

2008, 3-2 See the Savior John 9v1-41 (Lent 3)

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine, they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson, look up and tell me what you see."

Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." "What does that tell you?" Watson pondered for a minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo.

Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant.

Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Why, what does it tell you?" Holmes said, "Watson you idiot, someone has stolen our tent." Sometimes we are blind to what is going on right in front of our face, and in a spiritual sense, we can be blind to what God is doing for us.

A number of characters are blind in this story of the blind man. First, the disciples were blind to God's working, judging that the parents or the man had sinned. They did not consider a third or fourth option of why the man was blind. There theological minds were limited in this situation. Jesus quickly heals their blindness.

Second, the man's neighbors and the people who had seen him were doubtful it that was really the man. They assumed it was just someone who looked like him. They didn't even believe the man himself when he told them, I am the man. Finally, it seems that things are cleared up. They too see the truth in the matter.

Then the man's parents were afraid of the Pharisees so they avoided talking about what really happened. They were blind with fear so they were not able to claim having

faith in Jesus. They may have seen the truth about Jesus, but their fears limited their sight of exploring who Jesus was. Who knows whether they were healed of their blindness.

The parents fears bring the motives of the Pharisees to light. The Pharisees had already been casting people out of the synagogues if anyone was claiming Jesus was the Christ. This blindness of the Pharisees, was the worst of its kind. Jesus words ring true for them, "They knew not what they were doing." The Pharisees ultimately show their blindness by just asking the sarcastic question, "Are we blind too?"

Turn with me to the epistle 1 John, chapter 1 and verse 8. St. John again writes on spiritual blindness here. Verse 8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

So often we are blind to our own sin. We don't step outside ourselves and see the harm that we are causing others by our sin. Don't fight the reality that you are a sinner. And don't fight the reality that you need a Savior.

The Pharisees seemed to have everything together like good church goers. But they lacked one thing, faith in Jesus. I Corinthians 13 verse 1, "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have

love, I gain nothing." No matter who you are, no matter your theological training, no matter your years of experience at being a religious person, everyone is blind.

Ironically, even the man who was healed from blindness was still blind. He knew he was a sinner and that he had been healed. But he did not see who Jesus was. The man thought Jesus was a prophet. He is so blind to the Savior who healed him and stands right in front of his eyes.

Then Jesus, with just a few words, told him he was the Savior. That is the saving Gospel message we all need to see.

We can learn lessons from all these characters about how not to be blind. But the fact is we cannot see without Jesus. He is the one with the incredible power to change our dark souls. He healed us from our sin. He healed us by his word which says, "I am the Savior of whom you are looking for." He said it with the Samaritan woman at the well and now he says it again with this blind man. This man hears and believes.

How can one believe if he has not heard? That answer is he can't. We can't believe unless we hear. Unless we acquire it from God himself in his Word, we can neither hear nor see it. God described in his Word what healing is, it is the forgiveness of sins purchased with Christ life on the cross. That was the word we need open our ears, and our eyes, and our hearts for today.

God's Word does open up our eyes to change. Wycliff Bible translators Bob and Jan Smurtherman were assigned to the Macuna people of southeast Colombia, South America. Progress was going well in putting the Bible into the Macuna language. The chief's son was engaged as the language helper. Each portion of the Scripture had to be checked and double-checked for meaning and clarity.

After five years of labor, the Gospel of John was being finalized for publication.

Gathered together to hear the Word of God, the tribe sat patiently.

Beginning at John 9:1, the son read about Jesus' encounter with the man born blind.

When he got to the verse where Jesus says that this man was born blind "in order that the works of God might be put on display," the old chief stood to his feet. Requiring silence by his uplifted right hand, he said, "We must stop killing our babies."

To a people steeped in animism, the normal process was to take their deformed babies to a desolate place and leave them for dead.

God's Word helps us see our sin and change our sinful ways like it did for the Macuna chief. Maybe we have been doing something our whole lives that has been destroying others and ourselves. But God can help us face our sin and move on from hear, claiming Jesus as our Savior. He helps us see.

The Macuna Chief and has something in common with us. He saw that Jesus was his Savior years ago. But there are people out there that do not see the truth about Jesus. Maybe there are some that you have been blind to recognize need a Savior.

A month from now is Easter. What better time than now, the present, to introduce someone to Jesus Christ? He can open their eyes, so that they could see the grace of God, just like you can right now. Jesus can make that happen. And the time to do that, Jesus says, is right now – don't procrastinate. As long as it is day, as long as the world is still existing – now is the time to share your Savior with others. Night is coming, when the opportunity to do that will be over. All it takes is one visit with the light of the world, and someone's eyes could be opened, just as was the case for that blind man. "Keep your eyes open" for those whose eyes haven't been opened yet. Amen.

