

Wesley Uniting Church, Forrest

LENT FOUR

Theme: “Seeing, Really Seeing”
Sunday, 19th March 2023
9am Contemporary Worship



“I’ve never seen such a bunch of apple-eaters” JD Salinger, “Nine Stories”

The Gospel reading today is the third in a series that come to us from the Gospel of John. The order has been, Nicodemus (Lent 2) The Woman at the Well (Lent 3) and now the Blind Man. Each in this trilogy is important, because each depicts a response to Jesus, with varying degrees of adequacy. Of the three, it is the Blind Man and only the Blind Man who sees most clearly, who actually sees both physically and metaphysically. It is he who understands that Jesus is the Son of God. To use the metaphor of a couple of weeks ago, he sees with two eyes, with breadth *and* depth.

What also stands out in this reading of the Blind Man, is the issue of “sin”. It is a word that in secular circles, even Christian ones, causes embarrassment these days: it seems uncouth, unsophisticated, surely, we have moved beyond it? The point however is not so much that we have moved beyond it, but that we need to move beyond our childish understanding of the term and to interpret it as adults. In this story of the Blind Man, Jesus takes the term from the vocabulary of the religious ‘heavy weights’, turns it on its head, and re-casts it as a key word in his lexicon for explaining the weight of oppression.

Preparing Ourselves through a Musical Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Paschal and Community Candles

Acknowledgement of Country

Safe Place Statement

Greeting

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
And also with you.

Invitation to Worship

Come and see!

We come to see the light shine.

Come and focus on what is true!

We come to focus on what is true.

May the light shine that we may see!

Amen.

Song: In My Father's House *Paul Sommerville*

1. Rainbow of colours, a complex of creeds;
age-old perspectives meet fresh ways to see.
Everyone welcome, fling open the doors-
you'll learn of my path and I'll learn from yours.

Chorus *In my Father's house, there are many rooms
but no walls to divide
In my Father's house, there are many rooms-
the gates are open wide.*

2. The strong and the scard come from left and right
We're not so different seen in this light.
There at the table a banquet is served.
For every person a place is reserved.

Chorus

3. Some greet a stranger, some serve the poor;
some shake the system right to its core.
Some have found true faith, others still search
'Cause it takes all kinds to make up a church.

Chorus

4. A voice for the voiceless, justice for all,
and for the listless, a clarion call.
A church of inclusion we're bringing to birth.
Just like in heaven it can be on earth.

Chorus

Opening Prayer

...Calm our insecurities which we each carry in different ways;

Calm our fear of what we may find within us.

Strengthen our resolve to live in the light';

So that we may see

Encourage our living as we carry the light.

**May we not stumble under our own strength,
but trust in our Lord.**

Amen...

Assurance

God is in the world to help us live this life.

To see, to really see,

even in the darkest, most shadowy circumstances.

God will not fail us.

We trust God to help us as we find our way. Amen.

The Children

Children's Song: J.A.M. (Jesus and Me)

Chris Jaensch

Verse 1

You can spread it on toast (spread it on toast)
Or spread it on bread (or spread it on bread)
A sandwich if you like (a sandwich if you like)
Or a muffin instead (or a muffin instead)
But that's not the jam I'm talking about
It's something else instead.
The JAM I'm talking's when I keep on walking
with Jesus in my heart and my head.

Chorus

*Jesus and Me: J.A.M!
Good company, J.A.M!
He died and he rose again to set me
free
to be the me that he wants me to be.*

Verse 2

There's strawberry jam (strawberry jam)
A traffic jam (a traffic jam)
Getting in a jam (getting in a jam)
Or jamming with the band (or jamming with the band).
But that's not the jam I'm talking about
It's something else instead.
The JAM I'm talking's when I keep on walking
with Jesus in my heart and my head.

Chorus (x2)

Paths into the Gospel Reading: Anecdotes about Really Seeing

I've never seen such a bunch of apple-eaters."

J.D. Salinger, Nine Stories

The greatest temptations are not those that solicit our consent to obvious sin, but those that offer us great evils masking as the greatest goods."

Thomas Merton, No Man Is an Island

The cross solved our problem by first revealing our real problem, our universal pattern of scapegoating and sacrificing others. The cross exposes forever the scene of our crime."

Richard Rohr, Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life

All sins are attempts to fill voids.

Simone Weil

I believe that is what the God experience does for us. It calls us beyond our limits into the fullness of life - into a capacity to love people we are not taught to love - and into an ability to be who we are.

John Shelby Spong

The straight line belongs to people, the curved line to God, **Antoni Gaudí – "God's Architect"**

Bible Reading: John 9:1-41

(page 871 of pew Bible)

In this is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Christ

Some Thoughts

Offering

Song during the offering: Open the Eyes of My Heart

Paul Baloche

Verse To see you high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of Your glory;
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy.

Chorus

Verse

Ending Holy holy holy (x3)
I want to see you.

Chorus

*Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
Open the eyes of my heart,
I want to see you, I want to see you.*

Announcements

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Song: The Summons

Iona Community

1. Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

2. Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

3. Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean

and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

4. Will you live the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

5. Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

Blessing and dismissal

Postlude