

Eyes to See
John 9:1-41

We are trying to stay away from spit right now. Six to ten feet is the distance we are supposed to keep between us. The man born blind may or may not have known about the spit. When his neighbors asked how he could now see the man replies, *The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.* He is asked again, by the Pharisees this time, how he received his sight. *“He put mud on my eyes”, the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”* No mention of spit. I’m not sure that he knows.

What does he know? He knows what some people think about him. The Pharisees don’t even try to hide it. They come right out and tell the man, *You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us.* Jesus’ disciples weren’t much different. They didn’t say it to the man’s face, but they asked Jesus, *Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*

Are *we* any different? There are a whole lot of sinners in this world, and it’s a good thing Jesus has us to help point them out to Him.

This whole COVID-19 thing has given us all kinds of new opportunities to judge and condemn one another. There are pastors who are being verbally assaulted because they are abiding by the government guidelines. Other pastors are being attacked because they have chosen to ignore the different declarations.

Is there any judging going on in your life because of what people are doing or not doing? I’m guessing the answer is yes. Dear Lord, give us eyes to see our own sin that we may repent of it and know your forgiveness.

What else does the man born blind know? He tells the Pharisees that he believes Jesus is a prophet, and later confesses about Jesus: *If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.* And the story further unfolds this way: *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.*

Last Sunday, in the account of the Samaritan woman at the well, we heard Jesus apply the title Messiah to Himself. Today the words are a little different, but the meaning is the same. And here, too, the Word of the

Lord works faith. The man hears and believes and responds in worship.

It is very telling that Jesus does not tell the man to stop. In Revelation when John tried to worship the angel the angel responded, "*You must not do that!*" When the people of Lystra tried to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas *they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, "Men why are you doing this? We too are only men..."* Jesus doesn't object. As the Son of God, He is worthy to receive worship.

Many in our reading didn't see it this way. Rejection of Jesus as the Messiah was not unanimous among the Pharisees, but many of them refused to see Him as such. Our text closes with these words of Jesus to them: *If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.*

If you have a fever, it is a certain sign that you are sick with something. Do you turn a blind eye to it, or do something about it to seek healing?

Sin has symptoms too. Jesus is clear that if we fail to see our sinfulness we are stuck in it. There is no getting over it.

And it may sound like a bad thing, but it isn't -- even when we do see our sin, it is no action on our part that

brings healing. It's all Jesus. Jesus healed the blind man. Jesus heals you.

To heal you, Jesus doesn't use spit, but He does use some very earthy things. Through the water and Word of baptism you are welcomed into the family of God. The forgiveness of sins Jesus earned for you on His cross is delivered to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Holding bread in His hands, Jesus said, "Take, eat, this is my body given for you." Holding a cup of wine in His hands Jesus said, "Drink of it all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus' blood was poured out for you as He was whipped, had a crown of thorns smashed onto His head, and was nailed to a cross. These things Jesus endured for you so that seeing your sin, you may know His forgiveness.

Jesus died for you. Jesus also rose from the dead for you. He wants to assure you that He is victorious over sin and every evil. That's not always what our eyes tell us, but it is true. Jesus is Lord over all. And one day we will see Him in all His glory when sin and all its symptoms will be gone forever. Come Lord Jesus! Amen.