

When I think about it, I still feel a darkness inside me. We were on a Metra train riding into Chicago. Up in the front of the car a young, blue-collar mom with her child was being bullied by a big, boorish, white-collar, self-important boss-type. I don't know all of what was going on; I'm still making excuses, aren't I? But I just sat there.

Do you remember the time you just sat there? Or the time you walked on or drove on by? Do you remember the time the bully bullied, the needy needed, the hurting and the heart-broken and the scared showed it all - and you just sat there or walked on by? It leaves a darkness inside, doesn't it? And not just a darkness inside us, it leaves a darkness in the world.

Oh, we have our excuses, don't we? We didn't know what was going on. We didn't know what to do. We didn't have the time; we didn't have the money, the mind, the muscle. We were afraid, afraid of what might happen, afraid of failing, afraid of being taken advantage of. And so we just sat there or walked on by. Oh, we had our reasons. But it still left a darkness inside, didn't it? And darkness in the world.

Or maybe we thought: "They got themselves into this mess." Or "they had it coming." Or they weren't "worth the bother." And maybe after just sitting there or walking on by, maybe we didn't feel any darkness inside us, but it still leaves a darkness in us and a darkness in the world.

In our lesson today, Jesus doesn't just walk on by. As he's walking by, he sees a blind man. He doesn't just see a blind man; he sees an opportunity, an opportunity to do the work of God, an opportunity to shine as light in a dark world.

It wasn't a good time for this. Just before this, Pharisees and we don't know who or how many get after Jesus, challenging Jesus. At the temple of all places, they pick up stones to stone Jesus, but Jesus slips away. It wasn't a good time to stop and get caught. It was a good time to walk on by and get out of town, but Jesus doesn't just walk on by. Jesus stops.

It wasn't a good time to heal that blind man. It was the Sabbath. The Pharisees had already been getting after Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. To stop and give sight to the blind man would have been poking the tiger, asking for trouble. It would have been a good time to walk on by, then maybe come back the next day. But Jesus didn't just walk on by. Jesus stopped to give sight to the man born blind.

A man born blind. The disciples wondered: "**who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?**" Perhaps the disciples were just curious. Perhaps they were thinking theology - sin and guilt and judgment. Or was there something darker in their question "**who sinned that he was born blind?**" After a near-death experience, with Jesus and his way of creating trouble on the Sabbath, were the disciples wondering if that blind man sinner was worth it? Were they suggesting he was born blind because he had it coming? Were they hoping Jesus would just walk on by? Jesus could have walked on by, but he didn't.

Why? Jesus tells us. "**This happened [this man was born blind] so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**" So why? Jesus didn't just see a man born blind. Jesus saw an opportunity, an opportunity to do the work of God, an opportunity to shine. Jesus saw an opportunity arranged by God, an opportunity that would pass, an opportunity Jesus would not let pass. Jesus was here to shine. It didn't matter there were people out there who wouldn't like it. It didn't matter the timing wasn't good. Jesus saw an opportunity, an opportunity arranged by God, an opportunity to do the work of God, an opportunity to shine, before it was too late.

So Jesus stopped. He didn't just do a drive-by, a fly-by, a snap of the finger and off we go. No, Jesus stopped. He spit on the ground; with his spit on the ground, he made some mud. He smeared it, rubbed it, on the blind man's eyes, and sent him to the Pool of Siloam to wash and to see, and the man born blind went home seeing.

Some would say it wasn't a good time for that, but it was God's time, and so for Jesus it was the right time to shine.

Jesus gives the blind man sight. But Jesus does more than just give the blind man sight, Jesus gives the blind man his own opportunity to shine.

I can't imagine how amazing this would be - to be how old? and to see for the first time. To see family, friends, the glories of Jerusalem - I might want to go and see everything, all at once, all right now. At the same time, I can't imagine how overwhelming this would be. To see all this for the first time - I might want to hide and take my time without a crowd all around. But the man born blind doesn't get to take it all in quietly by himself; he doesn't get to take it all in together with people happy for him. Instead the man born blind is put on the spot, pushed, pulled, bullied, maligned, and rejected. But in that darkness, he shines! He doesn't hide or shirk or look for an easy way out - he shines! He tells what he knows - he knows he doesn't have all the answers - but he shines and tells what he knows!

And everybody believed him and turned to Jesus and they all lived happily ever after. No. It didn't work that way. The man born blind shined, and the darkness went after him and kicked him out. But Jesus doesn't leave him in the dark. Jesus looks for him, finds him, and introduces himself to him as the Son of God. Again wisdom might say it wasn't a good time or a good place for Jesus to get involved - the people in power were worked up against Jesus. But Jesus doesn't just walk on by. Jesus wanted the man born blind to see more than the world around him. Jesus knew the man needed to see more and have more, and Jesus had more to show him and give him.

