accepted it as truth. Had he not, he would have only been deceiving himself. Had he refused to believe the fact that he was blind, he would have had bruises all over his body from bumping into things. He surely would have had a number of broken bones from tripping over everything. And there's a good chance he would have been killed, perhaps by falling into a well or over a cliff. How unfortunate to be blind. But how much worse to think you can see when you can't.

This does not describe the blind man in our text, but it does describe the Pharisees. They were blind. How sad. Yet even worse, so much worse for them, is that they refused to believe they were blind.

Oh, they could see with their eyes. They avoided bumping into things. They didn't trip over everything. They could even see Jesus, whereas the blind man could not. But the Pharisees refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ. And even more, they refused to believe the fact that they were sinners in need of help; in need of a Savior to deliver them from their sins.

How many times didn't Jesus spit into their eyes, and with mud, by calling them to repentance? Yet they always refused. They suffered from a blindness far worse than that of the blind man.

We know people like that. People who refuse to believe they are blind. They can see with their eyes. They don't bump into things. They can even see Jesus. They see the church building where He is preached into the ears of sinners. But they have no use for Him, no use for His church. They're on the road to heaven, just ask them. Oh, it's not the road that Jesus walks. But at this time in their life they are unteachable. Like the Pharisees in our text who refused to be taught, they are quite certain that they can see where they are going, and no one is going to convince them otherwise. What's especially sad is when they lead others on that same road. The blind leading the blind, thinking they can see.

Now the Pharisees do not describe you, but you are described by the blind man in our text. He was blind from birth, and so were you. We, like all people, are born into this world spiritually blind. We can't see. We cannot see the grace of God in Christ Jesus. We cannot see our way to heaven. We are born in utter darkness. The darkness of sin and unbelief.

But this is why Jesus comes, He who is the Light of the world. He came to the blind man in our text because that man was a beggar. He knew he was blind. He knew he needed the help of others, because a blind man, by himself, will die.

That was our fate. But Jesus also came to us. Like the blind man, you were led to the pool of Siloam where, in that fountain, you were washed and cleansed, baptized into Jesus Christ, and He gave you sight.

Like the man in our text, you are no longer blind. Not only do you see Jesus and His church, as all people do. You see your need for Jesus. You see your sins and they trouble you. But you see in Jesus the help you need.

Jesus told the Pharisees in our text, *“If you were blind, you would have no guilt.”* And thus, in a very real sense, you must always be as that blind man, and in these two ways: you must remain a beggar all your life, and you must always be one who is led.

Never become like those in our text who were unteachable. Who thought that they did not have to beg, or be led, because they could see just fine.

When we think that our spiritual vision is twenty-twenty, we forget how much we need Jesus. Sin is blinding. It creates in us spiritual cataracts. And we sin daily. We need Jesus daily. We need His church where He delivers to us the forgiveness of our sins.

Today you are here as a beggar. You are here to be led. Led by Jesus to Siloam, to the fount of mercy, and to His table of grace. Today Jesus is here with forgiveness for you. He is here to remove your spiritual cataracts. To lead you out of the darkness of your sin into the light of His grace.

And so, do not be offended by the mud that He spits into your eyes. We need to hear where we have sinned. We need to repent. Because where the mud of the Law does its work, there the healing Gospel washes all sins away.

And this means you. Your sins are washed away because, for you, Jesus went to the cross to suffer and die. He closed His eyes in death to open your eyes to His love and mercy for you. There is no sin of yours that is not forgiven. All is washed away by Jesus' blood. There is no darkness for you, not anymore. Jesus is your Light now and forever. Amen.