

Lent 4 - Year A

1 Sam 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Eph 5:8-14

Jn 9: 1-41

Who do you see? What do you see? How do you see?

All three of these questions come up in today's scriptures.

Who do you see?

Jesse's sons present themselves and Samuel is immediately impressed with the eldest because of his stature and good looks. This must surely be the one. Maybe Samuel just wanted to get the whole business over with as soon as possible and get out of town. But God is quick to remind Samuel that God does not see as humans do and he will need to wait until all the sons are presented. People look at the outside, but God looks at the heart. Outward appearances can be so deceiving – we have heard of persons overlooked or misunderstood because of color, body type or disability. That is not the essence of the person or the whole story. In every encounter we bring our story, our history, and our experiences. Consciously or unconsciously, they come with us and influence our response. We need to move on from the baggage and seek the truth. Is the person more than the eye can see -is there depth of character, honesty, generosity, responsibility? These are the qualities that matter. Unfortunately, quick reactions and judgements can have permanent, disastrous, and possibly deadly results. The reverse can also happen – the good-looking smooth talker can scam the innocent or possibly bilk thousands out of their life savings.

What do you see?

Results do not reveal the back story. Think of a magnificent work of art. It begins with dabs of paint on an artist's palette. From humble beginnings something great emerges. Talent transforms one to the other. Simple ingredients in the right proportion and mixture result in wonderful cooking and pastries. Skill performs the transformation. Mud and spit can restore sight. They come together in a miracle from God. There is much more than what has a rational explanation. We need to rely on faith and belief.

How do you see?

Do the preconceptions of culture contort our sight? “Is this man blind because he sinned, or his parents sinned”. Do we only see what we have learned or do we see with the clarity of faith. There does not have to be cause and effect. Why not go with the simple explanation that he was born without his sight – no need to ask about sins. It is easy to fall into the trap of making things more complicated than they need to be. If the Pharisees could not accept that there was no blame for his blindness, then they also could not accept the healing. Saying it was a miracle was too simple. If one can ever say a miracle is simple. They could only say that the man was not really blind and Jesus was a fake and worse yet he healed on the sabbath which brought even more contempt upon him. Unbelief stretches on as the man and his parents are cross-examined again and again. Miracles do not need a reason – they do not need to be picked apart. That is where grace comes in. In their blindness, the Pharisees could not accept God’s mercy, goodness, and power. They needed to pick it apart and look for an earthly explanation. They did not believe that God can and will do more than what is humanly possible. in God’s mercy and power. Once again they missed the spirit of their faith.

Let us bask in God’s grace and give thanks for the wonders and miracles in our lives. God is always with us and ready to answer our prayers and do more than we can ask or imagine.