

4th SUNDAY OF LENT**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 15th March 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings:**¹ 1 Samuel 16:1-13 / Psalm 23 / Ephesians 5:8-14 / John 9:1-41**Theme:** *'From Darkness to Light—From Blindness to Sight'***1 Samuel 16:1-13**

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'" ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." ⁴ Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵ He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the Lord." ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." ¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Psalm 23***The psalm of David***¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;³ he restores my soul.He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil,
for you are with me;

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your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸ 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 ¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ 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?” ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

SERMON

Jesus giving sight to the blind man exposes us, as I am sure it did the blind man, to a profound journey—from darkness to light, from not knowing to being aware. We live with perceptions and expectations that colour our perspective of the world for better or worse, often without us even realising. Today’s readings invite us to consider not only how God sees, but how we are called to see.

Samuel² arrives at Jesse’s house expecting to find a king who looks the part. Yet God interrupts his assumptions: “*the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart*”³. God’s choice of David—the youngest, the overlooked, the one left with the sheep—reveals a divine preference for the unexpected. God’s light exposes the limits of human vision and invites us to see with God’s compassionate clarity. This is the first step out of darkness: learning to perceive the world not through the lens of status or strength, but through the heart of God.

² 1 Samuel 16:1–13

³ 1 Sam 16:7

Psalm 23 then places us inside this divine vision. The psalmist walks through the darkest valley, yet fear does not define the journey. God's presence—symbolised by rod and staff—transforms the valley from a place of threat into a place of trust. The psalm does not promise a life free from shadows; it promises a Shepherd who walks with us through them⁴. Light, in the biblical imagination, is not the absence of darkness but the assurance that darkness does not have the final word.

Then this from Paul: *“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light”*⁵. Paul is not saying we were merely *in* darkness; he says we *were* darkness. And now, in Christ, we *are* light. This is identity before behaviour. Yet identity demands embodiment. To be light is to cultivate goodness, justice, and truth. It is to expose what is harmful—not to shame, but to heal. In a world where conflict is normalised, where self-interest is rewarded, and where truth is often distorted, Paul's call is deeply countercultural. Light is not passive. Light reveals. Light challenges. Light transforms.

This movement reaches its fullest expression when Jesus heals a man blind from birth⁶. The miracle is not simply the restoration of physical sight; it is the unveiling of spiritual truth. The man's journey is one of increasing illumination: he first names Jesus as a healer, then a prophet, then one sent from God, and finally as Lord.

Meanwhile, the religious leaders—confident in their own clarity—descend into deeper blindness. Their certainty becomes their shadow. The story warns us that spiritual blindness is not about the eyes but the heart; it is the refusal to be changed by the light that stands before us. And so we arrive at the heart of Lent's invitation. To step into Christ's light is to allow our vision, our values, and our actions to be reshaped.

In a world marked by violence, polarisation, and the relentless pursuit of self-advantage, faith in Jesus calls us to a different way of seeing and living. Christ opens our eyes to the dignity of those the world overlooks, to the suffering we would rather ignore, and to the hope we often struggle to trust. His light exposes the selfish habits that diminish us and the systems of injustice that harm others. But exposure is never the end. Christ's light is always healing light—light that restores, reconciles, and renews.

As Christians, we must embody this lesson by letting Christ's light shape our way of seeing and acting. When we practise compassion, listen without judgement, tell the truth gently, and stand with those who are overlooked, others glimpse the heart of Jesus. Small, consistent acts—offering dignity, choosing peace over hostility, forgiving generously, resisting selfishness, and serving without seeking reward—become signs of God's presence.

As believers walk through the world with the courage of the healed man and the compassion of the Shepherd, their lives quietly illuminate the path, helping others recognise the One who restores, reconciles, and leads into life. Lent invites us to practise this vision—

⁴ Psalm 23:4

⁵ Eph 5:8

⁶ John 9:1–41

to let Christ's light not only illuminate our path but radiate through our lives for the sake of a shadowed world.

Let us pray,

God of transforming light, open the eyes of our souls to your truth.

Guide our steps from fear to courage, selfishness to compassion, darkness to Christ's radiant hope, that we may walk as children of light.