



*Who's The Blind One?*

I Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 26, 2017

First Federated Church, Peoria, Illinois

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Who's the blind one in today's gospel lesson; the man born blind—born into a world of darkness or the religious authorities? In the interrogation and the intimidation of the religious leaders we find that they are the ones who are blind. As it has been said, there are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

Blindness—in the widest sense of the word—is the thread that ties our three lessons together. Each lesson illustrates a particular kind of blindness, or a cause of blindness. In the case of the religious authorities in the gospel lesson verse 28 shows the root cause of their blindness; You are his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. Their blindness resulted from blindly following their ancient traditions. They confused the institution of which they were a part with the Creator of the institution. They lost their sense of direction and purpose. This is a blindness that still afflicts us today.

The story in I Samuel illustrates a different kind of blindness. The Lord said to (the prophet) Samuel, "How long are you going to grieve over Saul? I have rejected him as king over Israel." (v. 1) There is a blindness in grieving over that which was and never will be again—the Past. I am especially prone to this. In my mind there never has been a better pitching rotation than the 1960s Dodgers rotation that included Koufax and Drysdale. Nor has there been a better "killers' row" of batters than the Yankees lineup that included Mantle and Maris. I know that those of an older generation would differ with me and name "The Babe" and DiMaggio, and the like. But we are blind when we grieve for the Past and do not fully experience what God is doing right now, in our midst.

Another kind of blindness is found in our epistle lesson. This is one of my favorite passages, especially, when the apostle Paul quotes an unknown source and writes, Wake up, O sleeper, get up and the light of Christ will shine upon you. (v. 14b) There is the blindness of sleepwalking through life. Sleepwalking through life means that we are oblivious to the greater world around us—God's world. We become comfortable in our own little bubble. We listen to only those who agree with us or re-enforce our opinions. We avoid challenge and completely block ourselves out from the world around us; a world filled with darkness and a world in which God is calling us to shine our light. We hide our light under the basket of self-content and self-satisfaction.

In this season of Lent, on this fourth Sunday of Lent, I believe that we would do well to reflect upon our own spiritual eyesight. I believe that each one of us has own area or areas of blindness. It is time for us to ask God to make the scales of blindness fall from our eyes so that we can do the work for which God created us in the first place.

To God be the glory. Amen.