

Midweek Lenten Service

March 22, 2023

Who sinned?



“Son, Rise” by T. Denise Anderson

Artist's Statement

Jesus' community saw this man's blindness as a curse or a punishment for sin (either his parents' sin or his own). While it is true that blindness comes with challenges in a world made for sightedness, it is important that we do not problematize blindness in preaching and teaching this story the way they did. What happened here was an apocalypse—a revelation of the nature of Jesus and the heart and mind of God. That revelation challenged the epistemologies of the community, and it is the ones in the story who'd been sighted all along who were ironically unable to perceive what God was doing.

Jesus said that he "must work the works of him who sent me while it is day" (John 9:4). Daybreak is also an apocalypse of sorts; it reveals what we couldn't readily see at night and allows us to perceive the work in front of us. In my portrait, I've lit this man's face as if the earth and the sun's light are moving slowly across the surface, signaling the dawn of a new day. His eyes remain closed in my portrait because, for me, his newfound sightedness is not the miracle or the most important part of this story. What's most important is the revelation of who Jesus is. Jesus has been revealed to this man in a way that even the witnesses around him could not comprehend. His encounter with Jesus raises him to a new life and offers the whole community a new understanding of God's works. It's a new day for everyone, though that proves to be a difficult gift to receive.

—Rev. Denise Anderson

Holden Evening Prayer

The Liturgy is found in the Holden Evening Prayer worship booklet.

(Please place the booklet in the small basket after the service)

Please stand as you are comfortable, where indicated with an asterisk ()*

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

* SERVICE OF LIGHT	<u>p. 2</u>
PSALMODY	<u>p. 3</u>

POEM: Jesus in the psych ward

He's in group therapy, plastic chairs in a circle.
Paper cups with weak coffee. Everyone in the room has seeking eyes.

The Pharisees admitted him. They said things like,
He's more than we can handle. They let the rumors fly.

The other patients like him. They say, He listens to me.
He calls them by name.

And when one of them asks,
Is this our fault? Are we here because we sinned?
Jesus does not wait for the facilitator to speak.
He crosses the circle. He kneels down. He grabs their hands
in his and says,

Child of the covenant, God loves you too much to ever wish you pain.
Bodies and minds crumble sometimes, but God's love for you does not.

And after that
there were happy tears and the group was dismissed to lunch,
where they broke bread and no one talked of sin.

Written by: Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

READING: Exodus 17:1-7

¹The 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." ²Samuel 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.' ³Invite 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." ⁴Samuel 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?" ⁵He 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.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD." ⁷But 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." ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹Samuel 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." ¹²He 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." ¹³Then 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.

The Light shines in the darkness **And the darkness has not overcome it.**

FAITH STORY: Ciera McElroy

SONG: *we come with questions*

1. We come with questions assuming that there will be answers
Setting the world in an order that obeys our grammar
We want to know where Spirit's river will flow
Frustrated by her meanders

2. Here is the mystery we claim as the followers of Jesus:
Christ has died, Christ is raised, Christ daily comes to redeem us
Grace free, not earned, whether or not we deserve
God works beyond rules and boundaries

3. God help us live into mystery beyond comprehension
Quiet our minds always clamoring for some direction
Give us your peace with all that we can't perceive
Holding us within the tension

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* DISMISSAL AND SHARING OF PEACE	

WORSHIP LEADERS:

CANTOR: Matthew Christian
ACCOMPANIST: Aria Thomé

TONIGHT'S OFFERING – An offering plate has been placed in the narthex for your convivence. This year, our midweek offerings will go to support Lutheran Disaster Response and their efforts to help those in Turkey and Syria.