

# FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

## Discovering What Is Good and Right and True

March 19, 2023



### AS WE GATHER

Some of the central people in the Gospel narratives we get to know by name; others we do not. Although the man born blind is a major person in John 9, we never learn what his name might be. We meet his parents and his neighbors and we meet the Pharisees to whom he tells the story of the miraculous restoration of his sight. Although we do not learn his name, Jesus said of the man born blind that the works of God were displayed in him. As the One brightening our lives with the light of salvation, Jesus brings a new vision to our lives—an eternal vision of life with God that never ends. God knows our names. He directs the cross currents of our daily lives. In His light we see light—and that is what matters!

✘ PREPARATION ✘

**HYMN** "Amazing Grace 744 vs 1-3

1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound— That  
2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His  
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but  
Word my hope se - cures; He will my shield and  
have al - read - y come; His grace has brought me  
now am found, Was blind but now I see!  
por - tion be As long as life en - dures.  
safe thus far, His grace will lead me home.

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**INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**OPENING SENTENCES** *Psalm 119:33–35, 40–41*

Pastor: Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes; and I will keep it to the end.

**People: Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law and observe it with my whole heart.**

Pastor: Lead me in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.

**People: Behold, I long for Your precepts; in Your righteousness give me life!**

Pastor: Let Your steadfast love come to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your promise.

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us make confession of our sins to God, our gracious, heavenly Father.

**People:**       **Eternal God, we confess that we all have sinned and need forgiveness. By nature, we are sinful from the very beginnings of our lives. Through our thoughts, words, and deeds, we continually sin against You. We have lived for ourselves in many ways, breaking Your commands that direct us not to lie, steal, or transgress Your holy will. We have walked in the darkness of bad choices and have left unfulfilled opportunities to do good and be blessings to others. O God, in Your mercy forgive our sin and free us from selfishness and indifference, that we may joyfully follow Your will and gladly obey Your commandments. Graciously forgive our sins and direct us in ways of compassion and love.**

Pastor: God promises to hear those who turn to Him with repentant hearts. Upon this your confession, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in ✠ peace.

**People:**       **Amen.**

*(Share the peace of Christ with those around you)*

**HYMN** "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness" 849



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark - ness With a lib - er -  
2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren With a strong, yet  
3 Let us praise the Word In - car - nate, Christ, who suf - fered



at - ing light; Praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners,  
gen - tle, word; Praise the One who drove out de - mons  
in our place. Je - sus died and rose vic - to - rious



Turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight. Praise the One who preached the  
With the pierc - ing, two - edged sword. Praise the One who brings cool  
That we may know God by grace. Let us sing for joy and



Gos - pel, Heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease, Calm - ing  
wa - ter To the des - ert's burn - ing sand; From this  
glad - ness, See - ing what our God has done; Let us



storms, and feed - ing thou - sands With the ver - y Bread of peace.  
Well comes liv - ing wa - ter, Quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.  
praise the true Re - deem - er, Praise the One who makes us one.

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**SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:**           **Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING    *Isaiah 42:14–21* (The Lord turns darkness into light.)

For a long time I have held my peace;  
I have kept still and restrained myself;  
now I will cry out like a woman in labor;  
I will gasp and pant.  
I will lay waste mountains and hills,  
and dry up all their vegetation;  
I will turn the rivers into islands,  
and dry up the pools.  
And I will lead the blind  
in a way that they do not know,  
in paths that they have not known  
I will guide them.  
I will turn the darkness before them into light,  
the rough places into level ground.  
These are the things I do,  
and I do not forsake them.  
They are turned back and utterly put to shame,  
who trust in carved idols,  
who say to metal images,  
“You are our gods.”  
Hear, you deaf,  
and look, you blind, that you may see!  
Who is blind but my servant,  
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?  
Who is blind as my dedicated one,  
or blind as the servant of the LORD?

He sees many things, but does not observe them;  
his ears are open, but he does not hear.  
The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness' sake,  
to magnify his law and make it glorious.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE**    *Ephesians 5:8–14*    (Walking as children of the light)

For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**SOLO**    “How Great Is Our God”    Don Miller

**GRADUAL AND VERSE**    *Psalms 36:9, Hebrews. 12:2*

Pastor: With You is the fountain of life; in Your light do we see light.

**People:**        **O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,**

**All:**            **who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL**    *John 9:1–41*    (Jesus heals a man who had been born blind.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter.

**People:**            **Glory to You, O Lord.**

As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man 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. Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

**HYMN OF THE DAY** “Just As I Am” 570 vs 1,4,5,6



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy  
 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; Sight, rich - es,  
 5 Just as I am, Thou wilt re - ceive, Wilt wel - come,  
 6 Just as I am; Thy love un-known Has bro - ken



blood was shed for me And that Thou bidd'st me come to  
 heal - ing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to  
 par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; Be - cause Thy prom - ise I be -  
 ev - 'ry bar - rier down; Now to be Thine, yea, Thine a -



Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.  
 find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.  
 lieve, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.  
 lone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

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**SERMON** "Karma or Grace" John 9:1-41

**CREED** *Nicene Creed*

**People:** I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and  
the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and  
glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: . . . Lord, in Your mercy,  
**People:**           **hear our prayer.**

(more prayers are offered)

Pastor: We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through Jesus Christ,  
our Lord.

**People:**           **Amen.**

## OFFERING

### ✠ SACRAMENT ✠

## PREFACE    *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People:**           **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People:**           **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:**           **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Lord of heaven and earth, we praise You for bringing light to a darkened world. We bless You for calling us to be people who walk as children of the light, secure in the currents of the world around us. We thank You for inviting us to Your Holy Table. Joined together in the name of our Lord and as one with the communion of saints, we pray You to pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us to sanctify and renew us in body and soul for the sake of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**People:**           **Amen.**

**THE WORDS OF OUR LORD**    *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24;  
Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✕ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✕ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

**PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST**    *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**People:**            **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**LORD'S PRAYER**    *Matthew 6:9–13*

**People:**            **Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

# PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **Amen.**

# AGNUS DEI "Lamb of God" 550



1 Your on - ly Son, no sin to hide, But You have  
2 Your Gift of love they cru - ci - fied, They laughed and  
3 I was so lost, I should have died, But You have



sent Him from Your side To walk up - on this guilt - y  
scorned Him as He died: The hum - ble King they named a  
brought me to Your side To be led by Your staff and



sod, And to be - come the Lamb of God.  
fraud, And sac - ri - ficed the Lamb of God.  
rod, And to be called a lamb of God.



O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the ho - ly Lamb of God!



O wash me in His pre - cious blood, My Je - sus Christ, the Lamb of God.

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## POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Blessed are You, heavenly Father, for You have once again fed and nourished us at Your Table through the body and blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. As Lord of our lives, strengthen and support us so that we may walk as children of the light, and, sharing that kindly light, proclaim Your love to all the world. Bless us day by day, and keep us hope-filled as we await Your eternal kingdom, where You live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

## BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: **Amen.**

## HYMN “Amazing Grace” 744 vs 4-5



4 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail And  
5 When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright  
mor - tal life shall cease, A - maz - ing grace shall  
shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to  
then pre - vail In heav - en's joy and peace.  
sing God's praise Than when we'd first be - gun.

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