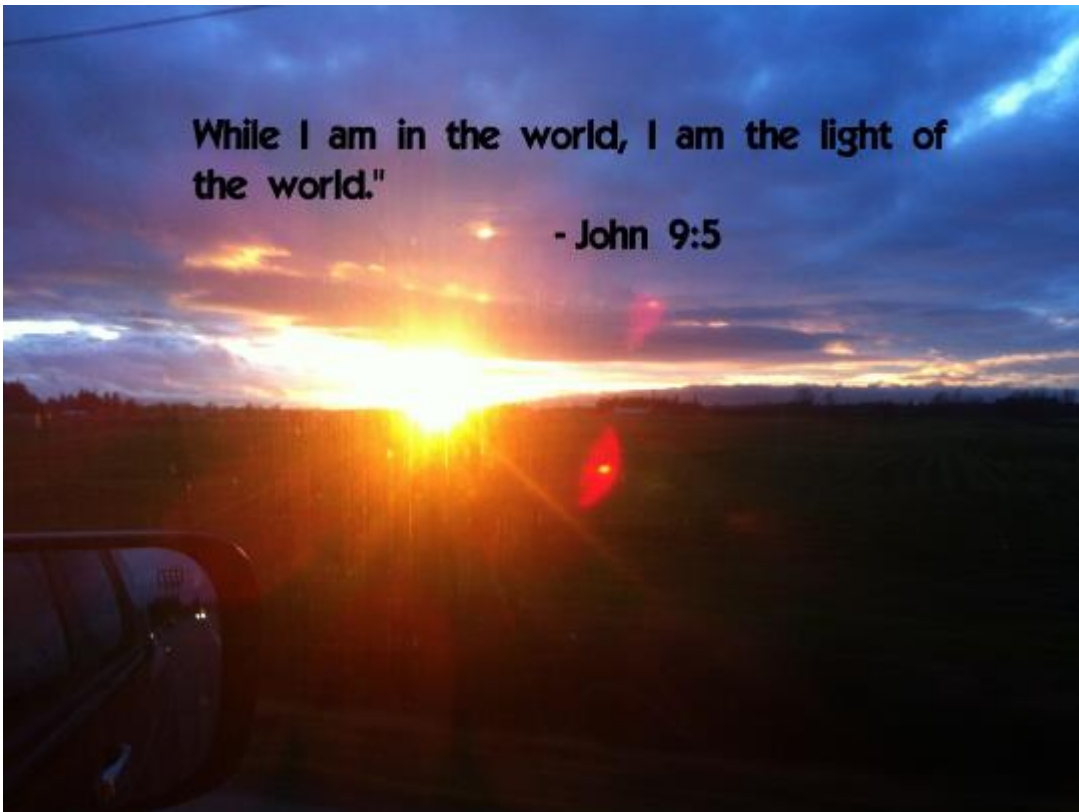


Dear Beloved

In this week's reading there are layers of meaning all around seeing the light in a physical way and a spiritual way.



Blessings

Wendy

AGMS

Jerangle 26 March

Parish 2nd April

Please get minutes and reports to Colleen asap

--

Palm Sunday Picnic Sunday 2nd April 12.00 - 2.00

After AGM at Norris Park BYO drinks and chairs

--

Easter Services at Cooma

6th April 8 pm Maundy Thursday

7th April 10.00 am Good Friday

9th April 10.00 am Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday Adaminaby

Sunday 9th April 3.00 pm

PTO →

Combined Easter Services

Saturday 8th April 11 am Jerangle

Saturday 8th April 3pm Bredbo

Saturday 8th April 5.30pm Nimmitabel

Sunday 9th April 11.30am Numeralla

--

Morning Tea after the Service in Cooma On 2nd and 4th Sundays

please volunteer for the roster.

--

Autumn Open Garden Day 16th April

Please pot plants up now and tell Nella how you can help

--

Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9/30 all Welcome

--

Vocal ensemble Concert in our Hall 26th March 2.30 pm

--

Please volunteer for the roster, well in advance.

--

Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher .. for his recovery

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.

Leanne Lowery

Mary Mitchell

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Numeralla

--

The New Catholic priest Father Mark Croker as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains

--

for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

--

People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

19 March 2023

Hymn TIS 591 (599ii) Forty Days and Forty nights,

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
And also with you.

