



“THE MAN WHO WAS BORN BLIND” (John 9: 1-38)

My beloved, the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney: May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you, your families and your homes with His blessings.

The gospel reading of today is speaking to us about the miracle Jesus did in giving sight to the man who was born blind. This story is special for us because it shows us the great love and concern Jesus has for all people, especially those who are weak and needy. It shows that He takes notice of everyone's situation, even when other people don't notice, and He is aware of our prayers and desires, and in His time, He responds.

This story tells us about the great miracle that Jesus did in giving sight to a man who was born blind, but on a spiritual level, this story also tells us about how Jesus came into the world to give light to those who are sitting in darkness.

In this story, we see the compassion of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, towards this poor blind man. It says that "Jesus saw him", which means that Jesus took notice of him and his situation, even when others did not take any notice of him. Jesus saw him and was concerned about him. And even though the blind man could not see Jesus, Jesus saw him and knew his prayers and his needs. The care that Jesus showed this man, and many other people who were in need, should also encourage us to be caring people and to help those in need.

In this story, 3 important interactions took place:

1. the first was **the conversation that Jesus had with His disciples** when He first saw the blind man
2. the second is the miracle that Jesus did when He cured the blind man
3. And the third is the conversation that Jesus had with the blind man after he was cured.

1. But first, let us look at the **conversation Jesus had with His disciples** when they first saw the blind man:

- ✠ The disciples immediately asked Jesus “**Who sinned? This man or his parents?**”. Here we see the difference between Jesus and the disciples: Jesus looked at the poor man with compassion. The disciples also looked at the poor man, but did not even move Jesus to heal him. Instead, they asked a cold question. Their question reminds us that many times people are more interested to know the faults of others instead of looking at themselves. To judge ourselves is our duty, but to judge another is our sin.



✠ Let us consider the response Jesus gave: we notice that He is always quick to teach and fix the mistakes of His disciples. He said: **“Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God may be made manifest in him.”**(v3) Here Jesus is teaching them that sometimes the intention of illness is to glorify God and reveal His works. This is because, through healing, God reveals Himself and declares His glory. This reminds us of how God permitted the fall of man and the blindness that followed after that, in order for the works of God to be revealed in opening the eyes of the blind.

✠ Jesus then said to His disciples: **“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is still day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”** (v.4-5). In this verse, Jesus is teaching not only the disciples, but all of us three important virtues, which we must try to practice.

i) **“I must work the works of Him who sent Me”**: The Lord Jesus Christ was doing His Father’s will.

✠ This verse shows us that Jesus was doing the **“works of Him who sent Me”** This means that Jesus did not only do the works that God asked Him to do, but He did the work for God and on His behalf. This shows that He was a co-worker together in unity with God.

✠ It also shows us that our beloved Lord was pleased to do even the hardest job and take up the heaviest burden in order to do God’s work, and so He said: **“I must work”** and He applied all His heart to His work.

ii) The 2nd important virtue is found in the words: **“while it is still day; the night is coming when no one can work”**. This shows us that Jesus was quick to respond and took the opportunity now: **“While it is still day”**... But what does this mean?

✠ the “day” refers to time on earth. All the work which we need to do in the world must be done within the limits of time.

✠ For our Lord Jesus Christ, all the work He needed to do here on earth was to be done before His death, and so when He speaks of the “day” He is talking about His time on earth.

✠ At the same time, when our Lord speaks about the “night” He is referring to death, when no work can be done and our time on earth has expired. When God gives us a duty, He also gives it to us within a certain time-frame, and therefore, when night comes, He calls the labourers to give an account of the work they did during the day, and will reward each one according to his deeds.

iii) And the 3rd important virtue found in this verse is when the Lord says: **“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”**. The reason for the Lord Jesus Christ coming into the world was to enlighten it. And so, Jesus would heal this blind man, who represents the blind world, because He came to be the light of the world and He would not only to give light to those who are living in darkness, but He would also open the eyes of those who cannot see. As St. Luke mentions in the book of Acts that the Lord came: **“To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light”** (Acts 26:18).

This virtue is important for us because:

- ✠ It encourages us to go to Christ, who is our guide and our refreshing light
- ✠ And also, the Lord is giving us a good example of how to be compassionate and useful in the world, and for this reason, the words that our beloved Lord Jesus said about Himself, He also said to us, saying: **“You are the light of the world, let your light shine”**

This conversation which took place between Jesus and His disciples was in order for our Lord to open the eyes and understanding of His disciples. And after He did this, He then turned his attention to opening the eyes of the blind man...

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2. The second is the miracle that **Jesus did when He cured the blind man.**

i) The **method** that our beloved Lord Jesus Christ used in healing this blind man is significant. He could have healed him with just one word, but the Lord is showing us that everything He does, He does for a reason.

- ✠ The 1st thing we notice is that the Lord put clay to the blind man’s eyes, but why? It is a known fact that if you put clay on a surface, such as the skin, it will dry up and close the skin. So why did the Lord use this method? Perhaps He did this because He wants us to feel our own dryness and blindness and sin before He gives us sight and healing. St Paul in his conversion was **“struck blind”** for 3 days and then the scales fell from his eyes. And then after his conversion, St Paul tells us that in order for us to get spiritual wisdom, **“Let a man become a fool that he may be wise”** (1 Corinthians 3:18). Therefore, in the same way that clay dries and closes up the surface, we must be aware of our blindness and burden of sin in order for us to be healed, through repentance, to see the light.
- ✠ Secondly, by applying the clay with His holy hands, He is showing us that it was His same mighty hand which first formed man out of clay.



