

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

There was a video I ran into several years ago, about a young boy who was able to see the world in a completely new way. It was one of those increasingly rare feel-good stories that seemed to break through what often feels like an avalanche of difficult news. In a time when headlines so often bring reports of war, rising costs, climate disasters, and political tensions, it was something of a rarity.

The video was about a boy who was born with color-blindness. For most of his life he saw the world differently from his peers. Colors that many of us take for granted—reds, greens, blues, and purples—simply didn't appear to him in the same way. His parents had offered to get him a new pair of sunglasses so he could comfortably play basketball outside with his friends. They bought several pairs for him to try on, just to see which ones he liked best, and his mom began recording as he tried them supposedly so he could see what looked best on him later.

One pair after another were placed on his nose, until finally his father placed a particular pair over his eyes. Instantly the boy's face changed. You see him

pause and look around. His lips begin to quiver, and then he turns and hugs his father as tears start to fall. The glasses he put on don't work for everyone, but what they are designed to do is filter light in such a way that some people with colorblindness can perceive a broader range of color. For this boy, they worked.

Just imagine for a moment beholding colors you had never seen before and experiencing the richness of the world in a completely new way. I can only imagine what that must feel like. It must feel almost miraculous, and it makes me wonder whether something like that ever happens in our lives of faith.

Perhaps there are some among us who have experienced life-changing eye surgery or treatments that allowed them to see in ways they hadn't before. And we should say clearly and respectfully today that physical blindness or low vision is not a lack or a failure of the person. Many people who cannot see physically perceive the world with depth, wisdom, and insight that others miss entirely. The gospel story today is not about diminishing those realities. Instead, it invites us to think about another kind of sight altogether.

Our central story today comes from the Gospel of John—the story of the man born blind whom Jesus heals. In some ways this story resembles the healing stories found in the other gospels, but in John it unfolds very differently. At the

beginning the disciples ask a question that reflects an ancient assumption:

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” In other words, they assume that suffering must have a moral cause.

Jesus immediately rejects that idea. He refuses the premise entirely and makes it clear that this man’s blindness is not punishment, nor is it the result of his parents’ failure or divine retribution. Instead Jesus shifts the conversation and proclaims, “I am the light of the world.”

Then something unusual happens. Jesus kneels down, makes a paste of mud and saliva, places it over the man’s eyes, and tells him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. I try to imagine what that moment must have felt like. Unlike some healing stories, this man did not approach Jesus asking to be healed. There is no indication he even knew what was happening. A stranger he cannot see places mud on his face and tells him to walk somewhere and wash. That must have required an enormous amount of trust. I might hesitate. I might wonder if this is some cruel joke or question the intentions of the person speaking.

Yet the man goes and does as he is told. He washes, and suddenly the world he has known through sound, touch, and memory becomes filled with sight. Oh, if

only we had a video like the one of the boy! Imagine the moment—the shock, the wonder, the flood of color and movement and light.

Yet interestingly, John's gospel does not linger on that moment of joy. Instead, the story turns somewhere unexpected. The religious authorities begin arguing because they cannot reconcile what has happened. Rather than celebrating the miracle, they begin debating the rules. Jesus healed on the Sabbath, which in their interpretation violated religious law, and so the focus shifts from healing to interrogation.

They question the man, they question his parents, and they question the neighbors. The formerly blind man simply keeps repeating the truth as he understands it: "I was blind. Now I see." That is the heart of his testimony. He does not claim to understand everything, and he does not pretend to have theological certainty. He simply tells the truth of what he experienced in that mystifying moment. But that honesty angers the crowd. They grow increasingly frustrated with him and eventually drive him out.

Imagine that. The man receives sight, and the community casts him aside. What should have been a moment of celebration becomes a moment of rejection.

But the story does not end there. After he is driven out, Jesus goes and finds him. He is not abandoned. Jesus reveals himself to him and explains that the Son of Man has come so that those who do not see may see, and those who think they see may recognize their blindness. And in that moment the man worships him.

So what does that mean for us? Who are the ones who cannot see, and who are the ones who think they see clearly? These are delicate questions, and we should approach them carefully. It would be easy—and dangerous—for Christians to read this story and imagine that we are the ones who see clearly while everyone else lives in darkness. History has shown us how harmful that assumption can be.

Jesus is not giving us permission to judge others. That role belongs to God alone. Instead, this story invites each of us to ask a more honest question: where might we still be blind? Where might fear, pride, or habit prevent us from seeing clearly?

If we are honest, there are many things in our world right now that can cloud our vision. Here in British Columbia people carry a great deal of anxiety. Families are

struggling with the cost of living. Communities continue to face climate concerns. Many people feel exhausted by political division and economic pressure.

And when we look beyond our borders, the world often seems frightening. War once again dominates the headlines. The conflict involving Iran has raised fears about global instability in more ways than just the fuel pump, and people worry about what might happen next—about safety, about the economy, and about the future their children will inherit.

When we live under that kind of pressure, it becomes easy to lose sight of hope. Fear narrows our vision and anxiety distorts our perception until we begin to see only threats instead of possibilities.

But the light Jesus brings into the world does not deny the existence of darkness. Christian faith has never pretended that the world is always bright and easy. Sometimes the light of Christ simply reveals the truth that we are standing in one of life's valleys.

Psalm 23 describes it well: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Notice something important. The psalm does not say we avoid the valley through faith; it says we walk through it. Valleys always have

ways in, but they also always have ways out, and the promise of Christ's light is that we do not walk through them alone.

That is the sight faith gives us. It is not naive optimism or denial of suffering, but courage—the courage to see the world honestly, to stand with those who are suffering, to question decisions made by the powerful when those decisions harm the vulnerable, and to remain compassionate even when the world encourages us to become cynical and apathetic.

When Jesus gives us sight, we cannot see the world the same way again. We begin to notice the neighbor who is struggling, the person pushed to the margins, and the places where justice and mercy are needed.

Faith does not give us rose-colored glasses. Instead, it gives us what we might call Christ-tinted glasses. Through them we begin to see the world the way God sees it—with compassion, justice, and love.

Sometimes that kind of seeing comes at a cost. Just like the formerly blind man, speaking the truth can place us on the fringe. It can make us outsiders and make others uncomfortable. Yet it also draws us closer to the light of Christ, and that light changes everything.

It brings color back into a world that can sometimes feel gray—color in the beauty of creation, color in the relationships we share with one another, and color in the quiet acts of kindness and mercy that continue even in troubled times.

Perhaps that is what the man in today's gospel experienced when he finally met Jesus face to face. Not just the gift of physical sight, but the deeper gift of recognizing the light of the world standing before him.

What color that must have brought to his life. What joy.

And what a reminder for us today. In a world that often feels overshadowed by fear, conflict, and uncertainty, Christ still brings light. Christ still opens our eyes. Christ still calls us to see with compassion, courage, and yes, hope. And when we do, we begin to glimpse the beauty of the kingdom of God already breaking into the world around us.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.