

## CATHEDRAL SERMON REVIEW

*Believing is Seeing: Healing Our Blindness*

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We live in a time of turmoil. Beyond the epidemic, which certainly fuels fear, we find ourselves in a world of strong expression of emotions, beliefs, divided opinions and views from politics to social, civil, moral issues. This includes a lot of judgment. We often judge that we are right and others wrong. We see and are surprised others do not. This judgment can turn ill will and condemnation, believing “they” are blind and at fault. The truth is, we are all blind. And the only way to help change this world to the better is to change ourselves first, allow the Lord to help us see what we haven’t seen, and to live a life ever increasingly in his ways.

There are two kinds of spiritual blindness, blindness of ignorance and blindness from evil. No one suffers from just one. We suffer from both, and we can be cured of both, if we allow the Lord to heal us.

Blindness of ignorance is when we mean no harm, but believe things that are not necessarily true, and act on beliefs that inadvertently hurt others. Blind ignorance is not knowing that what we think, say, or do may not be the right thing. But we are not at fault for this. We don’t know better. Like the blind man healed in our story, the disciples ask who has sinned that this man is blind, his parents. The Lord says, “Neither....” People are only to blame for what they do in freedom according to reason (*Divine Providence* #89). However, this doesn’t mean that acts of ignorance do not hurt people or bring evil into the world. Our blind ignorance may not be our fault, but it is our responsibility.

Blindness from evil is purposefully not wanting to see the truth. It is believing our own truth and often at the expense of others. The Pharisees’ blindness was full of judgment of and condemnation of others, from the blind belief that they were right and those who did not follow their path were wrong. Jesus said of them that if they were blind they would not be guilty of sin, but since they say they can see, their guilt remains (John 9:41).

We do not have to beat ourselves up about what kind of blindness we may be suffering from, because the cure is the same. Guilty of evil or not we can learn to be better people. The act of healing in this story is how we are healed.

The Lord spits on the ground and makes clay and anoints the man’s eyes with it. Spit from the Lord is his very most external truth from the Word. These truths can seem offensive to us, like spit in our eyes, but these are the ones we need to hear. They are the literal truths of repentance, the ten commandments, the call to change our ways. The earth is our experience. When the truth we know is brought together in our thoughts with the experiences we have had and are having, we gain insight into where we are blind and what we need to change. Washing in the pool of Siloam is actual repentance, changing our ways.

The man is persecuted by the Pharisees, and evil spirits will persecute us when we try to change, through attacks in temptation. But the Lord will help us prevail and even grow. The blind man first spoke of Jesus as being just a man, but as he was challenged, he began to teach that Jesus was not just a man, or even a prophet, but coming from God (the Messiah). He found himself kicked out of the temple, but the Lord came to him and asked if he believed in the Son of God. The man wanted to know who he was so that he might believe. Jesus said,

“You are now seeing him and he is the one speaking to you” (John 9:37). The promise of the Lord is not only that we can have a growing vision of the truth about life, but we will see him and have a new relationship with him. The man responded, “Lord, I believe.” (John 8:38)

Lessons: John 9; Apocalypse Explained #475:17