- ✠ And thirdly, putting the clay or the eye-salve on the blind man's eyes, symbolises the healing and opening of the eyes of the mind and the heart to the word of the Lord. It is only when we come to know our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, that our eyes are opened, and this is the purpose of the Gospel – to open our eyes to the truth. The eye-salve that helps us to see, has been personally made by our Lord – it is made up of His holy, redeeming blood and water that came forth from His pierced side. So we must come to the Lord Jesus in order that He may put on us His eye-salve so that we may be able to see. In Revelation 3:18 we read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ who said: ***“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed... and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see.”***

Only the Lord is able and appointed to heal our blindness, as we read in Isaiah the words of the Lord who said: ***“the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to... give sight to the blind”*** (Isaiah 49:8).

ii) The Lord then tells the blind man to ***“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”***. The Lord here used 2 important phrases:

- ✠ Number 1: He told the man to “Go” : symbolically, the Lord is telling each one of us to ‘Go’, search the scriptures, pray, attend spiritual meetings, seek the advice of your spiritual fathers, in order that you may overcome spiritual blindness and come close to God.
- ✠ Number 2: He told the man to “wash”: in other words, be cleansed and be purified. The washing symbolises the waters of baptism through which we are buried and risen up with Christ. And it also represents the spiritual cleansing that happens with tears of repentance. And for this reason, repentance is called the “second baptism”. The washing and re-generation also symbolises the blood of the Lord, through which we are saved and have eternal life.
- ✠ But there is also another reason why the Lord asked the blind man to go and wash in the pool, and that is because the Lord was testing his obedience. The Lord made the miracle on the Sabbath Day, which according to Jewish law was forbidden, so the Lord wanted to test if the blind man would listen to Him and risk being punished by the elders in the Synagogue. And of course, the man obeyed the Lord. This shows us that whoever comes into contact with the Lord and experiences His love, must live and abide by His commandments.
- ✠ In this verse, it is interesting to note that St John mentions the significance of the name of the pool, which is called ***‘Siloam’***, meaning ***‘Sent’***. Jesus Christ is often called the ***“Sent of God”*** or the ***“Messenger of God”*** (Malachi 3:1). So what this means is that when Jesus sent the blind man to wash in the pool, He was in fact sending the blind man to Himself, because Jesus is all in all, and the healing and

salvation of all our souls. Therefore, Jesus directs us to Himself saying, asking us to go wash in the fountain of life.

- ✠ And after the blind man went and washed, he came back seeing. When he washed the clay from his eyes, all the other dirt was removed as well, and so he was able to see. This is just like when we are washed with tears of repentance, all our sins disappear, and we come out illuminated and enlightened and refreshed, and able to see the glory of God once more.

This poor blind man went to the pool weak, and came back strong. He went in sadness, and came back rejoicing. He went trembling, and came back victorious. He went blind and came back seeing.

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3. And the final point is the **conversation that Jesus had with the blind man after he was healed.**

Jesus knew that when the Pharisees saw and heard the confession of the blind man, they rejected him and cast him out. For this reason we are told that Jesus went to search for him. This shows us some very important aspects about our beloved Lord Jesus Christ:

- i) He loved this man very much, and knowing that he was rejected, the Lord searched for him and found him, so that He can encourage and comfort him. But why? Because the blind man witnessed for Christ and spoke bravely about Him. What this means for us is that:
 - Jesus will always support and comfort those who witness for Him. He keeps an account, and will reward each one according to his deeds.
 - Jesus gives special notice to those who suffer for His sake. This poor blind man suffered from the Pharisees when he was witnessing for Jesus, and for this reason, Jesus searched for him so that his comfort will be much more than his afflictions.
- ii) The next thing our Lord did was examine his faith by asking him: **“Do you believe in the Son of God?”** (v 35) By asking this, the Lord was asking him ‘do you expect His coming, and are you ready to receive and embrace Him when He is revealed to you?’ This poor man showed his willingness to accept and believe and embrace the Messiah, and so he said: **“Who is He Lord that I may believe?”**
- iii) The Lord then immediately revealed Himself saying, **“You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking to you.”** (v 37) This proves to us that if we honestly seek and desire the Lord, He will reveal Himself to us, just like in the situation with the Samaritan woman. By faith, we see Jesus and we see His beauty and His glory and His love for us. And at the same time, Jesus talks to us by His word and

✠ Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Sydney, Australia,

Sermon by HG Bishop Daniel, Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

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Spirit, if we desire Him – just like the way He spoke to the 2 disciples after the resurrection and warmed their hearts. Jesus is always near to those who seek Him, even if they are not aware.

- iv) As a result, the man who was blind replied: **“Lord, I believe.”** He first believed with the heart and therefore he confessed with his mouth, and so he **“worshipped Him”**, therefore he was acknowledging Jesus as God.
- v) The Lord then said to him a very important statement, which is: **“For judgement I have come into this world that those who do not see may see and those who see may be made blind”**...(v39) In this statement, Jesus speaks about the reason why He came into the world: and He says “for judgement”. He came to put in order the administration and affairs of the kingdom of God on Earth, and He has been given authority to do this. Here Jesus is speaking as a king upon a throne, and as a judge upon the bench. The 1st point is concerning judgement:

May the LORD bless you all through the intercessions of our Lady Virgin St. Mary and the prayers of our beloved Father of Fathers His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. May the Lord keep him safely for many years to come and help him to serve His Kingdom on earth.

Glory be to the Lord forever, Amen.

Bishop Daniel

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions