



**OUR
GREATEST
NEEDS**

Sight For the Blind

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

March 19, 2023

SERIES THEME: OUR GREATEST NEEDS

What do you really need right now? To answer that question, one must first define what a “need” is. We understand that a “need” is greater than a “want.” If you lack something you want, life goes on just fine. If you lack something you need, that presents a problem. Thus, to correctly answer that question, “What do you really need right now,” ultimately one must understand their greatest problems. Mankind’s greatest problems are universal. We all live under the curse of sin. That sin makes us utterly helpless in our natural state. Natural man is confused, unable to make sense of life. Left in sin, man is doomed to death, and not just physical death. After one’s heart stops comes another type of death that is infinitely worse, an eternal nightmare. Lent is the season of the Church Year where we wrestle with our greatest needs. Lent also demonstrates that in Christ, all our greatest needs are met. Here is what the Spirit makes clear this season. If you lack Christ, you have nothing. If you have Christ, you have everything you truly need.

THEME OF THE DAY: SIGHT FOR THE BLIND

We know that unbelief will have consequences in the future—eternal separation from God. But unbelief also has consequences now. It makes you blind, in a sense. The unbeliever is unable to see the world as it really is. That which is harmful the unbeliever considers good; that which is good he considers meaningless. The unbeliever cannot see the danger that lurks behind temptation. He cannot see the blessing contained in God’s Word. The unbeliever cannot see the tragic fate that lies in his future, and he certainly cannot see the Savior. The Old Testament said that restoration of sight to the blind was one of the works of the Messiah. In his ministry, Jesus healed those who were physically blind. But even if our eyes work just fine, we still need Jesus to give us spiritual vision. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” Christ comes to shine his light into our darkened eyes that we might see him and live. Jesus meets our greatest needs. He provides sight for the spiritually blind.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Quinton Corwin

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 576 Amazing Grace

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, by your almighty power you opened the eyes of the blind and showed yourself to them. Turn our eyes away from worthless things, and lead us to love you sincerely; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Isaiah 42:14–21

God promises to lead the blind to safety and turn their darkness to light.

¹⁴ I have been silent for a long time.

I have kept still. I have restrained myself.

But now, like a woman giving birth, I will scream.

I will gasp and pant.

¹⁵ I will dry up mountains and hills.

I will make all their grass wither.

I will turn rivers into islands.

I will dry up pools.

¹⁶ I will lead the blind on a way they do not know.

Along paths they do not know I will direct them.

Ahead of them I will turn darkness into light
and rough places into level ground.

These are the things I will accomplish for them.

I will not abandon them.

¹⁷ They will be turned back and completely disgraced—

those who trust in an idol,

those who say to molten images, "You are our gods."

¹⁸ You deaf ones, listen!

You blind ones, watch carefully so that you can see!

¹⁹ Who is as blind as my servant?

Who is as deaf as my messenger whom I sent?

Who is as blind as my associate,

as blind as the servant of the Lord?

²⁰ You, Israel, see many things, but you do not observe.

Israel opens his ears, but he does not hear.

²¹ Because of his own righteousness,

the Lord was pleased to make his law great and glorious.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 27-Front of Hymnal: The LORD Is My Light

Second Reading

Ephesians 5:8–14

Those who have seen the light of Christ strive to leave deeds of darkness behind.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. ¹⁰ Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, ¹¹ and do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention the things that are done by people in secret. ¹³ But everything

exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes things visible. ¹⁴Therefore it is said, "Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Hebrews 12:2



Refrain



Glo - ry, praise, and hon - or to you, Lord Je - sus Christ.

Tone



Refrain

Let us fix our eyes on Je - sus, the pioneer and perfect - er of faith.

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Gospel

John 9:1–7,13–17,34–39

Jesus miraculously enables a man who had been born blind to see the Christ both physically and spiritually.

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

¹ As Jesus was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that God's works might be revealed in connection with him. ⁴ I must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World."

⁶ After saying this, Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and spread the mud on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," Jesus told him, "wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³ They brought this man who had been blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight.

"He put mud on my eyes," the man told them. "I washed, and now I see."

¹⁶ Then some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath." Others were saying, "How can a sinful man work such miraculous signs?"

There was division among them, ¹⁷ so they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?"

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

Spiritual Blindness

³⁴ They answered him, "You were entirely born in sinfulness! Yet you presume to teach us?" And they threw him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out. When he found him, he asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

³⁶ "Who is he, sir," the man replied, "that I may believe in him?"

³⁷ Jesus answered, "You have seen him, and he is the very one who is speaking with you."

³⁸ Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" and he knelt down and worshipped him.

³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, in order that those who do not see will see, and those who do see will become blind."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 515 Christ Is the World's Light

Sermon

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 713 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

sts. 1, Ref, 2

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 517 Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship

Wednesday: 6:30 PM Mid-Week Lent Service

Sunday: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

Mid-Week Lent Services

Our mid-week lent services will be held on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM.

Members are invited to bring finger foods to share after the services. For our final mid-week Lent service on March 29th we will have ice cream and members are invited to bring toppings.

Easter Breakfast

On Easter Sunday, April 9th, we will have our Easter Breakfast at 9:00 AM.

Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday worship service will be April 6th at Bethel at 6:30 PM.

Good Friday worship service will be April 7th at Grace at 6:30 PM.

Easter Sunday we will follow our usual Sunday service times at Grace and Bethel.

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