



Sunday, March 15, 2026
John 9:1-12 (Fourth Sunday in Lent)

Ascension Lutheran Church
Pastor Tony Acompañado

I'd like to begin today by telling you a little story from this past Wednesday when we had a little *unexpected excitement* during worship following an otherwise normal Wednesday night Lenten soup supper.

Two of the three amigos were present that evening, while the third...well, he was off somewhere doing who knows what. Okay, to be fair, we knew he was going to be gone, and he did take care of prepping the video that would be shown in worship that night. Shortly before worship I went to make sure the video was cued up and ready to go, only to find that the computer was in the middle of a software update. It was clear it wasn't going to be finished by start of worship, so, I instructed Pastor Edwin do the welcome and greeting solo to buy me a little time to get the video all set up again. When it came time to show the video the update *had* finished as evidenced by the large "update complete" message on the laptop screen.

But, in order to complete the update it *also* closed all the programs that were running when the update began. So, I needed to take a few moments to log in to Google Chrome and then Amazon Prime. And as you can imagine this didn't go as smoothly or quickly as I would've hoped and as I went to play the video, I could not get the sound to play through the sanctuary speakers.

For the next few minutes I tried to fix the audio issue and even had several angels in the congregation even came over to see if they could assist, but none of us could get it to work properly.

After several more moments it became clear that we weren't going to resolve the sound issue, so I decided to use my over the ear microphone to catch the sound through the laptop speakers. It worked, but not quite how any of us had hoped.

Later that night I got a text from the *conveniently absent* third amigo asking how everything went and I shared about all our *excitement* and he kindly offered his condolences for the unexpected drama.

Fast forward a few days to Friday evening when he and I were in Minneapolis with our Gathering colleagues and on the walk back from dinner, the amigo whom Jesus loved, leaned toward me and said, "I have a confession to make." For a brief second I thought back in my catholic school days except here I was as a pastor preparing to hear the confession of a weary soul.

This beloved child of God went on to say that earlier in the week he was setting up the video for Wednesday night while Vicki was in here practicing. He didn't want to disturb her, so he disconnected the audio cable from the laptop and when he read my text he realized he forgot to plug it back in!

Yes, sometimes we are completely blind to the solution before our very eyes.

In today's gospel, Jesus and his disciples encounter a man who's been blind since birth. The disciples ask a question that people had asked in one form or another for centuries when they encountered suffering: "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*"

They wanted an explanation. A cause. Someone to blame.

But Jesus refuses to play the blame game. He says something that surprises everyone: "*Neither this man nor his parents sinned.*" And then – he shifts the entire conversation. Instead of asking *why* the blindness exists, Jesus asks a different question altogether: **What can God do here?**

And then Jesus kneels down, makes mud, spreads it on the man's eyes, and sends him to wash, and miraculously when the man returns, he can see.

It's most certainly a miracle story. But it's also a story about seeing and not seeing. Because in John's gospel, blindness is never only about eyes. It's also about how we move through the world.

Most of us here can see – at least physically. But if we're honest, we know there are many ways people live with a different kind of blindness. We can be blind to the pain of people around us. We can be blind to the injustice in the world. We can be blind to the ways our own assumptions shape how we see others. And sometimes we simply turn a blind eye because seeing clearly might require *something* from us.

The disciples show us one type of blindness. They see a man – *but not really*. They see a problem to solve. But Jesus – Jesus sees a person – a life – a beloved child of God.



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We live in a time when it's easy to become blind to the world around us. Every day we're flooded with news – wars, disasters, division and suffering. The sheer volume of it all can numb us. And eventually we start to look away, but not because we don't care, but because caring feels overwhelming.

So we scroll past. We change the channel. We turn a blind eye. But blindness doesn't only happen on a global scale. Sometimes it happens much closer to home. We can be blind to the loneliness of someone sitting across the dinner table. Blind to the struggles of a coworker. Blind to the quiet grief someone carries into worship each Sunday. Blind even to our own need for grace.

And sometimes we become blind in our relationships. Old hurts cloud our vision. Assumptions blur what we see. We decide we already know someone, and we stop really looking. But the good news of this story is that Jesus meets us in our blindness.

I want you to notice something important in this story. The blind man *never* asks Jesus for healing.

Jesus simply *sees him* and *moves toward him*. Jesus kneels in the dust and begins the slow work of healing.

This is what God does. God comes *toward us* even when we don't know what we need. Even when we can't imagine that anything could change or be different.

Jesus says, "*I am the light of the world.*" Light doesn't just help us see. Light reveals things that were hidden. When the light of Jesus shines into our lives, sometimes we begin to notice things we hadn't seen before. We begin to see the humanity in someone we once dismissed. We begin to see suffering we previously ignored. We begin to see the ways that we ourselves have been wounded. And we begin to see the grace of God that has been there all along.

Lent is a season for exactly this kind of seeing. Lent invites us to slow down long enough to notice what we've been missing. To notice where we've become numb. Where we've turned a blind eye. Where we've stopped expecting transformation. But Lent is never about shame. It's about illumination. Because the same Jesus who exposes blindness is the Jesus who heals it.

The man in today's story is given a strange instruction – go wash in the pool of Siloam. So he goes. And when he returns, he can see. But the most beautiful part of the story might just be what happens next.

The neighbors are confused. They keep asking, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" And the man keeps saying, simply and clearly: "*I am the man.*" For the first time, he's able to stand in the world with clarity and dignity. Seeing doesn't just change his eyesight – it changes his life. Seeing allows him to step into a new future.

And the same thing happens to us when Jesus opens *our* eyes. When we begin to see the world through the light of Jesus, our lives begin to shift. We see people not as problems, but as neighbors. Not as labels, but as beloved. We begin to notice small acts of kindness we once overlooked. We notice beauty in ordinary places. We recognize that God is already at work in the world – even in places we assumed were hopeless.

My friends, the world desperately needs people who can see with hope. Not a naïve kind of optimism, but a stubborn hope deeply rooted in the love of God. Hope that believes no life is beyond healing. Hope that believes broken relationships can be restored. Hope that believes God's light shines even in the darkest corners of the world.

Fortunately for us, this is exactly the promise of today's gospel. Blindness does not get the final word. Not our blindness. Not the world's blindness. Jesus – the light of the world, is still opening eyes. Still kneeling in the dust of our lives. Still calling us toward a new way of seeing. A way of seeing shaped by love.

So I wonder if our prayer this Lent could be as simple as, "God, help us see." Help us see the people we've overlooked. Help us see the suffering we've avoided. Help us see the beauty you've created in this world. Help us see *your image* in every person. And help us see the new life you are leading us into. Because when Jesus opens our eyes, we begin to see what's been true all along – God's love is already here. God's light is already shining. And a new life is already beginning. Thanks be to God. Amen.