

Sermon Title: Sent
Text: Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
By: Rev. Terry Carty
Date: 4-3-11
Place: Kingston Springs UMC
Season: Fourth Sunday in Lent; Laetare Sunday

Main Point: We are born incomplete, lacking parts of the full image of God. God is completing us by opening our eyes and sending us in to public places as witnesses to God's work.

We are pretty conscious of things that we cannot see clearly. There are lots of sayings about it:
Blind as a bat.
He blind-sided me.
Blind curve.
Turn a blind eye.
What other sayings to we have about blindness? [Congregation responds]
 In my blind spot
 Third Eye Blind, a band in the 90's
 Blind faith, a band in the late 60's
 Blinded by the light

What is the significance of this man, blind since birth, who Jesus has healed? He did not ask for healing. In fact, the man did not even speak in John's story until the neighbors questioned his identity. There is more to this than just another miracle. But isn't there always something to be learned in the Bible when Jesus performs a miracle?

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This story is about sin. And the season of Lent is about examining ourselves and putting off sin. What can we learn about ourselves from this story?

In Jesus' time and place, it was assumed that someone's infirmity was a result of sin. The story opens with the Disciples wondering if the man's lifelong blindness was a result of his sin or his parents' sin. Jesus dispels the whole notion that the blindness is a result of sin. The man was born blind as a canvas for God's work. Then Jesus went about the business of completing the man to physical wholeness that he had not received at birth.

But his is not finished. Jesus has not fully given the man light to see, and there is still the stigma of sin to deal with. Jesus sends the man to wash his eyes in the Pool of Siloam – the name of the pool means "sent." It would have been a major gathering place for Jews making a pilgrimage to the city. Jesus wanted people to see that the man had been given sight. He immediately began to give his account of the miracle.

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The story of sin continues when the Pharisees begin to try to determine who has sinned. There must have been a sin committed. This story reads somewhat like our legal system. Friday in Murfreesboro a woman and her grown daughter who lived in her home had an argument. The daughter became verbally abusive and called her mother terrible names. The mother responded by slapping her daughter's face. The daughter grabbed the mother's eyeglasses and threw

them aside. As the daughter advanced aggressively toward the mother, the mother's husband restrained her.

The daughter called the Murfreesboro City police hoping to have the husband arrested. That would show her Mom! But when the police arrived on the domestic violence complaint they arrested the mother – she threw the first blow. The daughter begged them not to arrest her. The husband said, “take me instead.” But the police said they had to arrest someone and it must be the principle combatant. They took her to jail. She was released Friday night and given a court order that she cannot return to her home until after her court date in May. Someone must pay.

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The Pharisees investigated the healing. There must have been a sin committed somewhere – someone must pay. They interviewed the man, then his parents, and then the man again. They determined that Jesus must be the sinner. As the man goes through this ordeal with the Pharisees, his eyes are spiritually opened and he asserts that if Jesus were not from God, then he could not give sight. The man was made whole with spiritual sight and now was complete – God's creation is completed in him.

And Jesus pushes the point that persons are not born blind because of sin. Yet he suggests that the Pharisees may be the ones who actually sin by insisting that they see. Let that part go right now - it's a very confusing argument.

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We live our lives often trying to find someone to blame when things go wrong. Moreover, we live our lives trying to find fault in someone else to explain away the faults in our own lives.

Jesus said don't blame anyone because this man was created by God this way. God is still at work. God is not finished with him yet. God is not finished with us yet either. God is still working to complete the good work that was begun in each one of us. God is making us into God's own image.

And just like the man in the story, we are being sent with mud in our eyes to the public pool named “Sent” to wash and bear our own witness to the work of God in our lives.

What is God doing in you to remove your blindness today? Think about it – can you see dimly through the mud? Is it a blame or a grudge that you might hold? Is it a broken relationship? Is it a sinful indulgence?

And where is your Pool of Siloam – where are you being sent this week so your new insight will enlighten those around you? Will you go and wash the mud clear so you can see with your new eyes? Is it your workplace, or your mother's house, or your own dinner table?

Christ took your sin years ago. You were born to be completed. Now be Sent as a witness to God's goodness in you.