

Sermon Title: **“Do You See Jesus?”**

Bible: **John 9:1-41**

When: on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 19, 2023

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

O Lord, you come to us first. Even though we could not see you, you have been with us in our sufferings, in our joys, and in our daily life. Please guide us to open our eyes to your holy presence. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **1. John 9**

We read the whole chapter 9 of John today. It is a long chapter. But thank you so much for reading John chapter 9 and listening to it. One of the reasons why we read this whole chapter is that it shows the story of a man who was born blind and received his sight. Compared to this man's whole life and his struggles, this chapter might not be long enough to tell the entire story. But at least, in order to be with him and his story, we had time to read all of John chapter nine. I hope for us to be with others through our time and our listening ears.

### **2. He Was Not Welcome.**

There was a man who was born blind. Jesus met him and healed the blindness. Now he could see. What a miracle! If this was you in this story, how would you respond to this miracle? We have prayed a lot. We have received a lot of answers to prayer. We share our

joys and express gratitude! So, I thought that there ought to have been a lot of joy and gratitude expressed, because a miracle had taken place in this story. However, there were a lot of questions, and even fears. The neighbors raised questions, and just could not believe it. They did not even recognize this man who used to be blind.

The Pharisees, the church leaders at that time, also asked questions. Rather than accepting the miracle, they tried to explain why this would happen. Actually, they tried to explain why this miracle should NOT have happened, according to their own teachings. There should not be a healing on Sabbath day. The sinner should not heal, and the sinner should not be healed. And then, the Pharisees tried to deny the fact that this man was born blind. They called in the parents of this man.

The parents were afraid to answer their questions. At that time, Jewish Christians were in danger of being excommunicated by the Jews, the synagogue's authorities. It was so sad that the parents could not celebrate the miracle of their son, after a long time of despair. The family had been in a helpless situation for a long time, because at that time there was a belief that a blind person was born because of the sin either of that person or of the parents. Now, their son, the blind man, could see! There was no more helplessness! There should have been liberation and celebration. But they were afraid. They could not be thankful for the miracle and the healing of Jesus Christ.

### **3. His Unshakable Experience**

Even though the blind man experienced healing and a miracle, he was not welcomed by anybody. His neighbors, his friends, the religious leaders, and even his parents did not welcome him. However, this man who was born blind and later received sight had an unshakable experience. He was healed. He had been blind. But now he could see. Even though no one accepted him, he could not deny his experience of the healing and the miracle. The Pharisees tried to understand this healing. They could not understand it, because their eyes were closed. Rather than looking at God's overflowing love, they tried to fit God's love into their own small box. Then, how could they understand the healing and God's love? Even the man who received sight himself could not understand every detail of the healing and the miracle. But he definitely saw God's healing and God's holy presence in his own life. He saw and experienced that God was with him, and that God cared for him, beyond anyone else and anything else. No one and nothing could separate him from God's love.

#### **4. Do You See Jesus?**

Do you see Jesus? Do you experience God's love like this man in your own life? Very interestingly, this blind man had never asked to be healed in the first place. In many other healing stories, the sick first asked to be healed. But in this story, Jesus first came to this man and healed him without being asked. Even after he received his sight, and while everyone did not welcome him, Jesus came to this man again. It is God's work, God's love, and God's grace.

Jesus comes to us first. Jesus wants to heal us. Jesus Christ wants to be with us. Even when we are lost, even when we cannot see anything or anyone around us, Jesus might already be coming to touch our eyes, to heal us and make us see. When Jesus touched the eyes of the blind man, even though he could not see, even though he could not understand, even though no one was with him, the blind man walked to the pool of Siloam. So, do not be afraid of going to where God calls or sends you. Our Lord Jesus Christ already has started God's work in your own lives. Even though we cannot see clearly, even though we cannot understand everything, God's love and grace will be with you and me, with all of us.

### **Closing Prayer**

O Lord, you are with us, and you care for us. Please lead us to open our eyes to see your love and grace in our own lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.