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Scripture

John 9:1-17

¹As 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. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." ¹⁰But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹²They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

Devotional

Night, Sight, Light, and . . . Blindness.

When the disciples walk by a blind man, they ask Jesus the age-old question: "Who sinned here?" We understand that question, don't we? When something unfortunate comes our way, aren't we sometimes tempted to wonder what we did wrong? Or perhaps it's the other way around: "I'm sorry I did (or thought, or said) that, Lord. Please don't let anything bad happen!"

Luckily, Jesus denies the link between suffering and sin. He changes the perspective by proclaiming that God will use this tragic situation to reveal Jesus as "the Light of the world." This man lives in darkness, but Jesus enables him to see light. As the story progresses, he seems to recognize the Light as well.

The authorities also see the results of Jesus' action, but they can't accept the obvious conclusion. In spite of possessing healthy eyesight, they are blind to the truth about Jesus' identity. Or, we might say, they see what they want to see. That is a lesson for me, too. How often do preconceived opinions, views of others or myself, hopes, or fears cloud my sight to something I should recognize? Make me blind to something that is true?

This Lent, whom do I resemble—the blind man whose vision was restored, or the authorities who, denying their blindness, lived in darkness?

Prayer

God of Light, thank you for sending your Son to bring light into the world. Let that light illuminate my heart, so that any blindness in me may be taken away. Let that light enflame my spirit, that I may honor you, follow your Son, and serve this world, so often caught in darkness and despair. In Christ I pray. Amen.