

The gospels record at least seven instances of Jesus giving sight to the blind. This miracle was an act of God and a sign of the messianic age to come. Chapter 9 provides the only account in John’s Gospel of Jesus giving sight to a blind man. This sign declares Jesus to be Messiah and Lord, The one who has come as the son of the father into a world of darkness to be the light of the world.

This gift of sight in our gospel today has four unique features – FOUR INSIGHTS, if you will – that help us understand the events of our Gospel.

FIRST – the man was born blind from birth. He had never seen a day in his life. His parents and friends could and did testify to this fact.

SECOND – the disciples offered two Law-based reasons for His blindness. It must have been caused by sin – either this man’s sin or his parent’s sins.

THIRD – Jesus uses spittle and clay to give sight to the blind man. He didn’t just say, “Receive your sight,” but applied mud through a touch.

FOURTH – Jesus told the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam, which means “sent” as on a trip.

Let’s consider these **FOUR** insights and see how they relate to us.

Regarding the **FIRST** - all of us are spiritually blind from birth, in need of God’s forgiveness and light to give us sight. At conception we inherited original sin from our parents, going all the way back to Adam and Eve. The proof of this blindness is manifest in many ways. Who among us hasn’t at sometime question God and his actions? Why for instance does a person never have sight or have their sight taken from them later in life?

These are hard questions to which we don't always get answers. The fact that we ask them and don't have answers points out our spiritual blindness.

Regarding the **SECOND** insight - namely, the two law-based reasons for blindness - Jesus rejects both suggestions and says the blindness is an opportunity for the gospel to shine forth and God's work to be done while it is still day.

Jesus then gave a personal answer to evil, hardship and these questions in *v.3*: ***“Neither this man nor his parents sinned [that he was born blind], but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”*** It is imperative for us to put all crises in life into perspective. For us that means to see life's ills in view of the cross, with the shadow of the cross always falling on it. On the cross Jesus died for our sins. Therefore anything that we as Christians face is not a punishment for sin. Jesus did away with that on the cross. Certainly, when we willfully sin we must live with the consequences or results of our action. Yet for many other situations - like blindness - there is another answer, as Jesus said, ***“That the work of God might be displayed in his life.”***

I know a Lutheran pastor who is blind. He shared with me that he is now able to see his blindness as a blessing. He shared how he has had the privilege of reaching, touching and talking to many blind people and by God's grace, to help them see the hand of God in the middle of their darkness.

He went on to say jokingly, *“I can walk past the glass cookie jar full of cookies and not be tempted. I don't have to hassle with traffic. Nor am I in fear, for I am not aware when the near misses happen.”* He then said, *“I will not even get into clothing television magazines and other temptations that through sight lure and entice people to sin.”*

Our **THIRD** insight addresses the fact that Jesus used to spittle and clay to give sight. At first one might wonder why Jesus did this. To the blind person, it seems simple. Jesus was getting close to the blind man, touching him, talking to him, letting him know that Jesus words were for him. It then was a clear message to this blind man that the washing pointed to the washing away of a sin, spiritual blindness. Jesus gave the man both physical and spiritual sight, and he wanted him to know that in a way the blind man could understand. So Jesus used all the other senses to communicate this to him.

This blind pastor went on to share with me that when a blind person stands in a crowd or at a distance from someone who is talking, he or she cannot be sure that the words spoken are for him or her. Because of Jesus touch, his closeness, there was no doubt in the blind man's mind that Jesus was talking to him. Later, when Jesus sought after him, because the man had recalled Jesus sounds, touch, and even smell, he knew immediately that this was the man who had given him sight.

We are no different today are we? Each of us wants and needs the message of God's love in a way we can know and understand. I believe this is one reason why God establish the office of pastor, that you may hear from a living, breathing, touching, and touchable person the words of God. There is nothing special about me or any other person who fills this office – the benefit is simply the ability to relate to physical person.

Moreover, this is one of the blessings of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion - that through the sense of touch, smell, taste, and sight, as well as hearing – you may receive the message that Jesus loves you, forgives you, and washes away your sin by His death on the cross.

Finally, the **FOURTH** insight: Jesus told the man to wash in the pool of Siloam, which means "*sent.*" John frequently describes Jesus as the one sent by the Father. In the same way - after washing us clean - after

opening our eyes - after restoring us from spiritual blindness - Jesus sends us to tell others of His love and grace that they, too, might see and be made clean.

How does this event bring about belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God? Faith is a GIFT - the result of Jesus miraculous giving of something we did not have. In our text, the gift of sight comes about because of the giver, Jesus, who was sent by the Father for this purpose.

Jesus is sent for us also with a gift. He saves us from the darkness of sin, death, and the devil by bringing us into the light of forgiveness and life. Those who see Him through the eyes of faith confess Him with their lips and lives, but those who oppose Him like the Pharisees, are blinded further, leading to judgment. Sadly, this was the case with the Pharisees.

Though we were blind, God sees! He saw our sin and knew its consequences - eternal death and separation from Him in the outer darkness. God sees! He sent his son, Jesus, true man, the Christ, the light of the world, into this world of darkness and blindness, to bring life, light, and sight. God sees! Humanity's blind sin saw Jesus led to the cross. In Good Friday's darkness He paid the price for all.

God sees! The sun's dawn on Easter sees the shining angels announce that Jesus is alive and victorious over the darkness. Light and life are His and ours. The risen Christ cures spiritual blindness through his anointing, and his words bring a sight and light. Our spiritual sight restored, we do exactly what the blind man did in our text - We worship the Lord! Our spiritual sight restored, we, like the blind man, are sent to tell others. Our spiritual site is restored because we have been touched by Jesus love and many others can be touched through us, as we share Jesus, the Savior and light of the world. Amen.