

Sunday 18 January 2026 Cooma Anglican HC 3
Hymn: TIS 557 Awake my soul and with the sun

**1 Awake, my soul, and with the sun
your daily stage of duty run;
shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
to pay your morning sacrifice.**

**2 Glory to you that safely kept
and have refreshed me while I slept;
grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake
I may of endless light partake.**

**3 Lord, I my vows to you renew;
disperse my sins as morning dew;
guard my first springs of thought and will,
and with yourself my spirit fill.**

**4 Direct, control, suggest, this day,
all I design or do or say,
that all my powers, with all their might,
in your sole glory may unite.**

**5 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures here below,
praise God above, you heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

Sentence of Scripture

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." John 9:33

The Great Commandments

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 'This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

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

Holy God, in Jesus Christ you reveal yourself to the world, even when we are blind to your grace. Open our eyes to see your transforming love in our midst, so that we may see your world anew; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Leviticus 21:16-23 (NIV)

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷ “Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. ¹⁸ No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; ¹⁹ no man with a crippled foot or hand, ²⁰ or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. ²¹ No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the LORD. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. ²² He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; ²³ yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.’”
This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalms 36 (NIV)

¹ I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before their eyes.
² **In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin.**
³ The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful; they fail to act wisely or do good.
⁴ **Even on their beds they plot evil; they commit themselves to a sinful course and do not reject what is wrong.**
⁵ Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.
⁶ **Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.**
⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
⁸ **They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.**
⁹ For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.
¹⁰ **Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.**
¹¹ May the foot of the proud not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.
¹² **See how the evildoers lie fallen—thrown down, not able to rise!**

Revelation 3:14-22 (NIV)

¹⁴ “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

John 9:1-34 (NIV)

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

^{9.1} 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 spit 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 neighbors 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.

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - The Blind and Those who will no see

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

Response: Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

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.

Scripture Sentence

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1 Cor 11:26-28

The Confession

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, saying together:

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.

By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **Amen**

Greeting of Peace

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn - TIS 607 Make me a channel of your peace

Make me a channel of your peace:

**Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your healing power,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.**

**Chorus: O, Master, grant that I may never seek
 so much to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love with all my soul.**

Make me a channel of your peace:
where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy. *Chorus*

Make me a channel of your peace:
it is in pardoning, that we are pardoned,
in giving to all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life. *Chorus*

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

The Great Thanksgiving

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.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your son, our saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and his blood. On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.

We who are many are one body in Christ, **for we all share in the one bread.**

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying 'Drink from 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.' We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.** We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and united in the body of your Son. Bring us

with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise.

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever. Amen

The Holy Communion

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 with thanksgiving.

After Communion

Gracious God, thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are living members of Christ's body.

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 134 - Praise, my soul, the king of heaven

Praise, my soul, the king of heaven; to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who like me his praise should sing?
Praise him, praise him, hallelujah, praise the everlasting king!

Praise him for his grace and favour to his people in distress;
praise him still the same for ever, slow to chide and swift to bless:
praise him, praise him, hallelujah, glorious in his faithfulness!

Father like he tends and spares us; well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes:
praise him, praise him, hallelujah, widely as his mercy flows!

Frail as summer's flower we flourish, blows the wind and it is gone;
but while mortals rise and perish God endures unchanging on.
Praise him, praise him, hallelujah, praise the high eternal one!

Angels, help us to adore him, you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him, dwellers all in time and space:
praise him, praise him, hallelujah, praise with us the God of grace!

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; 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.

Sermon - John 9:1-34 - Physical and Spiritual Blindness

Introduction

This morning, and for the next few weeks, we are continuing to work our way through the gospel of John that we started last year. We finished up late last year with John chapter 8, so we will look at chapters 9 through chapter 12 up until Lent when I will preach on Paul's letter to the Philippians, and then we will go back to John and look at his Easter accounts

But as I said, this week we will look at John chapter 9 - or at least the first 34 verses. As we looked through John 1 to 8 last year, we were constantly asked who Jesus is, and were given many different answers. The first 18 verses of John chapter 1 act as a sort of an executive summary of John's answers. It tells us that Jesus is the Word, the Word who was with God and is God, who made all things, and is the light of all mankind. John calls Jesus 'the true light, who gives everyone who receives him the right to be children of God, the giver of grace and truth'. This point is illustrated in today's reading which says that you cannot see the true light if you are spiritually blind.

In relating his account, John considers what it means for Jesus to be the light of the world with the help of a man who suddenly became able to see physical light and as a consequence spiritual light, and a group of people who had perfect eyesight, but were blind to spiritual light. With that introduction, let's get started with John 9.

Whose sin causes blindness?

John 9 starts with a debate between Jesus and his disciples. It wasn't an antagonistic debate like many that Jesus had had, the disciples were not seeking to trick Jesus, although like many of their conversations there may have been a little one upmanship, vying for Jesus's attention and seeing who could ask the best questions. They saw a man, who was obviously commonly known as being blind from birth. Blindness in that culture was a huge disability; not only did it prevent most forms of economic labour, as we read in the Old Testament reading, it was one of many barriers to temple worship, and was considered by many as a judgement of God. So it was not surprising that the disciples asked Jesus the question "who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" John 9:2 The premise of the question was reasonable. There is no doubt that the man was blind because of sin. There would be no blindness, or any other disability, sickness, or death in this world if there was no sin. These things were not in the garden of Eden before Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so the man's blindness was due to sin.

