

O Jesus, with bitter suffering, pain, and anguish, You redeemed our souls from the power of Satan. Enlighten our eyes to see Your love, and grant us patience in the sufferings, pain, and the labors of this present life. Keep us steadfast in Your faith, that through You we attain that better life, where pain and sickness shall be no more, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Amen. (Reading the Psalms with Luther, CPH, Ps. 107, p. 260)

So for the second time [the Pharisees] called the man who had been [born] blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this Man [Jesus] is a sinner." He answered, "Whether He is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this Man, we do not know where He comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him, and it is He who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him.

In Christ Jesus, who opens our eyes forever as those once born spiritually blind, dear fellow redeemed:

We are considering two great miracles in our text today, one – Jesus gave sight to a man born blind; second – Jesus opened this man's spiritual eyes to see forever into eternity. The second is the greatest of the two and by God's grace, we have all experienced it through faith in Christ as Savior. So let us consider: **The Healing Lasting Beyond a Lifetime.**

I

You may recall that at the beginning of John 9 when Jesus and the disciples came upon this man born blind, the disciples asked the question: "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" We could chalk it up to spiritual ignorance, but Jesus' enemies in our text take it to another level of pure self-righteous

cruelty when they say to the man: "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?"

So hateful were these enemies of Jesus that they took it out on the one whom Jesus healed. They excommunicated this man from the Church. Consider the roller coaster of emotional experiences he had that day – joyfully he could see for the very first time in his life. But when his parents were confronted by Jesus' enemies, they in essence disowned him by saying he was old enough to answer for himself. So he finally had hopes of leaving his life of begging, but his parents did not embrace him, they pushed him away too.

Consider this as well: Jesus healed this man who did not know who Jesus was. Jesus healed even unbelievers on occasion. Our Lord has love and compassion for all people. Remember He did not come to save His friends, but to save His enemies, you and me, and all sinners. He willingly came even while we were His enemies to redeem us, to buy us back from the kingdom of Satan by offering the payment to the heavenly Father to take us back.

So sick and perverse are sinfully corrupt minds, that Jesus' enemies pressured this man born blind to condemn his healer. They especially said this to him, because Jesus had done the work of healing on the Sabbath, the day of rest: "Give glory to God. We know that this Man [Jesus] is a sinner." When the man turned the tables on them and suggested they actually wanted to become Jesus' disciples, they said: "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this Man, we do not know where He comes from." Their argument was not logical.

Common sense did not elude this poor man's reasoning, even though he was having the most amazing day of his life, he responded: "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

This miracle was not a product of the powers of hell, but of the gracious working from heaven. But again there was a greater miracle taking place while Satan threw his poisonous darts at this man tempting him to despair. We do well to take note of it and cherish it for what it is worth, since it is the exact same miracle, which has taken and is taking place for us right now as the word of our Lord actively speaks to us. It is even more powerful than the word spoken

in our Gospel lesson – “*Ephatha*”, “Be Opened”, to the deaf mute, which opened the ears and loosened the tongue of the deaf mute.

II

When Jesus heard that this man whom He healed and gave sight for the first time in his life was now excommunicated, He sought him out. Then Jesus asked if he believed in the Son of Man. The man knew Jesus was speaking of the Christ, but since the prophets from old could do miracles at times, he did not know that his healer was the Christ. So Jesus identified Himself as the Christ. The man then declared: “Lord, I believe,” and worshipped Jesus as God, His Savior, come in the flesh.

What a contrast! The religion of the Pharisees who claimed they followed Moses as a strict Lawgiver, which Law according to them prevented merciful healing on the Sabbath. The religion of the Lord Jesus who came to forgive and save, drips with eternal grace and mercy. The Epistle lesson for today speaks of this contrast. When Moses came down with the Law his face shone forth with great glory and the Israelites could not gaze upon it. But the Law is the message of condemnation, whereas the Gospel ministry of Christ is that of righteousness, peace and life.

The letter of the Law wounds and kills. Truly that is a legitimate and proper function through which the Spirit works, but if that is all a sinner has, he is lost forever. But the Spirit comes with healing and life in the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Savior. The Pharisees were content leaving this man in the state of condemnation through a false excommunication. But our Lord Jesus came with the balm of His gracious words of love and peace receiving him into the true Church.

This man was given physical eyesight for the first time that day, but eventually he would have those eyes go dark again in death. But his perfect 20/20 spiritual eyesight was also established that very day as he came to know and trust in Jesus as Savior. That was a healing that would never come to an end. And, in truth, his physical eyesight will be fully restored on the great day of resurrection when Jesus returns. Remember what Job confessed: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”

This promise, in which Job trusted, is also for you my fellow enlightened souls. You have been eternally healed by the grace of God extended to you through Jesus’ perfect life and bitter suffering and death. You see God’s great love for you in His Son. You see that

in Him alone you are forgiven all your sins, you have everlasting life and eternal salvation.

We still pray for miracles for our loved ones, total strangers and even for ourselves. God in His mercy spares us at times from the ravages of sin by healing our diseases and mending our broken bodies and even from the threats of imminent death. But eventually we will all have our eyes go dim in this life. Thanks be to our gracious Lord, He has provided us with the greatest of all healings by granting us eternal life in His name. May this rightly astonish you beyond measure leading you to conclude that our Lord Jesus has truly done all things well, He even makes us who have been born blind and lost forever, to be those who can now see Him as the Way, the Truth and the Life and come to the Father freely through Him. This is our healing beyond a lifetime, since we shall behold our gracious Lord face to face; His gracious countenance shall shine upon us forever. Amen.