

4th Sunday of Lent A 26 March 2017

1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41

Do you recognize the light of God's truth and power in your life? God wants to remove every obstacle that might hinder us from recognizing the light of his truth and wisdom for our lives. Saul, the first king of Israel, failed to recognize God's light and power to save him from his enemies, so God replaced him with David. God saw something in David which Jesse and his other sons did not recognize—a man after God's own heart who delighted in doing what was pleasing to the Lord. David was a man of courage and vision who defeated his enemies and united his people. His strength and success came not from himself but from God who anointed him with the power and wisdom of his own Spirit.

What can keep us from the light of God's truth, wisdom, and strength for our lives? Sin blinds us and causes us to stumble and fall—unable to rise on our own or to walk in the freedom of God's love and truth. Sin clouds the mind in moral confusion, and it grows in darkness and resists the light of God's truth. Only God's light can uncover the darkness of sin and free us to walk in the path of holiness and peace with God.

When the disciples saw a man who had been blind from birth, they asked Jesus what kind of sin had caused this blindness because it was taught that many infirmities were the result of human folly and sin. While sin can lead to physical, mental, and spiritual infirmities, not all sickness is the direct result of sin. Jesus answered that God had allowed this infirmity for a greater purpose, which was to demonstrate his presence and power. Jesus then made a claim that only God could rightfully make: I am the light of the world. In other words, Jesus was saying that he is the one true source of power and light that sustains life and overcomes the darkness of sin, confusion, and spiritual blindness. Jesus' mighty works—his miraculous signs—confirmed the truth of his claim to divine authority and equality with his Father in heaven. The healing of a man who had been blind from birth is one of his greatest signs.

When Jesus approached the blind man he did 3 things that hopefully we too can relate to: **first** he awakened hope in him—the hope which God offers those who seek his help. The 2nd and 3rd was to identify with this man's misery and to draw expectant faith in him by touching the man's eyes with his own spittle mixed with dirt and telling him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. I can remember using my spittle to wash stuff of the kids' faces—one way of being personal. When the man washed—he could see. The healing of the blind man is a significant event, and is much more than just a miracle. You see, it is a "sign". A sign that points to the source of the miraculous life-giving water which Jesus offers through the gift of the Holy Spirit. How would you like to have the Holy Spirit to pour out on you his renewing power of faith, vision, and healing love? Do you ask expectantly?

The Pharisees couldn't accept Jesus' miracle on two counts. First, he was a "Sabbath-breaker" he healed on the Sabbath, which they considered a serious violation of the command to rest on the Sabbath. **Second**, how could a "sinner" (one not being a Jewish leader) do such a marvelous work of God? They wouldn't accept the man was truly blind, even though the fact was common knowledge and they had the testimony of his parents.

The prejudice of the religious leaders made them blind to God's intention for the Sabbath (to do good rather than evil) and to Jesus' claim to be THEE One sent from the

Father in heaven to bring freedom and light to his people. The Jewish leaders even tried to intimidate both this cured man and his parents by threatening to ban them from the synagogue—a very important aspect of their lives. They shunned the man because he believed that Jesus healed him and was the Messiah.

We need never to forget that our witness to Jesus and his redeeming work in our lives draws us nearer to the Lord Jesus himself.

St Paul warns us to avoid the darkness of sin that we might walk more clearly in the light of Christ. Do you allow any blind spots to blur your vision of what God is offering you and asking of you?

Our Lord Jesus is ever ready to heal us and to free us from the darkness of sin and deception. There is no illness, whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual that the Lord Jesus does not identify with. He offers us freedom from spiritual blindness due to sin and can restore us to wholeness of body, mind, soul, and heart:

- By loving God, our neighbors, and even our enemies, for the man who hates his brother is in darkness,
- by rejecting worldly ways to avoid being blinded by the god of the present age: secular humanism,
- by going to Confession regularly so as not to be blinded by sin,
- by seeing Jesus as He is, and finally

Pray with me. Jesus, in your name the blind see, the lame walk, and the dead are raised to life. Come into our lives and heal the wounds of our broken hearts. Give us eyes of faith to see your glory and hearts of courage to bring you glory in all we say and do.