

SERMON on the Blind Man - January 19, 2020 - Luke 18:35-43

The Old Testament prophecy tells us that when the Messiah will come, the blind will see, the lame will walk and the mute will speak. Our Savior the Messiah is healing the multitudes of their physical illnesses. However, there is a greater, deeper significance to these physical healings. What is most important is that our souls are healed. In the end our earthly bodies will decompose in the grave and go back to the earth from which God created us. However, our souls will live forever. It is surely a marvelous thing when a person who is physically blind receives their sight and it is a cause for much rejoicing. What is much much greater than this, what is the greatest miracle, is when someone is blind with their spiritual eyes, when a person cannot perceive with their heart the existence, grace, love and closeness of God. All of us are at different levels of understanding God and all of us are in different unique situations in our lives. I believe that we must accept people where they are. I believe that it is wrong for any of us to try to change people and make them into something that they are not. I believe that it is wrong for any of us to expect someone to act a certain way and be a certain way that we consider the "right" or "better" way. We must accept and acknowledge people where they are. I think that if we understand this, there would be much fewer arguments and ill feelings between people. One thing I tell couples who are preparing for marriage is not to deceive yourself by thinking, "Oh, I will change him or her after we are married and then he or she will be the way I want them to be." WRONG! I tell that what you see now is what you will get, and how he or she is now is how they will be after you are married and you will not change your spouse and make him or her different. I am not saying that we should not change and that people cannot change. All of us are called by the Lord to repent. The word in Greek for repentance, μετάνοια, means "to change." We all have free will and that is a gift that God has given us and a major component of what it means to be a human being. God respects our free will. However, God, the Church, our spiritual leaders, they all cast the seeds of knowledge, create situations, and try to lead us to where we voluntarily hopefully will choose to go and to change our hearts and ourselves and be and live for God and not for ourselves. When the sheep are called, there are some who respond and sadly, there are some who do not respond and stay right where they are. Therefore, when the Lord heals the physical eyes of the blind man, it is the spiritual eyes that are symbolically being healed. When the eyes of the heart are healed, this is invisible to us, but when the physical eyes are healed, this is a real visible example to us in order for the Lord to demonstrate for us the deeper meaning of what He is trying to do. The miracles performed in the Gospel of John are called "signs." These deeds of healing, changing water into wine, etc. are like signposts indicating to us and pointing to a greater meaning and understanding which the Lord wishes to convey to us. In fact, the word "miracle" does not even appear anywhere in Scripture, either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. The word miracle is a thoroughly modern word which actually obfuscates the understanding of what God is doing. In Hebrew we use the word **נִסִּים (nes)** today to mean miracle, but its meaning in Biblical Hebrew is "a symbol of victory held high for all to see (also a banner or flag)." The message here, my dear brothers and sisters, is that in one way or another, to one degree or another, we are all blind—spiritually. We are all in need of enlightenment from our Savior. We all need the light of understanding to shine brighter in our hearts and minds, we all need to repent or change and struggle to become closer to God and to struggle to have our Lord's love and grace and the Divine presence within us and giving God's light and vision to the spiritual eyes of our heart. There are many who have physical sight and cannot see, and there are many who are physically blind and can see more clearly than all of us. How many people did our Savior stand in front of and these people could not see the truth? Didn't our Savior say, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Light"? Today our Savior, through His Church, stand in front of us all, yet how many of us cannot see Him, or see Him in a blurry way and not clearly as He really is? May our all merciful Savior help us in this good struggle and desire. May we all receive within us an abundance of the Divine Light so that we may see more clearly with the eyes of our souls and hearts and have our Savior dwelling within us. Amen.