

Works of God Displayed

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Fourth Sunday in Lent) is John 9:1-7. This is the story of Jesus healing a man born blind.

The specific location is not given. It was on the Sabbath (v 14). This story is simply the continuation of the previous narrative, for the events here told occurred as Jesus passed along, probably out of the Temple, near whose gates many beggars were wont to assemble. It so happened that His eye rested upon a blind man. It is a peculiarity of God's providence that He often manifests His power in little incidents which seem to us chance happenings. This is true also for us in our daily lives. Nothing in our lives is too small for God to notice.

The rabbis had developed the principle that "There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity." They were even capable of preexistent state. They also held that terrible punishments came on certain people because of the sin of their parents. As the next verse shows, Jesus plainly contradicted these beliefs.

All imperfections result from sin but there is not a one-to-one correlation. Jesus had come to save this man and not punish him so this was to be that opportunity. Jesus therefore taught His disciples the truth with regard to this man and all other unfortunate sick people. In this special case, for instance, the work of God, his power and might, should become manifest.

His method of healing would only seem to make matters worse: spit and mud in the man's eyes. In ancient times, saliva was thought to have curative powers (e.g., how animals clean themselves).

Shades of washing in a specific body of water brings back memories of Naaman in 2 Ki 5:14. The blind man is to wash in a specific body of water, the pool of Siloam, according to the Lord's word. It was a rock-cut pool on the southern end of the main ridge on which Jerusalem was built. The man sees.

Jesus knew his time on earth was limited so he made the most of every opportunity. In this text Jesus tells us "I am the light of the world." Jesus still heals using the gifts he has given to us. He is still the light of the world as he shines through his Word. He healed us of our most vital illness by dying on the cross to take away our sins. And through his Word and Sacrament he empowers us to share that light.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for coming to this earth and shining your light in this dark world through your words and deeds. Help me to be a faithful witness of that light. Amen