

Fourth Sunday in Lent – March 22, 2020, Year A

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: John 9:1-13, 28-38

“Trust in the Light”

Powerful readings that we were blessed with today. The first reading today brought us to a town called Bet-Lechem, you may know it as Bethlehem, from the Christmas carol “O Little Town of Bethlehem – that is where God told the Prophet Samuel to go and search for a man named Jesse. When God called him to go there – his immediate reaction was one of fear. He was afraid that King Saul would kill him - but God told him exactly what to do – and that was come before the Lord in a spirit of sacrifice – and then seek Jesse – and have his sons brought before him. All seven sons were presented – and the Lord was still was looking for someone else. Samuel asked Jesse if he had another – and so he sent for his youngest son – David. Ironic that a king would come out of a town called the House of Bread – Bet-Lechem. A King would indeed come from that town – He is the Bread of Life – His Name is Yeshua. Yeshua is Jesus.

How comforting and challenging is the Psalm for today – the 23rd Psalm – written by none other than the shepherd king, who was anointed in our first reading, David.

Today's Holy Gospel is all about “seeing.” When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees who was responsible for the blindness of the man in today's Gospel – Jesus responded, *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened 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.”* (John 9:3-5) An interesting reflection on that is *“night is coming, when no one can work.”* Are we not in a time when no one can work? Isn't it ironic that we have been praying for a long time for ‘shut ins’ and we find ourselves now all being ‘shut in?’

I want to take this a step further; Jesus was referring to the lack of light in this man's life to demonstrate that when light is introduced – there is a complete and total change – a transformation. I have often taught that when you walk into a dark room, you don't see much – but when you turn on the light – you see everything. Jesus states emphatically that He is that light! You know – during this pandemic – we of course need to be taking all precautions – washing our hand, staying 6 feet away from people, staying home if at all possible - but I need to encourage you that one of the most important thing that we need to be doing is that we must be looking to Jesus – who is our light.

There are a lot of people who might be afraid of what the light would reveal in their lives. In fact Jesus told Nicodemus, who was one of the Temple leaders, a member of the Sanhedrin, that very same thing – right after He told him about God sending His Son so that whoever believed in Him would have eternal life. Jesus told him: *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”* (John 3:19-21) Those are the

words that come right after the famous John 3:16, and people stop at verse 16, never going to 17 and 21 revealing the truth – and Jesus sheds more light all the way through verse 21.

I hope that your relationship with God, with Jesus is more like a huge floodlight than a small pencil flashlight! Jesus invites you and encourages you today, to see Him as the Light. He encourages you to put away spiritual blindness and like the blind man –to truly see Jesus for who He is.

I want to share two other words of Scripture. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, (Ephesians 5:8-14 NIV) *“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. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*”

Jesus said these words in John 16:33, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* We can hold on to those words and realize that, indeed, Jesus has overcome the world.

It is sad news today that there is one tested positive case at Coffee Regional Medical Center of Covid-19 – what we need to do about that is pray, and continue to pray.