

Sermon for the Sunday of the Blind Man

John 9.1-38

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit—Amen!

Christ is risen!

Today we hear this gospel about the man born blind. During the season after Pascha—these 40 days after Pascha—which comes to an end this week. We are hearing from the Gospel of John. And we hear these Gospels that are appointed by the Church in order to take us further into the mystery of the resurrection of our Lord and what that has been done for us.

There are seven “signs” in the Gospel of John and today we about the sixth of the seven. These seven signs line up the seven days of creation.

On the sixth day of creation, God created man.

He took the dust of the earth, He breathed into the dust, and man became a living soul. This is what the Scriptures tell us (Gen 2.7).

And we see the same thing here today. This man has no eyes. The Father tells us that this man has no eyeballs.

And, the Lord comes to him, he takes dust, and he spits in the dust and makes clay, and he puts that in the man’s eye sockets, and he tells him to go and wash.

He goes and washes, and he comes back and sees, and then the rest of the story about the back and forth with the Pharisees, and how they, are incredulous. They can’t believe that this has happened and they don’t want to admit who Jesus is because they are so consumed with their own envy and anger and fear—these things that keep us from having a life with Christ.

And so, this gospel is partly about God giving us new life, creating us anew after the resurrection, after our Lord has defeated death, we now have the opportunity to live a new life—we have the opportunity to live a new life with our Lord—and to leave the old life behind. . .

We see this with the pharisees

They. . . and sometimes we—get so caught up in our own sin that we can have a foretaste of the experience of hell. What it's like to be in hell.

To always be angry. To always be envious. To always be judging and worrying about what other people are doing. This creates a turmoil in our hearts.

It's a fire that burns inside of you, and you can't let it go. Right? And you just ruminate, and you get angry.

Also, this gospel is about moving from darkness to light—about a life in Christ in what that takes

This man hasn't had an experience of what it's like to walk around with light, with eyes to see. And so there's a coming to light, a coming to knowledge which comes from Jesus Christ Himself who is the light of the world. Again, Scripture tells us this. Even our Lord says this Himself—I am the light of the world (Jn 8.12 and 9.5). This is an experience of moving from darkness to light—to encounter Christ.

Moving from non-being to being; that's a fancy way—a philosophical way—to say it. Moving from nothingness to being, to having life, right?

So, this man also is moving, is having this experience of going from death unto life, right? And so when our Lord tells the man to go to the wash, This is a clue to us of how we can receive this life.

We go to wash when we're baptized. We are washed in the waters of baptism. And this is a death with our Lord. This is the teaching of the church. This is the teaching of the holy scriptures. When we go into the water, we die with our Lord. We die the death that He died. Right? We die a death to this world, and now can have a new life. (Rom 6.1-13)

We can leave behind darkness, we can also leave behind bitterness, anger, envy, fear. And

we can have a new life with our Lord.

So how do we do that? How do we do that?

Well, first of all we have to be available

Our Lord comes to the man him and he seeks him.

So, first we just have to be available to listen to the Lord. Yes, we can call out to Him but we also have to listen. We have to listen. This comes through other people. Our parents, our friends, parishioners

Our Lord can come to us in any way. And He speaks to us. And we have to be willing and open to hear what He has to say to us. What is He telling us to do?

The second thing we have to do is, we have to do what he asks us to do. Right?

So we have to be willing to listen, and then we have to do what he asks us to do.

He tells us to go, wash.

It wasn't that the Lord couldn't heal the man without clay and spittle and water... no the Lord is testing his faith, testing his obedience. And sometimes that's what he's doing with us. Are we willing to do what he asks us to do? To follow him?

Are we willing to do the difficult things? Are we willing to follow the commandments and do these things that our Lord asks us to do? This man was... and the result is life—the life of our Lord.

And the third thing we need to do is worship.

When the Lord encounters this man again after he has been cast out of the temple the Lord says to Him... Do you believe the son of God? (Jn 9.35)

He says, Who is he that I may believe in him? (Jn 9.36)

And then the Lord says, I who speak to you am He (Jn 9.37) and he worships him. So then the third thing we need to do is to worship our Lord.

And yes, that starts with being here, in Church. That's, that's a huge part of this coming here to this Church.

To participate in the life of the Church and the worship of the Church.

We are washed, in a renewal of our baptism, by the words we hear in the services—the prayers, the scripture, the actions of crossing ourselves and communing with God and we are made clean through this washing and strengthened so that we can then go do the work of the Lord in the world through doing the commandments of Christ.

Doing the commandments is a kind of worship of God. Being kind to our neighbor, loving our enemies, doing these things that our Lord asks us to do, this is a worship of God. Reading the scriptures, saying our prayers at home, fasting, giving alms, all these things are ways that we stay connected to this life that the Church offers us.

This is the washing through worship that the Church offers us to cleanse us from our sins.

And it is difficult sometimes. It is. There's no way around that. This blind man's parents rejected him because they didn't want to be cast out of the temple like their son was.

He was rejected by his parents. And then the rulers, the Pharisees, they cast him out. So it's not an easy life to live this life in Christ.

The church never said it was easy. Our Lord never said it was easy, right? It's a difficult life. But we move from darkness to light, and we choose to do that work. And how does our Lord help us?

He gives us eyes to see. And these eyes to see. They are a prefigurement of the life that we have with Christ who is everlasting. To move from this world to the next world is what we are called to do. We all have that time to move from this life to the next life. And it is not easy but death is the door to the next life. It's not the end of life. It's the door to the next life.

We move from glory to glory, from darkness to light. This is what the scripture says. m

May we, through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, move from darkness to light. Amen.