

Lenten Devotional Reflection

22 March 2020 (Lent 4)

Scripture: John 9:1-41 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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.”

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do

nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

Message: Really blind? False blind? Or blind in mind?

This Chapter is a beautiful, remarkable, lively and thought-provoking story. The theme is: Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). The protagonist is a man blind from birth.

There are three points that worth thinking: Light, faith and corresponding actions after conversion.

1. Light: light represents life and turning away from sin. We need a lamp to shine upon so we can see in darkness. Jesus is the light that leads and guides us to a right way. Like Jesus said to his disciples: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:5).
2. Faith: If that man blind from birth did not “go” to Siloam to wash as Jesus said, he would not receive his sight. Faith should be put into action. There are many experiences in life, especially sufferings from illness and fear of frustration, which make us lose faith in God. The current novel-coronavirus pandemic in the world also affects our lives in every aspect. We may question God’s arrangements and complain a lot. During Lent, will you restore faith in God?
3. Corresponding actions after conversion: Today’s Gospel reveals a conversion process. First, meet the Lord, then confess sin, accept God by faith and worship Him (verses 35-38). Have we ever been blind? We are often blind in mind, only caring for ourselves and things that we are pursuing, and forget God. In fact, everyone has many blind spots and dark places, some of which we cannot see while some of which are deliberately not seen (like Pharisees in verses 40-41). Let us seek God’s help to open our eyes and confess our blindness in mind so that we can receive salvation.

Reflection

1. Lent is a season for repentance and renewal. Do we see our darkness and sins? Will you truly repent? Do you wish to be healed like Jesus healed the man blind from birth?
2. Is it unfortunate to be blind from birth? Which do you think is a real misfortune, physically blind or spiritually blind? Try to recall an example as reflection.
3. “Life is no straight and easy corridor”. How do we face hard times? Grumble about it or face it with action in faith?

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