

Eyes Twice-Opened

Intro. The Lord did not go looking for opportunities to do spectacular miracles. In the course of preaching salvation, people *came to him* or, as in this reading, his heart responded to the blind man. The disciples' sincere question presented him with an opportunity to clear up a common misunderstanding about sin, to point out the dignity that belongs to everyone created in God's image and to show the works of God.

I. During their three years with the Lord, the disciples asked some dumb questions. "Can we sit on your right and left when you come into your glory?" [Mk. 10:37] "No." When a village refused to accept the Lord they asked, "Do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" [Lk. 9:54] "No." They also argued about who was

number one. The question they asked in today's gospel was **not** a dumb question; it was a very serious one. We often ask it when difficult things happen. No one knew much about diseases or infections. The common understanding of the time was sickness as punishment for sin. Somebody screwed up and somebody had to pay. After correcting the disciples' false understanding, the Lord could have kept walking, but he healed the man's blindness. Something else happened. The cured man's confidence grew. He took charge of his life by identifying himself as the formerly blind man, "I am he". He out-argued the so-called teachers and when they couldn't win, they threw him out of the temple. He brushed himself off, went home and took in the sights of his home town for the first time in his life. On his way he came face to face with the one

who healed him; he asked to believe; and found the Lord. The phrase, “Seeing the light” was never more true than in that moment.

Concl. In the first explanation of his healing, the man described the *physical* steps by which he received sight. The more he re-told the story however, the more he was transformed by the spiritual power of it and he moved closer to having his eyes opened a second time: he recognized the Lord as Messiah. Then he received a much more important gift: *salvation*. The Pharisees only saw the fact the Lord broke the Sabbath laws. In that moment, *who cared what day it was!* They refused to rejoice in the blind man’s recovery of sight and that was *their* sin. We profess to want to see where we are going in life and what God wants us to be and do as disciples. But when we refuse to see other

people’s pain, hunger, violence, injustice, we *make ourselves blind*. The cured man ran circles around the Pharisees because he realized they were blind to the reality in front of them: that Jesus **was** from God and **was** the Messiah. We have enough trouble seeing the Lord clearly without purposely closing our eyes to his presence in each other. That’s our sin. Seeing is not only a function of the eyes; the soul and the heart can also “see” if we open them. We are halfway through Lent. As we continue to prepare for Easter, we join with our catechumens and candidates and pray that we turn away from sin and desire to see God more clearly. Not only will we see **God** better, we will probably see a lot of **other** things better too, especially our sin.

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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