

**John 9: 1-41**

Most of us would rank sight as our number one sense. It's good to be able to taste, touch, smell, and hear, and we'd hate to give any of them up. But seeing, for most people, is at the very top of the list.

When you can't see, your entire life is lived in darkness. We can handle darkness for awhile, as long as we know it's not permanent. We don't mind closing our eyes at night because we know we'll be opening them up again in the morning.

What about someone who has never been able to see? He doesn't know what he's missing, does he? To describe seeing to a man who never has, is impossible. It's like trying to describe what a banana tastes like to someone who has never eaten one. You have to experience it to understand it.

The man in our text was born blind. He heard his mother's voice, but he never saw her face. He could pet the family dog, but he never knew what it looked like. He never saw a sunset, a bird, a flower. He could hear birds sing; he could smell a flower's fragrance; he could feel sunshine on his face, but that's as far as it went. Until the day he met Jesus. He couldn't see Him either. He heard His voice. He felt the clay on his eyelids, and he understood the command to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And when he did, he could see. We can't imagine it. To go from nothing to everything. Total darkness to a world of light. Even when we wake up in the morning it's not shocking—we've seen it all before. But this man never had. Until the day he met Jesus.

Now stories like that should have a happy ending. Except that fairy tales are only found in children's books. Real life is very different. We live in a world of sin. This man was tossed out of the church. He was excommunicated, because he spoke well of Jesus who had healed him. It's a sad day when the church excommunicates a member for confessing Jesus Christ. What was their problem—those Pharisees? Their problem was that they were blind. Oh, their eyeballs were in fine shape. They could see trees, birds and people. They could even see Jesus. But they didn't believe in Him. That's why they were blind—spiritually blind.

Like most people today. They don't recognize Jesus Christ as the Savior from sin and damnation. I know someone who has read the Bible at least seven times, cover to cover. But he doesn't believe in Jesus. The man is blind. He can see the words on every page. But he can't see Jesus on any page.

Jesus came and found that man who had been cast out of the synagogue. "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He asked him. "Who is He?" the man said. Jesus said, it's Me..."the One who is speaking with you." "Lord, I believe," the man said, and worshiped Him.

Now that is a happy ending. The man who was blind; who was then able to see, was given something even greater than sight—faith in Christ; spiritual sight; seeing Jesus for who He is; the Promised Savior; the Almighty God who became Man for us and for our salvation.

Now do you know that the pool of Siloam (that's where that blind man washed to receive sight), that pool is right here in our midst? And that this story in John 9 took place again

this morning? Little Eva was born like all of us were, blind. Not physically, but spiritually. The Bible says we were born in sin; lost and condemned; unable to see God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

But as Jesus came to the blind man so He came to Eva. In the water of Baptism He gave her spiritual sight. The font is the pool of Siloam. It's where the scales of darkness fell from her eyes, for there Jesus washed all her sins away. And now Eva knows her Savior. God has given her faith to believe in Jesus.

You, too, have been washed in the pool of Siloam. You who were blind, now see. But like the Pharisees in our text who were angry that the man received his sight, so today there is someone who is angry that you can see.

Satan is furious that Jesus gave you spiritual sight, and he is "hell-bent" on taking it away. But he can't. The Pharisees could not make the man blind again. He had washed in the pool of Siloam; his sight had been given to him. Satan cannot take away your Baptism. He cannot undo the washing away of your sins that Christ performed there. But he can shield your eyes from seeing Jesus.

Is there a difference between a blind man driving a car, and a person with sight driving but whose eyes are looking down at a map? Neither one is watching the road. The one cannot. The other can, but is not. Both will end up in the ditch.

Satan cannot prevent your Baptism, but he can take your eyes off of it. He cannot prevent Jesus from dying for you, but he can turn your eyes away from His body and blood for you in the Holy Supper. He can turn your eyes away from Christ's words of forgiveness.

It's not that Satan doesn't want you to see; he doesn't want you to see Jesus. And so as the weekend approaches, he reminds you how busy you are so that you won't come here to God's House and see Christ in His Word and Sacrament. As each day begins he shows you how much you need to do, and as each day ends he reminds you that you need to rest your eyes, so that day after day your Bible and catechism remain closed, so you do not see Jesus.

But let me ask you this... what's the difference between someone who cannot see Jesus, and someone who can but will not see Jesus? There is none. For faith looks to Christ and Him alone. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith."

And how do we do that? Jesus tells us. "For judgment I have come into this world, so that those who are blind will see." For judgment Christ came. Not to judge you, but to be judged for you. To be judged in your place. To take your judgment upon Himself.

How could Jesus give sight to that blind man? Because He took his place in the darkness so that the blind man could live in the light. Jesus is the Light of the world. And when He went to the cross, He experienced darkness. Total darkness. Our darkness. The darkness of our sin, of our judgment. For six hours His world was dark. "My God," He cried, "why have you forsaken Me!" Jesus became blind for us. He could not see His Father's love, for the Father had forsaken Him.

On the cross Jesus was lost and condemned. On the cross He became sin; He was judged guilty by His Father. He who is the Light of the world entered our darkness to bring us into the light. He became blind so that we may see. Like a blind man stumbling about in the darkness, crying for his father, so that you and I can see the Father's love shining upon us from the face of Christ.

Satan always tries to prevent you from seeing Christ. His hands always try to shield your eyes from Christ's Word and Sacraments. But Satan's hands were not wounded for you. His hands do not have the marks of the nails in them. Satan is not your master, Christ is. It is Christ who died for you. It is Christ who forgives you; who loves you.

Satan's domain is the darkness, but you belong to the Light. In Baptism God has made you children of Light. That's why you flee from Satan. When his hands cover your eyes, remember who you are—one to whom Jesus has given spiritual sight. Satan cannot rule over you. He has been defeated by your Master.

Jesus knows that Satan's hands are dark. That's why He keeps leading you here to the place where His grace can be clearly seen. He leads you to His Table for you to see, taste, and eat His flesh and blood for you. He shows you His Father's mercy in the words His servant speaks—words of pardon, so that you see, beyond any doubt, that you are God's forgiven child.

He leads you here to His House of grace because He is leading you to heaven. For when the day comes when your eyes close in death, your Savior you will see. He opens your eyes, in faith, to see Him now, so that when we leave this world of sin we will gaze upon Him in heaven's glorious light.

And so you who are God's children of Light, "come, fix your eyes upon Jesus." Amen.