

Sunday Sermon March 19, 2017

Sermon Text: John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

Sermon Theme: What do our Eyes of Faith See?

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

*<sup>3</sup> “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

*<sup>6</sup> Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

*<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup> Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”*

*<sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”*

*But others asked, “How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?” So they were divided.*

*<sup>17</sup> Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”*

*The man replied, “He is a prophet.”*

*<sup>34</sup> To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.*

*<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”*

*<sup>36</sup> “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”*

*<sup>37</sup> Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”*

*<sup>38</sup> Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.*

*<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”*

Eyesight is very important to us. From the time we are little we had to take eye tests to see what kind of vision we had. As we got older, we might have to make the decision of contacts or glasses. As the vision gets worse we don’t want to go back to the doctor for another different prescription. Then, as we age even further we have the questions of bi or tri focals, correction of cataracts or glaucoma.

Eyesight is important to us so that we can do what we want to do. We need our eyesight to read, to perform hobbies, even to drive. A loss of eyesight means that we will not be able to be as independent and do the things we would like to do.

Being able to see is important. But what do we really see? Even if we have perfect eyesight, do we always see everything we should? Even with perfect eyesight do we see perfectly, or do we miss things?

As we listen to God’s Word this morning we want to ask ourselves the questions. What do our eyes of faith see? Do we see the sin and unbelief in our life or are we blind to it? Do we see that only Jesus can give us sight?

In our sermon text this morning, Jesus performs a miracle. He heals a blind man. That miracle is enough for a sermon of its own. But, our lesson today looks especially at the fall out after the healing.

As Jesus and his disciples were walking along there was a man who everyone knew had been blind since birth. The disciples ask Jesus a strange question, **““Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”**

The disciples don’t seem to have any malice in their question. They are not digging for dirty details, they are wondering who or what was so bad that would cause someone to be born without sight.

It was a popular teaching that God punished some people on earth for their sins and that the punishment could be seen in the suffering of those people. It is a very logical conclusion that fits into our human thoughts of cause and effect: If we have suffering in our life, God must be punishing us. This type of thought can still be

found today, but it is also not a correct way to think about God. This false teaching was one of the ways the Pharisees justified themselves and condemned others to hell who were suffering from disease or illness.

Jesus answer shows the disciples that, even though there are consequences we bring on ourselves because of sin, God doesn't bring suffering on us to punish us. Jesus answer taught the disciples something new; that God can and does work blessings from physical problems, ailments and disabilities. **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life**

This man shows faith in Jesus. He allows Jesus to put mud on his eyes and then he follows Jesus command to go and bathe in the pool of Siloam. According to Jesus' promise, he was healed and his eyesight was restored.

Imagine how happy the man was. Sometimes on Facebook we see those videos of people hearing or seeing for the first time and their joy is evident. That must have been how this man felt. He was overjoyed at what had happened to him and he told his friends and neighbors all about this man who had healed him and how the miracle had occurred.

His joy must have changed a little when he was brought in for to be declared healed. The Pharisees are not happy about this miracle or about the miracle worker.

They treat the man like a criminal and question him. The man replies to their questions in the same way as he had to his friends and neighbors, with the truth of what Jesus had done. However, instead of the truth bringing the Pharisees to see and believe in Jesus. They were deeply divided about whether this man was from God or not.

How could they be divided about who Jesus was? It wasn't common for people to go around and heal others as Jesus did. Even today, we don't see miracle workers on every corner. And this was certainly no trick. Everyone knew this man was blind from birth. It should have been clear that this was the power of God on display before them.

But instead of seeing the power of God at work in the miracle, notice what they chose to focus on; they focused on whether or not a miracle occurring on the Sabbath day was a sin. Instead of trying to worship Jesus, they tried to discredit him and turn him into a Law-breaker.

Many people can see clearly. They don't have the need for glasses or contacts. They look at the eye chart and they can see even the littlest line at the very bottom. But there are still things that even those with the best eyesight miss.

Even people with the best eyesight might miss the car that comes up quickly into the blind spot, even though they checked, they didn't see it. People with great eyesight might read a word incorrectly because they missed some letters of the word. People with great eyesight might miss the stop sign that is clearly in front of them. Even those with great eyesight miss things. What do we see with our eyes of faith? What do we miss?

When we look at ourselves what do we see? Most of us think we are pretty good people. We don't do the things the really bad people do. We attend church, we volunteer for things, we live a clean life. We realize that we have sin, but those sins aren't the ones that really make us feel guilty. We overlook some, we cover some up, we rationalize others away. All in all, when we look at ourselves and our sins, we think we are really not that bad.

These are the same things that the Pharisees thought about their lives. Yet, because of these thoughts they could not see. Their thoughts of their own goodness made them blind to Jesus.

There are so many things that we miss when we look at ourselves. Sin makes it impossible for us to see ourselves and our own sinfulness clearly. We might think that we have perfect vision, a perfect understanding of temptation and the sins that affect us the most. But really we don't. We are blind to many of the sins that we commit. We need someone to help us see those sins and really do something about them.

During this “trial” Jesus is absent. The Pharisees had put the miracle on trial without ever speaking to the miracle worker. Instead of asking Jesus, the Pharisees interrogated the man 3 times. They tried to discredit Jesus and then when that didn't work, to discredit the man who had been healed.

The man witnessed to them three times of his affliction and the miracle that Jesus had performed. But the Pharisees were blind, instead of listening to that witness and seeing Jesus as their Savior, they threw the man out and called him a sinner.

The Pharisees couldn't see what was right in front of their face because they were blinded by their sinful pride and unbelieving arrogance which led them to rejecting Jesus.

Jesus does not go to the blind Pharisees to set the record straight with them, instead he searches out the man in order to give him true sight.

This man had given testimony that had not swayed the Pharisees, but that testimony was evidence of the Holy Spirit working faith in his heart. Jesus finds him, sits with him and asks him **Do you believe in the Messiah, the Son of Man.**

Even though the man does not immediately call Jesus the Savior, his answer still shows faith. This man knew this miracle was from God, he may have wondered if Jesus was a prophet or if maybe he was the Savior. Yet, he believed that God would send that Savior as he promised.<sup>36</sup> **“Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”**

Jesus had healed the man of blindness, but it is here that he gives him true sight. **You have seen him, in fact, he is the one speaking to you**

With his eyes of faith opened, the man believed in Jesus and worshiped him.

When we were blind in our sins and unbelief, it, the Holy Spirit who called us to faith in Jesus. Even after we are called to faith, we still need Jesus to continue to keep our eyes of faith open to see our sinfulness and to see him.

Jesus provides for us a sight that we would not have on our own. Through the Law, he shows us our sin so that we know what we have done wrong. Through his Gospel, he shows what repentance is and the forgiveness that comes from him. Once we are forgiven, Jesus gives us spiritual sight to walk in a God-pleasing path in this world, avoiding sin and temptation while relying on God to help us do that.

Seeing is very important to us, but having good eyesight, being able to read and drive, or having enough sight to avoid falling over things at home won't do us any good without the sight that Jesus gives. Jesus gives sight to the blind, but more than that he gives spiritual sight to people like you and me, who, through faith are his children.

Jesus grant to us spiritual sight that sees our sins, repents of them, and relies on you for the hope of heaven that you give.