

Lent Devotional April 7, 2025

Scripture

John 9:1-17

1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10 But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

Devotion

The Rev. Shannon M. Garrett-Doege '21

During the Lenten season, Christians are called to a time of reflection, renewal, and reconciliation with Christ Jesus, with one another, and with oneself. One of the ways that we can participate in the work of reconciliation is through widening our lens and experiencing the world from another perspective. There is an approach to theology known as Womanist theology, which is defined as an interpretative approach that centers the experiences of Black women in the biblical narrative. The Womanist approach prioritizes experience as a way of knowing.

In John 9:1-17, the disciples and the Pharisees both want to know something. The disciples want to know who sinned to cause the man's blindness, and the Pharisees want to know how the blind man's eyes were opened. Both the disciples and the Pharisees are seeking knowledge through facts and data rather than through experience.

Facts and data are imperative in most aspects of our lives, but sometimes, we place too much emphasis on who, what, when, where, why, and how and forget to feel, to be present, to experience. The gift of Lent is an invitation to feel. It is an invitation to reflect, renew, and reconcile. There is a wealth of knowledge in research and reading, but also in feeling and experiencing.

The Pharisees experienced Jesus performing a miracle. Instead of immersing themselves in the experience as a way of knowing, they launch an investigation. Instead of praise and thanksgiving, they offer skepticism and ridicule. From their place of privilege, the Pharisees protest Jesus' act of healing on the Sabbath, but for the blind man, even one more day of injustice was too many. Not only was the

formerly blind man's vision restored, but his life and livelihood were as well. His life was changed in dramatic fashion. It should have been a celebration, but instead, they launched an investigation.

This Lent, I invite you to prioritize experience as a way of knowing. I invite you to widen your lens. Christ Jesus invites you into the work of reconciliation with him, oneself, and the world.

Prayer

God of justice and love,
So often we are blind to everyday blessings and miracles.
We get so caught up in being right instead of being righteous.
We get so caught up in the investigation that we overlook the celebration.
We forget about the marginalized and seek to criminalize.
Cover our eyes in your miraculous mud, so that we may see again.
Wash us in your healing waters, so that we may feel again.
Strengthen us through the Holy Spirit, so that we may experience again.
So may it be. Amen.