

March 21/22: The Man Born Blind

THOUGHTS FROM SUMNER PEERY

Diaconate Candidate

Are we the man born blind? As Jesus and the disciples passed by the man born blind, the disciples asked who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? It was a belief that persons were blind because of their sins or the sins of the parents as written in Exodus. Jesus said that he was not blind because of his sins or his parents' sins, and that he was blind so the works of God might be made visible through him.

Jesus had compassion for the blind man who had never seen the light of day, and he healed the blind man by spitting on the ground, then making clay and putting the clay on the blind man's eyes. Jesus told the blind man to go and wash his eyes in the Pool of Siloam. So, the blind man went and washed, and came back able to see.

The Pharisees questioned the healed blind man's parents to gather information in order to accuse Jesus. The parents, out of fear, only acknowledged that their son was born blind. The parents would not answer the Pharisees' question on how their son got his sight, out of fear of the Pharisees expelling them from the temple if they acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. They took a neutral position to save themselves by not acknowledging that their son was healed by Jesus. Do we take neutral positions on our faith out of fear, and deny God?

During questioning, the blind man showed his faith in Jesus by saying that he is a prophet. Then, the Pharisees tried to get him to deny his being born blind, which would deny Jesus' healing him. He said, "We know that God does not listen to sinners but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him." He said, "If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." The blind man was expelled from the temple after this.

He accepted Jesus as a prophet and later as the Son of God, and now had spiritual sight and gained spiritual growth, unlike the Pharisees, who were spiritually blind. The conflict between the Pharisees and the man born blind can be compared to our daily conflict in this material world and our own temptations to sin. The man born blind was asked to deny what he knew as true, just as we are asked to deny knowing the love and grace of Jesus Christ, but instead to embrace sin.

Jesus came back to find the man born blind because of his profession of faith in him, and gave the man born blind support and more spiritual sight by revealing he was the Son of God. We need to be aware that when we stand up for Jesus and defend the challenges to our faith that Jesus will defend us. Do we stand up for Jesus, defend our faith, and reject sin?

The man born blind received physical sight and spiritual sight that brought him to eternal light from Jesus, the Light of the World. Let us seek spiritual sight for ourselves and help others with their spiritual sight as Jesus did, and know that Jesus loves us.