

Open Our Eyes
John chapter 9
Paulette Mixon-Weller
March 19, 2023

In a few minutes we will sing a beautiful song written by Clara H. Scott in 1895.

“Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.”

Our Scriptures for today are filled with glimpses of truth God has for us.

We read Psalm 23 in the Call to Worship about The Lord being our shepherd, caring for us and leading us in the ways.

In the litany of confession we declared with Paul in Ephesians that “once we were darkness, but now in the Lord we are light.” We are light.

In the Old Testament passage we see Samuel struggling to overcome his grief that Saul was no longer an acceptable King. Saul had anointed him to be the first king of Israel, but God had a new plan. As strong man after strong man was rejected but the youngest son in the fields was chosen, Samuel learned the truth of God that “the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart.”

In the Gospel lesson for today we see glimpses of truth as a man born blind was healed by Jesus and unfortunately the crowd and the religious authorities do the opposite of rejoice. They did not see; they were afraid and tried to set it up as a con. It was acknowledged that even though this man had been on the edge of community his whole life, they didn’t really ever see him. They denied that he was the same

man, and even went to his parents as witnesses of his identity. But Jesus went straight to him and offered a relationship.

So what do these glimpses of truth mean for us? So what do we do with all this?

Do you see the Lord leading you?

One of America's great preachers Barbara Brown Taylor preached on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. As part of her research she talked with a sheep farmer in the Midwest and learned a few things. "You push cows, but you lead sheep, and they will not go anywhere that someone else does not go first- namely their shepherd- who goes ahead of them to show them that everything is all right. Sheep tend to grow fond of their shepherds. It never ceased to amaze him, that he could walk right through a sleeping flock without disturbing a single sheep, while a stranger could not step foot in the fold without causing pandemonium. Sheep seem to consider their shepherds part of the family, and the relationship that grows up between the two is quite exclusive. They develop a language of their own that outsiders are not privy to"(Taylor 140).

The Great Shepherd went before us. We can meditate on this Psalm and on the truth that Jesus is our Shepherd. I am thankful to have Psalm 23 memorized. I recently reflected on it during a root canal, and it calmed me down.

The Letter to Ephesians proclaims that "we are light." Wow we are light. Pastor Many Sayers in Disciplines wrote:

"It turns out that if we stay in a dark environment long enough, our eyes begin to adjust to it. Maybe our expectations of ourselves slip a little. We more often miss the mark of God's call to love God and neighbor and we tell ourselves that it's ok. Maybe we hide behind the notion that "it is what it is" because we cannot see anything more."

What does it mean that We are light? Our candles have been lit by Jesus' love and example.

We are light. How can we live that out?

With Samuel, how can we see as God does and see the heart?

Our family watched the Academy Awards last Sunday, and I was so encouraged. There was so much kindness. So much light. So much seeing the heart and acknowledging what is really important. The cast of "An Irish Goodbye" who was awarded best live-action short used their acceptance speech time to sing Happy Birthday to actor James Martin who has Down Syndrome.

What does it mean to truly see and to celebrate God's glory being revealed?

Such good questions to ponder.

A few prayers to close with:

From An African school girl, "O great Chief, light a candle in my heart, that I may see what is in it, and sweep the rubbish from your dwelling place."(Counsell)

From Father Gerard Hughes, "Jesus, light of the world, be the light and joy of my life. Dispel the darkness of my fears and break down the barriers of my prejudice, so that I may recognise that which is of you in everyone I meet, and live grateful for your presence within us and amongst us. Amen."(Counsell)

From Clara H. Scott, "Silently now I wait for Thee, ready my God, Thy will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me. Spirit Divine!"(Hymnal)