

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
THE SEASON OF NEW INSIGHTS
Reverend John R. Hanson
March 19, 2023, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION

This week's Gospel, the story of the blind man who is healed by Jesus and the subsequent investigation by the Pharisees, is so rich in detail, so filled with metaphor and symbol, so compelling in its narrative, the focus on seeing, perception and whether we live in 'light' or 'darkness' flows throughout. May our eyes be opened in new ways to God's glory and our place in God's purposes.

CALL TO WORSHIP

"Just a Little Talk with Jesus"

Celebration Singers

THEME AND VERSE

I seek the grace of God and my cup runneth over. I seek the will of God and my cup runneth over. I seek the strength of God and my cup runneth over. How generous is God's love? So much the world cannot contain it.

" Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

HYMN

"Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord"

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart,
I want to see you, I want to see you. *(repeat)*
To see you high and lifted up, shining in the light of your glory;
Pour out your power and love as we sing holy, holy, holy.
Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy. I want to see you.
CCLI Song # 2298355 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-8, 39-41

Jesus heals a man who was born blind. Jesus teaches that he came to bring sight to the blind and to reveal the blindness of those who think they see.

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when

no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

³⁹Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this

and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of

the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, we do not see as you do, open our eyes.

O Lord, we love what we have made for ourselves, the way we like to do things. We love it so much we think what makes us comfortable is also what makes us right. We are so secure in our "rightness," we don't try to please you, Lord. We ignore your way because we are set in our way. Lord, shepherd us along the right pathways for your name's sake. Amen

God does not desire for us to walk in darkness. God sends the light of Christ into our world - the light to expose our sin and call us again to right relationship. Through the Holy Spirit our eyes can be opened again.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

WELCOME

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"I Can't See!"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, our provider as well as our guide, you invite us to participate in the banquet of life. All parts of the world are invited – enemies and friends, alienated and powerful, those close at hand and those far off. You offer the abundance of bread broken and you share the cup of refreshment that leads to new life. We praise and thank you for your abundant spirit. Your goodness and love unfailing follows us all our days. Help us to see and believe these many blessings. Amen.

READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-5, 11-13

God instructs Samuel to stop mourning for Saul and to anoint a new king for Israel in Bethlehem. After examining seven of Jesse's sons and rejecting them, Samuel finally anoints the youngest boy, David, and God's Spirit comes upon him.

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill

me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you."

⁴Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And

Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

¹²He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

READING: Ephesians 5:8–14

Paul encourages the believers to live as people of the light, doing what pleases God.

⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to

mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, " Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

HYMN

"The King of Love"

Green # 456

The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing brought me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight; thine unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

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SERMON - *The Wounded healers, the ones who don't make the grade, God doesn't want anyone to suffer! Through the living example of his son, Jesus, God brings wholeness to all.*

HYMN

"We Are Marching"

Burgundy # 63

We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God.

We are marching - - - - oh, oh,

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching - - - oh, oh,
We are marching in the light of God.

We are living in the love of God, we are living in the love of God.
We are living in the love of God, we are living in the love of God.

We are living - - - oh, oh,
We are living in the love of God.

We are living - - - oh, oh,
We are living in the love of God.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, you are revealed in simple, created things. We thank you for speaking to us through bread broken and wine poured. We thank you for the Word of life planted like a seed in our hearts through this sacrament. May the fruit it bears be good and plentiful, bringing honor and praise to you. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May the blessing of God our Father, his son, Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit be among you and give you strength within to meet the days ahead.

Amen.

As God's word has been shared with us in our worship, so we go to share God's word with the world longing to hear. Lord, give us voices to speak and lives to tell of your love. May God's freely given favor Christ's self-giving love, and the Holy Spirit's constant companionship remain with each of us now and into eternity. Amen

May we walk in Christ's light and live out his love!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

“How Do We Choose to See?”

Blindness and sight, light and darkness, rejection of those in power and anointing those who are unknown. The heart of these readings is this: how do we choose to see? Samuel is tempted to look at Jesse's sons in an ordinary human way – outward strength and primacy in the family

hierarchy – but God commands him to look differently, ultimately choosing the son who is the least. Paul encourages believers to walk in God’s light, avoiding the “deeds of darkness” that cause broken-ness, stumbling and pain, but rather seeking to live in the light – seeing clearly and moving securely through the world because we can see. Finally, the Gospel uses a dramatic story to show the difference between those who claim to see but don’t, and those who truly can see.

The corruption, power-grabbing and judgmental condemnation of anything new and different is a mark of those who cannot see – although they always protest that they see clearly. On the other hand, the acceptance, healing and grace that Jesus shows – and the response in worship of those who have had eyes opened to see by Christ’s touch – is the mark of those who “live in the light”. Our choice, then, as individuals and as Church, is whether we will allow God’s light to change how we see, or whether we will go through the motions and continue to see as the rest of society does, while claiming falsely that we see as God does.

In our daily lives we all make choices about what we will see and what we won’t. It’s tempting to choose not to see the suffering and injustice in our world – to switch off the news, and to ignore reports of grief, war and trauma. It’s tempting to avoid seeing certain people and to allow them to just blend in with the landscape, removing their need and struggle from our vision. It’s tempting to avoid seeing God’s truth and grace in those with whom we disagree, and whom we would rather see as “all bad.” It’s tempting to avoid seeing the broken-ness in those we support and with whom we agree and to see them as “all good.” It’s tempting to avoid seeing the resources, the opportunities and the capacity we have for making a difference, and to believe we are not required to do anything.

But, if we have really seen Jesus, and if we have truly seen God’s reign proclaimed and manifest in Christ, then we have to confront how we see things, and allow God’s grace and mercy, God’s truth and justice to change our seeing and shed light on our world, our relationships and our neighborhoods. Our seeing must be informed by God’s perspective where the greatest are the least, and where everyone – even a young shepherd boy, or a carpenter from the countryside – can make significant differences in the world.

Devotion resources from John van de Laar at Sacredise.com