Sentence

'I am the light of the world,' says the Lord; 'those who follow me will have the light of life.' John 8.12

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, in order that we children of earth might discern good from evil you sent your Son to be the light of the world: as the light of Christ shines upon us, may we learn what pleases you, and live in truth and goodness; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

1 Samuel 16.1-13

¹ The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.' ² But Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.' 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 to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.' ⁴ Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?' ⁵ Samuel replied, 'Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.' ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.' ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The Lord has not chosen this one either.' ⁹ Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, 'Nor has the Lord chosen this one.' ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' 'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.' Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.' ¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.' ¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Psalms 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd: therefore, can I lack nothing. ² He will make me lie down in green pastures: and lead me beside still waters. ³ He will refresh my soul: and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake. ⁴ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me. ⁵ You spread a table before me in the face of those who trouble me: you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. ⁶ Surely your goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Ephesians 5.8-14

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible – and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said: 'Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

John 9.1-41

¹ As he went along, 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 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶ After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ 'Go,' he told him, 'Wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'Sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. ⁸ His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.' ¹⁰ 'How then were your eyes opened?' they asked. ¹¹ He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.' ¹² 'Where is this man?' they asked him. 'I don't know,' he said. ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.' ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others asked, 'How can a sinner perform such signs?' So they were divided. ¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' The man replied, 'He is a prophet.' ¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?' ²⁰ 'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.' ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.' ²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.' ²⁵ He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!' ²⁶ Then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' ²⁷ He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' ²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, 'You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from.' ³⁰ The man answered, 'Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' ³⁴ To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' ³⁶ 'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.' ³⁷ Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.' ³⁸ Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.' ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, 'What? Are we blind too?' ⁴¹ Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.'

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and

glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

the prayers

Let us pray for the world and for the Church. God of all mercy, **hear our prayers.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Jesus said, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and who ever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6.35

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.

Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Invitation to Confession

The Lord comes, bringing to light things now hidden in darkness, and disclosing the purposes of the heart. Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Confession

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled and wandered far off. Let us then ask for mercy, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. **We meet in his name and share his peace.**

Hymn TIS 407 (SoF 51) Breathe on me

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving 3

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. You anointed him as Messiah, the light of the nations, and revealed him as the hope of all who thirst for righteousness and peace. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to walk in the way of his love.

By his death on the cross and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy and gracious God, all creation rightly gives you praise.

All life, all holiness, comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom you sent to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

Hear us, merciful Lord; through Christ accept our sacrifice of praise; and, by the power of your Word and Holy Spirit, sanctify this bread and wine, that we who share in this holy sacrament may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

Who, when his hour had come, on the night before he went up to the cross to make full atonement for the sins of the whole world, offering once for all his one sacrifice of himself, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, in obedience to his command, we commemorate and celebrate his saving passion and death, his mighty resurrection and ascension into heaven and we eagerly await his coming again in glory.

We thank you that by your grace alone you have accepted us in Christ; and here we offer you a spiritual sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight. Through Christ, receive this our duty and service, and grant that we who eat and drink these holy gifts may, by your Holy Spirit, be one body in Christ, and serve you in unity and peace. In your grace and mercy, bring us to the joy of your eternal kingdom with all the company of the redeemed. May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father eternal, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread:

so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

After Communion

God of mercy, may we who have shared in this holy meal know your forgiveness in our lives, bring your reconciliation to others, and be a sign of your wholeness in this broken world.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

notices

Hymn TIS 577 Coe, let us to the Lord our God

Blessing

May Christ the Son of God be manifest to you, that your lives may be a light to the world; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**



The healing miracle in our reading today is not merely a physical healing, rather it is a story that portrays the truth of Jesus incarnation profoundly and poignantly. Light and darkness are no longer merely concepts but are embodied in the characters involved. In the blind man's journey from physical blindness to spiritual sight, we are able to watch as he comes to the light and is given new life. In the authorities journey from physical sight to spiritual blindness, we can watch as they close themselves to the light and place themselves under judgement.



For the first 50 years after Christ's death people 'of the way' were accepted in the Jewish faith but about the time that John's gospel was written a 'Benediction against Heretics' was introduced into the Jewish liturgy which specifically mentioned Nazarenes (the Jewish name for Christians) plus other persecutions and they were expelled from the synagogues.

John was writing his gospel at about this time so his initial readers could see parallels in this story. There is even the possibility that this story was told as a sermon in John's church to strengthen and encourage the Christians in their situation because on one level, the story portrays a conflict with the religious authorities in Jesus own day, but it is told in idioms (eg afraid of the Jews, be put out of the synagogue) that also communicate directly on the level of the community's own experience of conflict and persecution.



The story starts with the disciples' question reflecting the common assumption at the time that hardship or disability was due to sin. Who sinned? Could the man have sinned even while he was in the womb or was his affliction due to his parents. Even today we continue to assume that many hardships are somehow the sufferers own fault, some people say that poor people need to work harder, some people expect those suffering from mental problems to pull themselves together and there is plenty of prejudice against disabled people and those going through rough times. Jesus turns the question on its head and reveals that this blindness is an opportunity for revelation of God's power.

