

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

As I read the texts for today I have to admit that I struggled with which one to focus on. All of the texts grabbed me. In many ways it was refreshing to be overwhelmed with have ideas for all of the texts. The text from I Samuel made me want to focus on how God looks at our hearts when he calls us, not at our physical appearance. Psalm 23 reminded me of God's presence throughout life. The reading from Ephesians tells us to live our lives to reflect the light of Christ. And finally, the gospel is full of a variety of topics one could tackle to preach on. But in all of these, the question that I kept coming back to was what are we blind to?

In the gospel text Jesus heals a blind man. In this long narrative the blind man and his parents are questioned about who healed him. And in the end, the blind man recognizes Jesus as the Son of Man. He knows Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus healed the man from his blindness, but he did so much more than that. The blind man could physically see for the first time in his life, but he saw the light of Christ. He recognized the power and presence of God in this miracle and defended it when people asked him who healed him. He probably even offended the people who asked a second time when he told them that already told them who healed him and they didn't listen. Those asking him about the one who healed him didn't like that he challenging their beliefs. Their world view was that someone sinned and that is what made him blind from birth, which Jesus tells his disciples is not the case. He was born blind so that God's work could be revealed in this man.

This text is full of thoughts to ponder. The people who were questioning the blind man about who healed him didn't understand. They couldn't seem to get beyond what Jesus meant by those who see will be blind and those who are blind will see. The point isn't that Jesus will blind people physically, but rather that people recognize who he is. The blind man, not only saw Jesus standing in front of him physically, but he recognized that Jesus was the Son of Man.

What are we blind to? As people of God, God opens our eyes so that we can see that we are his children. We have hope in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God asks us to seek peace and justice, to care for the poor, and to be in community with one another.

I think we are all blind from time to time. I know that I'm "blinded" when I see something that I know isn't right, and yet I don't do anything to change it.

What are some things that we are blind to? Racism is one of those things that we can be blind to. Unfortunately we live in denial that people are discriminated against because of the color of their skin. We may see someone being treated in an unfair way and we continue to walk by.

I think at times we are blind to the poor. There are always times of the year when remember the poor – usually around holidays – but what about the rest of the year? I'm reminded of a friend who shared a story about being reminded about helping the poor. He was on his way into the office very early one winter morning and he passed a homeless man with no coat. The man was freezing and he walked by – he was blind to this man's need. My friend shared with me that this is a reminder to him – that he is haunted per se by not giving the homeless man his coat because he had another one at home. He was blind to a need.

Do we see another student at school who needs help? Maybe this young person is struggling with a specific subject that we might be good at. Are we blind to their need because we are too worried about what others will think of us if we help another person who isn't in a particular circle of friends?

Do we recognize our brothers and sisters years after a tragedy? It seems at first that when tragedy strikes there is a willingness to help in any way possible – whether it is financial or actually going to the site. Last year at the Bishop's convocation we heard from the Bishop from the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. He shared how great God's love was shared in the days, weeks, and months after Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast. But he also shared that the Gulf Coast is still in desperate need of help. Whether it comes in the form of financial support or work teams, the need is still there.

This list of what we are blind to could go on and on. There are a lot of things that make us uncomfortable. One of the hardest things about being a disciple is recognizing what we are blind to and struggling with it until we let the light of Christ shine through. When we realize what we are blind to we can take the next step and try to come to terms with it. When we learn from our blindness we can do ministry and show others that we see and experience the light of Christ.

We are all blind to different things. In our journey as disciples, we need to be honest with other people as the woman at the well and Jesus were in our readings last week...but as disciples we need to be honest with ourselves and recognize what we are blind to so we can see the light of Christ.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding be in your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.