

*1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a*

*Ephesians 5:8-14*

*John 9:1-41*

As with all of Jesus' miracles,  
the cure of blindness here is not the point.  
Rather, Jesus' purpose here is to speak about  
light and darkness, sight and blindness  
in the mind, in the heart, in the spirit, in the soul.

Except for the very wise among us --  
and some among us are wise indeed --  
most of us simply believe what we see  
and spend little time pondering how we see what we see,  
or what we fail to see,  
or what refuse to see,  
or what we want to see.  
We tend to trust what we see, the way we see it  
and believe what we see, the way we see it to be true.

That's just how the Pharisees looked at things.  
Standing before them was a man born blind who now could see.  
*But they could not see* how this came to be.  
They were blind to how the man born blind came to see.

Many things blind us to what's right in front of us.  
Many things cloud our vision of what's within arm's reach.  
Many things tempt us to see what is not there  
or to fail to see what is right in our face.  
The questions this story poses, then, run like these:  
"Do I see?  
Through what eyes do I see?  
Do I trust only what I see, the way I see it?  
Can I acknowledge that there may be another way of seeing  
what I see?  
Can I admit that perhaps God sees some people, some situations,  
some realities differently than how I see them?  
Is it possible that my own eyes might lie to me?  
Do my mind and heart need glasses?  
Does my vision need correction?  
Could it be that the world as I see it  
may not quite be the world as it is?  
Could it be that God, as I see God,  
may not quite be God, as God is?"

Our culture tells us that each individual's sight is infallible.  
It affirms that whatever I see is true.

Whatever I perceive to be true is true:  
at least it's true for me and if it's true for me – that's good enough!

I began thinking this way when I was about 11 or 12 years old  
when I was convinced that my view of the universe was 20-20 –  
while I thought my parents were pretty much legally blind.  
Unfortunately, some 50 years later,  
I still find myself trusting the infallibility of my own eyes,  
and they are very fallible eyes.  
It's so easy to rely on them  
and very often what my eyes tell me, is unreliable.

The theory that my vision is infallible is interesting  
but the truth is that those who see most clearly (the wise among us)  
are those who understand that even with eyes-wide-open  
we can often be blind.  
And that we often see most clearly  
when our eyes are closed to our own autonomy.

We live in a world infallibly convinced  
of the truth of its own vision  
and yet much of what we've made of the world  
resembles the work of those who labored in the dark,  
their eyes shut to the light around them.

We need to be wakened from a dark sleep  
which can be so deep as to blind us from the darkness itself.  
We need to rise up to light  
that we might recognize the dark when we encounter it.  
None are so spiritually blind  
as those who are blind to their own blindness.

To seek the light;  
to peer through the eyes of God;  
to refract what we see through the prism of God's word;  
to color our vision with the wisdom of tradition and truth:  
    therein lies the cure for the blindness we often fail to see;  
    therein lies the truth to which we can often be quite blind.

Only faith helps us see our own blindness;  
only faith opens our eyes to the light and the truth.

Eyes of faith look at this altar and see a table;  
eyes of faith see bread and wine  
and behold the body and blood of Christ;  
eyes of faith see the risen One made visible  
in the supper of the Lord.

Lord, open our eyes – and help us to see...

*Rev. Austin Fleming*