We see that something more in John chapter 1, 8 chapters before our lesson - **“He [Jesus] was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”**

The man who was once born blind, now knowing God and the Son of God, was reborn seeing as a child of God. What does that mean for us? We were once born blind to God, born into a world of darkness. Think about it. What if no one introduced you to Jesus? What if no one introduced me to Jesus? I'd still be in the dark - blind and wandering in the darkness of my guilt and shame; blind and wandering in the darkness of trying to figure out who I am, why I am, trying to be a somebody; I'd still be in the dark, blind and a burden, wandering in the darkness, floundering, foundering, not able to make things right for myself or the people around me.

But God put someone in our lives; God put you in someone's life. And they didn't just sit there; they didn't just walk on by. They shone and they shined Jesus' light into your life so now you know Jesus and live in his light. Instead of blind in the dark of your guilt and shame, you know Jesus - you are washed, you are clean, you are forgiven and right by God. Instead of blind in the dark wandering and wondering who you are, with Jesus, you know who you are - you are a child of God with God beaming over you - "You are my child whom I love; with you I am well pleased." And instead of wondering and wandering in the dark - "why am I here?" - with Jesus, you know why you're here - you're here to shine! We're here to shine!

So why all the darkness? Here's one answer - to give you a time and a place to shine! Darkness sets us up to shine! Darkness is our time to shine - with Jesus! Amen.

**THE SERVICE**

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** we see darkness and trouble in us and around us.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we are encouraged - with Jesus we get to see opportunity in the darkness and troubles - opportunity to shine the light of Jesus!

**OPENING HYMN**

*"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"*  
**Hymn 517**

Praise the one who breaks the darkness  
with a liberating light;  
praise the one who frees the pris'ners,  
turning blindness into sight.  
Praise the one who preached the gospel,  
healing ev'ry dread disease,  
calming storms and feeding thousands  
with the Father's word of peace.

Praise the one who blessed the children  
with a strong, yet gentle, word;  
praise the one who drove out demons  
with the piercing, two-edged sword.  
Praise the one who brings cool water  
to the desert's burning sand;  
from this well comes living water,  
quenching thirst in ev'ry land.

Let us praise the Word incarnate,  
Christ, who suffered in our place;  
Jesus died and rose victorious  
that we may know God by grace.  
Let us sing for joy and gladness,  
seeing what our God has done;  
let us praise the true Redeemer,  
praise the one who makes us one.

**OPENING SENTENCES**

Our help is in the name of the Lord.  
**Who made heaven and earth.**

## CONFESSION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, during the days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.

The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. In our struggle and in our times of trouble, we know that with Jesus we have God's promise and power.

I invite you, now, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle.

## HYMN

*"Lord, Have Mercy"*  
Hymn 652 vs. 1

For what we have done and left undone  
we fall on your countless mercies.  
For sins that are known and those unknown  
we call on your name so holy.  
For envy and pride, for closing our eyes;  
for scorning our very neighbor.  
In thought, word, and deed we've failed you, our King;  
how deeply we need a Savior. (Refrain I)

Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.

## ABSOLUTION

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## HYMN

*"Lord, Have Mercy"*  
Hymn 652 vs. 2

For what you have done, your life of love  
you perfectly lived, we praise you.  
Though tempted and tried, you fixed your eyes;  
you finished the work God gave you.  
And there on the tree, a King among thieves,  
you bled for a world's betrayal.

You loved to the end, our merciful friend;  
how pure and forever faithful. (Refrain II)

Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.  
(Repeat)

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy Spirit, we thank you for all those who are employed in the field of social work. Move more men and women to take on this burden of love. Instill in all of us a concern for broken families and communities. Lead us to help and assist in bearing the crosses of others so that the love of Christ becomes evident to all.

**Amen.**

#### FIRST READING

*Isaiah 42:14–21*

“For a long time I have kept silent,  
I have been quiet and held myself back.  
But now, like a woman in childbirth,  
I cry out, I gasp and pant.  
I will lay waste the mountains and hills  
and dry up all their vegetation;  
I will turn rivers into islands  
and dry up the pools.  
I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,  
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;  
I will turn the darkness into light before them  
and make the rough places smooth.  
These are the things I will do;  
I will not forsake them.  
But those who trust in idols,  
who say to images, ‘You are our gods,’  
will be turned back in utter shame.  
“Hear, you deaf;  
look, you blind, and see!  
Who is blind but my servant,  
and deaf like the messenger I send?  
Who is blind like the one in covenant with me,  
blind like the servant of the LORD?  
You have seen many things, but you pay no attention;  
your ears are open, but you do not listen.”  
It pleased the LORD  
for the sake of his righteousness  
to make his law great and glorious.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM OF THE DAY**

*Psalm 27A*

*Refrain*

The LORD is my light, the LORD is my help, the LORD is my salvation.

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom / shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I / be afraid?

One thing I ask / from the LORD,

this only / do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house / of the LORD

all the days / of my life,

to gaze on the beauty / of the LORD

and to seek him in his / temple. *Refrain*

He will hide me in the shelter of his / sacred tent

and set me high up- / on a rock.

I remain confi- / dent of this:

I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land / of the living.

Wait / for the LORD;

be strong and take heart and wait / for the LORD.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son**

**and to the Holy / Spirit,**

**as it was in / the beginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

**SECOND READING**

*Ephesians 5:8–14*

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,  
rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Isaiah 60:1*

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

GOSPEL

*John 9:1-7,13-17,34-39*

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided.

Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN

*"Lord, You Call Us as Your People"*

**Hymn 736**

Lord, you call us as your people,  
out of darkness into light.  
You created and redeemed us,  
made us precious in your sight.  
Give us faith to trust you boldly  
and to love you steadfastly.  
By your Spirit may we ever  
faithful to our callings be.

Lord, you call us as disciples,  
walking on your pilgrim way.  
Crucified and risen Savior,  
you are with us ev'ry day.  
Give us wisdom, give us courage

as you teach us patiently.  
By your Spirit may we ever  
faithful to our callings be.

Lord, you send us to the harvest  
in your Great Commission's call,  
reaching out to all the nations,  
bringing life and hope to all.  
Give us boldness and compassion,  
bless us with your eyes to see.  
By your Spirit may we ever  
faithful to our callings be.

Lord, you call us to new ventures  
by a pathway yet unknown.  
Though we cannot see the ending,  
we will follow you alone.  
Knowing that your hand is guiding  
and you love us faithfully,  
by your Spirit may we ever  
faithful to our callings be.

Lord, you call us as your people,  
now in faith we sing your praise:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
alleluias to you raise.  
Hold us in your gracious power,  
blessèd Holy Trinity,  
that rejoicing we will ever  
faithful to our callings be.

#### SERMON

*John 9*

#### NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,**

and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who in unity with the Father and the Son  
is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.



OFFERING

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.*

CHOIR

*"Let Your Light Shine"*

Music and lyrics: Tim Samelson

Solo by: Steve Lemerand

1. My friend is lost, can't find his way; so he wanders through the night.  
Don't you be frightened, for God is with you,  
give up your fear and shine your light.
2. My little girl, her heart is huge, and her smile could melt a stone.  
So when she tells you that Jesus loves you,  
she's sure to help you see you're home.

*Refrain:*

*So let your light shine warm as the sun. Don't keep it covered up on a shelf.*

*Yes, let your light shine, bright as the One who loves you more--more than His life itself.*

3. My dearest friend, sings like an angel, and her song will stir your soul.  
So she sings boldly; strong Gospel only,  
you hear the Truth that makes you whole. *Refrain*
4. My Savior came to Earth to rescue ev'ryone, not just the few.  
How will they know Him, if you stay silent?  
Sharing the Word is what you do. How will we know Him, if we stay silent?  
Sharing the Word is what we do. *Refrain*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Eternal God and Father, we thank you for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for occasions to serve and be served, and for fellowship with believers in our congregation and our synod.

**Help us rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and use them faithfully.**

Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open our eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of the lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, Lord Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

**Awaken us to opportunities to proclaim your message of love.**

Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly. Help us to speak the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

**Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Keep in your care those who are enduring chronic pain and incessant unhappiness, those enduring rejection and struggling with poverty, those mourning the loss of someone they loved. [Especially bless... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Bring healing and help and comfort and calm to everyone in distress.

**Move us to act alone or join with others to provide help and support.**

Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

**Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.**

Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

**Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

## THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

### PREFACE

CW 183

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

CW 184

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

### JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

CW 186

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

Church of God, elect and glorious,  
 holy nation, chosen race,  
 called as God's own special people,  
 royal priests and heirs of grace;  
 know the purpose of your calling,  
 show to all his mighty deeds,  
 tell of love that knows no limits,  
 grace that meets all human needs.

God has called you out of darkness  
 into his most marv'lous light,  
 brought his truth to life within you,  
 turned your blindness into sight.  
 Let your light so shine around you  
 that God's name is glorified  
 and all find fresh hope and purpose  
 in Christ Jesus crucified.

Once you were an alien people,  
 strangers to God's heart of love,  
 but he brought you home in mercy,  
 citizens of heav'n above.  
 Let his love flow out to others,  
 let them feel a Father's care,  
 that they too may know his welcome  
 and his countless blessings share.

Church of God, elect and holy,  
 be the people he intends,  
 strong in faith and swift to answer  
 each command your master sends.  
 Royal priests, fulfill your calling  
 through your sacrifice and prayer;  
 give your lives in joyful service,  
 sing his praise, his love declare.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our

love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

#### **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

#### **CLOSING HYMN**

*“Rise, Shine, You People”*

**Hymn 744**

Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered  
our human story; God in him is centered.

He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded,  
with grace unbounded.

See how he sends the pow’rs of evil reeling;  
he brings us freedom, light and life and healing.  
All men and women, who by guilt are driven,  
now are forgiven.

Come, celebrate, your banners high unfurling,  
your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.  
To all the world go out and tell the story  
of Jesus’ glory.

Tell how the Father sent his Son to save us.  
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.  
Tell how the Spirit calls from ev’ry nation  
his new creation.

#### **Acknowledgments**

Setting Two from Christian Worship

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Liturgical and musical settings of Scripture based on text from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Software distributed in partnership with Northwestern Publishing House.

Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2026 Concordia Publishing House.

*Let Your Light Shine Music and lyrics: Tim Samuelson Copyright © 2025.*