The need that evokes the miracle is not the man's blindness but the need for God works to be made manifest. Being born blind doesn't mean he must have sinned nor that his parents sinned. When bad things happen to us or to other people it is no one's fault, it is an opportunity to trust God and let him work to make all things good for those who love him. Something much stronger, more mysterious and more hopeful is going on. The chaos and misery of this world is the raw material out of which the loving wis and just God is making his new creation.



Phil did not die because he sinned, or lost faith, he did not die because I or any of our family did something wrong, he died because we live in a fallen world where Cancer exists. Phil is fine, he is totally healed, and he will receive his reward. We miss him, but God is still God, he is still faithful and trustworthy, and he still walks with me every day. I don't know what my life will entail but I know that God will continue to use me and bless me with his love all the days of my life.

That man could only beg for a living, he was not allowed to enter the inner parts of the temple because of his disability but he still believed and trusted God. When Jesus told him to go and wash, he didn't know who Jesus was but he accepted it as a word from the Lord and obeyed. His obedience was rewarded both with physical sight but also spiritual sight.



As the man is healed, we are meant to recognise that this is one of the moments when God's truth and life come together. This healing is an acted-out parable of truth. Jesus is the light of the world, this man receives Jesus' word as coming from God and receives light into his body and his spirit. Just as in the beginning God created light first and then a whole new world so here Jesus is doing the work of the one who sent him. This is the beginning of the new world of light and healing.

This story is leading to Easter: after the chaos and despair of Good Friday and Holy Saturday the new creation will begin with the light of the first Easter day (John 20:1) Sometimes when people receive the light of Jesus it so transforms their lives that people ask if it is the same person or if its real. This same thing happens in this story, some people ask if it's the same man and others ask if the change is real. After the resurrection the disciples ask if this is really Jesus. The answer is yes. People who come into the light change, this man was healed. New creation does happen. How? Through Jesus! Not by our striving but through our trust in Him.



The pharisees, the Jewish authorities (not the ordinary people) can see their carefully constructed arrangement crumbling and they try to discredit the healing and Jesus in any way they can, but they are foiled in every way. 'Give glory to God' they say but of course the man is giving God the Glory by sticking to his story and insisting that God was working through Jesus,

Jesus action in healing the man is the clearest indication that God does not agree with the lengths the authority's construction has taken in regard to the Sabbath. God is doing a new thing, opening up a world of healing and hope. Their insistence on keeping all these laws only shows how far they are out of tune.



This original blindness had nothing to do with the man's own sin or his parents' sin but that Jesus' presence and healing delivers people from everything that's wrong with them physically, mentally and spiritually. When we see God as he truly is with our spiritual eyes, which is what this passage is encouraging is to do, then we can see his love and faithfulness in every throughout the scriptures and in our lives.

There is a progression in the man's witness: initially he identified his healer as 'the man called Jesus' but then he identified Jesus as a prophet. Then he asked the Pharisees if they wanted to become Jesus disciples too, and finally he worshipped Jesus. The man's growing awareness of the truth of Jesus' identity underscores one of the story's central themes: Blindness is not determined simply by seeing or not seeing but by recognising the revelation of the works of God in Jesus. By seeing God's Amazing Grace.



Do you see a parallel with your own life? When we were young or first came to faith, we understood a little of who Jesus is but gradually as we lived our lives and learnt more, we understand the reality of who Jesus is and what he has done for us. We were looking at a glass darkly but now we see face to face. As we grow in faith our lives open up and we can see clearly.

When Jesus finds the man who has been healed and now thrown out of the synagogue and asks him whether he believes in the son of man, this is what he means: Is he prepared to put his trust in the one who has come to bring God's judgement, God's dangerous but healing light into the world? Are we prepared to put our trust in the one who has come to bring God's judgement, God's dangerous but healing light into the world? Only by constantly checking with Jesus can we be quite sure that we are standing alongside the man born blind, in his new found faith and openness to God's light.



This story started with the disciples' assumption of sin because of this man's blindness. Jesus opposed that view, healed the man and then warded off the challenge from those who objected to him doing it on the sabbath. Now it comes full circle with his accusers claiming to see clearly when in fact they can't. Jesus comment on their condition is that though blindness itself isn't an indication of sin, claiming to be able to see when you can't certainly is. Because you say "we can see" your guilt remains'.

Jesus' presence, then and now divides the world into those who come to the light and allow it to change, heal and direct their lives, and those who resist the light and choose to remain in darkness - even while in some cases declaring boldly that they see everything clearly. Let us stand in the light and allow it to change, heal and direct our lives.