

March 22, 2020

John 9:1-17, 34-41, “For judgment I came into the world: that those who do not see, may see; and those who see, become blind.”

*Jesus wants us to believe in Him. To see Him more clearly in faith as He brings light. But our natural opposition blurs and blinds us to Him and His work for us and in us. Still He cares for us body and soul. So He comes in His Sacraments and His Holy Word to give us sight.*

Rabbi, *Who* sinned? **All** have sinned. Why the blindness? So ‘the works of God would be displayed.’ Jesus has compassion for soul AND body. Thus, in a distant echo of Day 6 of creation, God gives a one-time Sacrament. ‘This is not plain mud, but the mud included in God’s command and combined with God’s Word.’ Jesus removes sin and restores physical creation.

Do you know what **karma** is? You do good, good will come back to you. You do bad, bad will come back to you. Someone does good for you, and you are expected to do good to return karma. Likewise, bad. This is the religion of the Old Adam. It’s how much of the world operates. It is how the Pharisees operated; and how the disciples thought. It’s how ALL religions of the fallen creation operate. Except genuine Christianity. Churches like ours do not teach it. We teach salvation is a no-strings-attached gift God gives because HE is good. By grace we’re saved: grace free and boundless. God doesn’t believe in karma.

As you heard in John 9, you noticed the Jewish leaders *thought* they could see. Jesus did not keep THEIR rules of Sabbath, so they could *not* see He was from God.

When the **man** born blind suddenly could see, the **Pharisees** *refused* to see Jesus as the *hand* of God, much less He is the **Christ** of God (v.17-26). They believed in a god of paybacks. Not like the God - Jesus.

When they could no ignore the facts, they attacked the messenger (v.28-34) and threw him out. Jesus said (41) their guilt remains. They were deliberately and intentionally spiritually blind to God-in-the-flesh salvation. Though their physical eyes could see, they were blind.

It happens today, too. People deny the Intelligent Design of the creation (Heb. 3) as it stares at them. Their conscience **denies** the supernatural and tries to prove errors by overlooking facts or making things up. Still others embrace the super-natural so long as Jesus is not involved, falsely declaring all religions are equal. They are blind.

What is more sad is when those calling themselves Christians live in darkness and do not even ‘try to *discern* what is pleasing to the Lord’ as Paul laments in Ephesians 5 today. For example: those “*having the appearance of godliness but denying its power*” (2 Tim 3:5), by their rejecting God’s gift of Holy Baptism for infants, or the mentally handicapped. Or by refusing to receive Christ’s forgiveness offered to us in Holy Communion.

Or, living in an unrepentant sin like the Samaritan woman. Or, less obvious and just as bad, tearing others down (10C #7) in politics or business, never studying God’s Word (#3) because it seems a bother, or not helping others in their needs (#5).

When any person denies Christ and His cross by what they believe, or say, or do or don’t do: they are willfully and spiritually blind. And when you refuse to see that you do these things in daily life, you are just as blind. Jesus came to confront ALL blindness, *even yours*. When you choose to live by your own feelings and rules, you are blind to God’s love, and you are in danger of His condemnation to hell.

Christ says, “for judgment I came into the world: that those who do not see may see, and those who see become blind.”

Are you someone who says they see, but remain blind to your sin and constant need of salvation? Our Old Adam, our original nature, is blind to Christ and the things of God as 1st Cor. 2:14 records. Original Sin never leaves. It always causes problems (Romans 7:24).

This is why God’s Holy Law, not our laws of karma - paybacks, must be preached. Unless God gives us His Spirit to believe, we will quickly slip back into spiritual blindness.

As Jesus healed the man born blind, He explained (v.3) not every problem is a consequence of a specific sin. Not every person gets cancer, cardiac arrest, or COVID-19 as a consequence of a specific sin. We live in a fallen world. Because of sin, both Original and Actual, there are problems. But they can be times of faith for the glory of God.

So Jesus came into the world to ‘work the works of Him Who sent Him.’ Namely, Jesus did not come to be just a great Man from God, or a prophet. He came to do the work of salvation; to live a perfect life as our Substitute, then suffer and die for all our sins on Calvary. He came to be our **Beautiful Savior**.

The Good News of Christ’s work for us IS the Gospel. The words of the Gospel have power to change people. The Gospel makes us spiritually alive and opens our eyes so we can say “I believe” (v.38) and act by faith in daily life (v.7). Christ is our Cornerstone!

But even the clear light of the Gospel can be blurred by our reason (v.24) when we have trouble believing God can do all things. Persecution works to make us doubt God’s work and love and turn from Him in times of troubles; like the man’s parents (v.22). Or Satan can persecute you with COVID-19 by

saying you don’t have *enough* faith, or you brought it on yourself, or making you fearful of death. Philippians 1:21-23.

This is why not only God’s Law must be preached so we can keep realizing our natural darkness and blindness, BUT also the cross of Christ must boldly be continually proclaimed to us again and again. “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved, *the Gospel* is the power of God to salvation.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

There is no place in the universe that God’s love can be seen more clearly than on Jesus’ cross. There we see what we deserve for our rebellions against God, AND there we see the debt of our mutiny paid-for-in-full. There we see God’s hatred against sin and the complete impossibility of our repaying God. There we see God’s purest love and the perfect payback laid on God in the Flesh for all our sins.

Only God can give us spiritual sight. Only He can sharpen spiritual sight by the power of His holy Word and perfect pardon in, with, and under bread and wine.

I have no doubt that the man born blind experienced a very different life once Jesus gave him sight. God has opened your eyes spiritually so you, too, will live a new life. (Ephesians 2:10).

In the joy of His salvation, we reach out to the spiritually blind around us. **You** can tell them about Christ dying for their sins with your own lips. And you can support the mission of St. Johns with your generous offerings and daily prayers.

On this Occuli Sunday ‘let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith’ (Gradual), so our lives will shine for Him, and our living will be overflowing with acts of praise to God. In the Name of Jesus.