

Dear saints who are the light of the world, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The anticipation of the birth of child is great. I will be first hand testimony of this, as I'm sure others in the congregation can as well, either in the present or in your past experiences at the anticipation of the birth of your own children. There is a desire to see and hold this little gift of God that is knit together in the mother's womb for the previous nine months. Finally the time and labor and delivery comes and there is unexplainable moment of joy as the child is born. But for the parents of this man Jesus encounters there would soon be something evident that would take away some of this joy. Their child did not look at them back, this boy did not react to light and his surroundings. This child was born blind.

Blindness at the time of Christ was a severe blow to one's personal and social life. The individual and family left to fend for themselves. The general attitude reflected in the disciples question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" We do the same thing, how many times have you thought or confessed or heard others say that this cancer, this disease, this economic problem, must some sort of punishment from God because of a sin of either the parent or person themselves?

"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him...As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, he made a little mud with his spit, and smeared it on the man's eyes. As the mud was washed away, in the pool of Siloam, so was the darkness.

Overflowing joy! What would you pay for your eyesight, or for your child's if born blind? Would heart overflow in thankfulness to God for the world of possibilities made with the gift of sight? This man could see for the first time ever, all the sights and shapes and colors flooded in, faces of his parents and others had an image, textures had a look. What a tremendous moment of joy and celebration. His first sight would have been the waters of Siloam, the waters where the Lord would send him by His Word and promise to provide cleansing and healing.

Enter the Pharisees! Uh, didn't he break the law by doing this healing on the Sabbath? Soon joyful thanksgiving is assaulted by investigation and accusation! You see, the Pharisees had perverted the Sabbath from a day of rest in which God served man to a day of laws and rules by which man tried to please God. That perversion is still very much alive today. They had built a man-made fence around God's day of rest and worship. What Jesus did in mixing mud was considered the work of a mason. While a cow could be pulled out of a well on the Sabbath, somehow Jesus restoring this man's sight with a little mud was too much! The questions come in rapid succession.

"How have you received your sight?" "What do you say about him?" To the parents – "Is this your son, who you say was born blind?" Again to the young man – "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" Under the glaring attack of the religious elite, the parents' hearts are fearful. They don't want to lose their place in the synagogue for confessing

Christ. Think of it! Their son could now work and take a wife and look after them in their later years – it was a wondrous miracle! But their abounding joy is quickly choked down to one pitiful wary response, “He is of age; ask him.”

And when the young man bravely held to his story and gave thanks for the healing of Christ, they threw him out! All his life he had been cut off from so much because of his blindness! Now he is cut off further because he can see! They threw him out!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, how can they be so blind? How could they not see the wondrous healing gifts Jesus was present to bestow? The truth is, it was easy – it came naturally for them just as it comes naturally to you and to me.

For you see, the coming of Jesus brings both darkness and light. It brings darkness to supposed saints who think they see – who imagine they’re performing well enough to please God. It brings light for sinners, who know they are groping in the darkness of sin apart from Jesus Christ. “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

Physical blindness is only temporary, like all the other afflictions in this life. But a blind and darkened heart will prevent you from seeing for all eternity. The Pharisees had hearts and minds that were blind to God’s gracious healing in Jesus Christ. It’s the same reason you and I have neighbors and friends and even family who won’t believe. It is sin. It dead ends in eternal darkness and gnashing of teeth.

It is the sin of unbelief and it also clings to us. Our Old Adam does not want to see how good God is to us in Christ. Our sinful nature wills to be blind to how much God loves us in Christ. Every day we are naturally dark to the healing, light-giving works of Jesus Christ. Some days we might go through the day not wanting to expose the unfruitful works of darkness. We prefer to live by the light of our own desires and dreams. We favor our own displays of spirituality and goodness. Surely we can pick and choose and mix and match and be just fine. Such is the darkness into which we all are born.

Remember how Jesus healed the blind man? He anointed the man’s eyes with...dust and water and combined with his Word and said, “Go wash...” Fellow-Redeemed, this messy, muddy eye-cover points to the mud in the eye of the whole world! The mud in the eye of this blind man says “look at the sin in your own eyes” – “you are blind to God” – “You need washing to restore sight.”

Jesus told that muddy-eyed blind man – “Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which means the waters of the Sent One). Who is the Sent One except Jesus? This man went and washed Himself in the waters of the Sent One now included with God’s command and combined with God’s Word. He came back seeing! Likewise the Holy Spirit said to us who were born with mud-caked sin-blindness, be baptized, every one of you, for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). By His own baptism in

the Jordan River, Jesus made all waters a blessed flood and washing of rebirth when included with His command combined with His word. This is what is delivered in this Holy washing, it is what Tessa has received, it is what you have received, your sins forgiven, you are cleansed and given your sight and life!

But notice, Jesus didn't wash the blind man or us so that we can primarily look with new eyes at the world. There is much beauty to see in this world, but there is only one view that gives us life! Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him.

The man formerly blind could now see Jesus for who He is, the Sent One. He is the one Isaiah prophesied of...look you blind, that you may see! Who is blind but my servant...Who is blind as my dedicated one...or blind as the servant of the Lord? You see, the young man left this encounter as a believer in Jesus Christ. Now He could see! Not only was this world open to him in a wondrously new way, but the world to come was open to him by God's gift of faith. Now He could see Jesus!

The light has come to shine on the darkness. Jesus has come as the Sent One, to bear your sin. Ultimately, even His heavenly Father cast Him out. On the cross, Jesus' eyes were caked thick with the muddy blindness of your sin and mine. On the cross the Light of the World encountered the outer darkness of our eternal punishment.

Dear friends, seeing this is your life! You are the joy set before Christ for which He endured the cross! See the love of the Father for you – His unimaginable, incomparable love for you! See what the Sent One has finished for you! God has answered our blindness by blinding Himself! Your sins forgiven, you are the light and the light of the world shines brightly. In Christ God wills not to see your sins or mine! As far as the east is from the west so far has He removed our sins from us by judging His Son in our stead.

Risen from the darkness of death Christ is still the light of the world! It is He who washed away Tessa's blindness and your blindness in water combined with His Word. Once you were blind, but now you see. For judgment He came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. Oh Come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and Perfecter of our faith! Amen.