

## Believing Is Seeing

- ✠ Work while it is day. (vv.1-12)
- ✠ The Prophet is the Light. (vv.13-34)
- ✠ Confess blindness – see Christ. (vv.35-41)

In the Name of Jesus, the Light of the world, dearly redeemed disciples of our Lord:

In today's Old Testament Lesson the LORD says something not very nice about us, His people: *"Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the LORD? You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing." It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious.*" (Isaiah 42:18–21 NIV84) The key to the treasure of spiritual insight is to admit your blindness. The LORD God loves to give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He uses His Word with the means of grace, the Gospel in Word and sacrament. Why Jesus demonstrates this today with mud, He doesn't say. But that's how some people treat His sacraments, like mud. Here's some mud in your eye: **Believing Is Seeing.**

### ✠ Work while it is day. (vv.1-12)

"Wake up, sleepy head!" That's what your mother used to say, the mother whose face you've never seen. You've heard your father's gentle voice, felt his firm grip, but every face is missing. You were born blind. Life is very simple. Get up from your mat. Head out to the busy Tyropoeon Way where your parents live. It leads south from the Temple through the City of David to the Pool of Siloam. Generous folks you know by voice. Some are just footsteps rushing by. You're just a beggar.

Sun or oil lamp don't matter. Today your ears pick up something strange. A man named Jesus is passing by again with His disciples. They're talking about you as if you're not there – or deaf too! *"Rabbi," they ask, "who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?"* You've wondered too because you could never play like other kids. Or have a job. Blind...beggar – what else is there?

But Jesus answer comforts and confuses you: *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This happened so that God's works might be displayed in him. We must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* While you're wondering what that might mean, you feel Jesus near. He's spitting and mixes mud with His fingers. Now He's wiping it on your eyes! *"Go,"* He says kindly, *"Wash in the pool of Siloam."*

You hurry down the street to wash the mud from your eyes. Coming back you can see the street... houses...people – all looking at you! *"Isn't this the man who used to sit begging?"* Some say, *"Yes."* Others, *"No, he just looks like him."* You keep saying, *"I'm the one!"* So they ask how it happened. *"The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash.' So I went and washed, and then I could see."* They want to know where Jesus is, but you didn't actually see Him. The sun is so bright! Now you can see why Jesus told His disciples to **Work while it is day.** But what did He mean? *"A long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from a draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

## † The Prophet is the Light. (vv.13-34)

Never did you dream what happened next. You can finally see! Everyone's happy, right? But in the limelight you're a target! Why should it matter what day Jesus opened your eyes? Strong hands are pulling you toward a group of stern looking men. Angry Pharisees demand to know how it happened. You've told the story so many times: ***"He put mud on my eyes. I washed and I now see."***

That really upsets the Pharisees. ***"This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath."*** But others argue, ***"How can a sinful man work such miraculous signs?"*** They're fighting about Jesus' miracle on you! Finally they turn back as if you can settle this! ***"What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?"*** It seems so obvious. You answer simply, ***"He is a prophet."***

Oh, boy! What a hornets' nest! Now someone is bringing your parents to the Pharisees. Instead of happy, they look worried. The Pharisees keep firing questions. You've never seen your parents so upset in public. ***"We know this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him; he's of age. He will speak for himself."*** Later you find out they were threatened with expulsion from the synagogue for saying anything good about Jesus.

You're looking around trying to enjoy the gift of sight, but they're calling you back. Now they're putting you under oath? ***"Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner."***

You don't want to argue. Keep it simple: ***"Whether he is a sinner, I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind, now I see."*** When they ask again how it happened, it's too much. ***"I already told you, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become his disciples too, do you?"*** Now they get personal: ***"You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man – we don't know where he's from."*** That does it.

You've been begging so long what's it matter? These men are utterly blind! You never expected to say this, but: ***"That's amazing! You don't know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but hears anyone who worships God and does his will. Throughout history no one has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of somebody born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."*** What your parents feared, you suffer. They throw you out.

## † Confess blindness – see Christ. (vv.35-41)

His face looks so friendly. It's the face with the voice that told you to wash in the Pool of Siloam. But His question makes you think. ***"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"***

You remember the priests and rabbis reading about the Son of Man in the Prophet Daniel. You wonder: ***"Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?"***

***"You have seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you."***

The Messiah opened your eyes! On your knees in total joy you worship: ***"Lord, I believe!"***

***"For judgment I came into this world in order that those who do not see will see, and those who do see will become blind."*** You're so grateful because you were blind, but now you can see!

Yet some of the Pharisees are offended. ***"We aren't blind too, are we?"***

***"If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."***

Jesus makes it so simple, doesn't He? Admit your spiritual blindness, and He will open the eyes of your heart with the gift of faith. Claim your own spiritual sight, and you remain in your natural born blindness. We are beggars all, Pharisees and prodigals too. One and all Jesus invites by His holy Word because **Believing Is Seeing**. And Jesus wants to turn the lights on for you. Amen.