While this is true, it is not always possible to link specific illnesses, disabilities or even deaths to specific sins, or even to the sins of specific people. You can sometimes, for example in cases of murder or assault, but not in most cases of sickness, apparently natural causes, our genetic anomalies which is likely the case with this man born blind.

Jesus makes this clear, that neither the blind man, nor his parents sinned in a way that caused his blindness. Moreover, Jesus is not suggesting that any of them is completely without sin. No human being other than Jesus himself is completely without sin. Jesus is simply saying that the man's blindness was not caused by any of their sin.

God's work in Healing the Blind Man and in our afflictions

Jesus then goes on to say "this (that is, the man's blindness) 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."

The man was born blind so that the world of God may be shown in him. Jesus isn't explicit at this point how the works of God are shown through this man's blindness, but he is clear that it will happen. As we read on, we see God working in this man in two ways. First we see him cured of his blindness, and, although we have to wait until next week to see it, God heals his spiritual blindness, that he comes to believe in Jesus, and so gains eternal life. Similarly, God's works are shown in our afflictions, although not necessarily in this world, or this side of heaven.

Jesus said that "as long as it is the day, we must do the works of him who sent him." We then see Jesus applying mud to the man's eyes, so we know that he is doing God's work, and he knows he is working to a schedule. He knows night, the dark time when no one can see to work, in fact, his own death on the cross, is coming, and he must bring God's light to the world in the short time that he has.

Then, Jesus 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.

This happened on the Sabbath (although we aren't told until later) and the detail regarding Jesus spitting in the mud is probably to support this. In the Deuteronomy account of the 10 commandments, we read: Deut 5:12-15 12 "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work,

neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

The reason for keeping the Sabbath is associated with Israel's slavery in Egypt when they were making bricks without straw. This is the reason given for the Sabbath commandment, and Jesus is emphasising this by making and using mud to heal the blind man. It seems that by using this method of healing, Jesus is deliberately aggravating the Pharisees, showing their spiritual blindness, and demonstrating his Lordship over the Sabbath.

4 Conversations

After being healed, there are 5 conversations, although we only look at 4 of them this week. Firstly, his neighbours aren't sure whether he is the same blind man they have seen begging on the side of the road. He tells them he is, and tells them he doesn't know how he was healed, but the one they call Jesus did it. He won't say anything more about Jesus.

Next, the Pharisees weigh in. They are most excited that the apparent healing happened on the Sabbath, which is against their religious laws, and they asked him how it happened, looking for ammunition to use against him. The man is a little more forthcoming in his response, saying again "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see." but this time also adding that he is a prophet.

This conversation is between the Pharisees and the man's parents, but they don't want to have anything to do with the Pharisees, and tell them to ask their sin rather than them. John tells us that they were afraid of the Pharisees because they knew they had already decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. This is another indictment of the Pharisees' spiritual blindness, not only refusing to see that Jesus is the son of God and promised Messiah, but willing to excommunicate from the temple anyone who could see this.

The fireworks really start when the Pharisees go back to the man. They really show their blindness by saying that lying about Jesus would give glory to God, but the man won't take the bait. He won't agree that Jesus is a sinner, just that he was blind and now he sees. He is obviously growing in confidence, baiting the Pharisees by suggesting that they are so interested because they want to become Jesus's disciples.

This starts the insults flying, and the Pharisees fall back on their genetic ancestry in Moses. Yet again, this just shows their spiritual blindness: they may have a physical link to Moses, but as Jesus said back in John 5:46 (NIV) 46 If they believed Moses, they would believe Jesus, for Moses wrote about Jesus.

The man who was blind now really shows his confidence. He responds, with the sarcasm almost dripping "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."

The man who was blind and barred from the temple now not only has physical sight, he has spiritual sight as well. He knows that Jesus is at the very least a godly man who does God's will. He knows Jesus is doing God's work, as Jesus told the disciples before he healed him.

The man who was blind can now see the light of the world, both physically and spiritually. He can physically see Jesus, God the son, incarnate as a man in the world, but he can also see that Jesus is the source of spiritual salvation with his spiritual eyesight. Irrespective of his sinfulness or otherwise at his birth, the Pharisees really did have much to learn from him. As he had sarcastically suggested, they really should have become Jesus's disciples, instead of throwing out him who had been born blind, and could now see better than they could, at least spiritually.

As we read about this man born blind who could now see, and the spiritually blind Pharisees, we need to consider our own spiritual eyesight. Are we blind to who Jesus is, and simply looking for excuses as to why we shouldn't believe him, why he shouldn't be who he says he is? Or are we like the once blind beggar, accepting the physical and spiritual healing that Jesus has given us. Do you see a mere human being who lived 2000 years ago, upset the religious authorities and then died an ignominious, agonising death at the hands of Roman soldiers on a cross? Or do you see the son of God, God the Son, who never sinned, who always lived as God wanted, who healed blindness, paralysis, and other diseases, raised people from the dead, and ultimately rose from his own death to heal us, not only physically but spiritually that by believing in him we might have eternal life in perfect harmony with God and creation.

Are you spiritually blind, or like the once blind man, can you see the ultimate, spiritual truth?

Amen