Grace and Peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today’s narratives is the sixth of the gospel of John's seven miraculous ''signs'' of Jesus' divinity, which the synoptic or similar gospel writers call miracles. This story is a pattern familiar in John’s healing stories: a healing sign or miracle, a controversy generated by the healing and Jesus theological explanation.

Today’s healing sign or miracle gives sight to a man who is blind since birth. As those in ancient times believe, as do the disciples who are with him, his condition is due to an unidentified sin of his or his parents. The disciples assume either the man somehow sinned before his birth, or he is being punished for something his parents did.

Because of this the blind man (and to an extent it may impact his family) and has no status only being identified as a blind man he lives outside the religious and economic realm of the society. He has to resort begging, depending on others for his well-being. The disciples simply see a blind man. but Jesus sees someone who can be a witness and states his blindness will reveal God’s presence in Jesus.

Jesus response is that personal suffering is not necessarily linked to one or the parent’s sin. This rejects the eastern idea of karma, which assumes that all current suffering is, in some way, that person's own fault. While it is true suffering is a result of sin from the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden most of the suffering we experience in this world is primarily the result of human sin, of forfeiting paradise by being tricked by the serpent by eating the forbidden fruit in disobedience to God. Because of that we have war and poverty and hunger which are grounded in humanity rejecting their God created purpose. But, in the case of the man's situation, not all suffering is directly deserved, in and of itself. In other words, bad things happen to good people when someone hasn’t done anything wrong. Suffering and hardship, including persecution, are not necessarily signs of divine retribution.

After Jesus says he was a light to the world he spits on the ground and makes mud with the saliva he which he spreads on the man’s eyes and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam, (which means sent) which he does and comes back able to see. The crowd was incredulous and wonders if he was truly the beggar. He tells them he was questioned how his eyes were opened since this never happened before. He told them how Jesus had put mud in his eyes and he washed in Siloam so they wanted to know where Jesus was and he responds he does not know.

The people bring him to the local religious leaders who inquire how he gained his sight. He repeats the story he told the others and some said Jesus is not from God because by healing on the Sabbath he does not observe the sabbath, while others asked how a man who is a sinner could perform such a sign. So, they ask the blind man what he has to say about Jesus since it was his eyes that were opened to which he responds “He is a prophet.” This is embarrassing to the religious leaders.

They say they did not believe he was blind so they ask the parents if he was born blind how can he now see. They say they know it is our son who was born blind and now sees but they do not know who opened his eyes and say they should ask him themselves since he was of age. The parents deferred to their son since they are fearful because the leaders can put them out of the synagogue which would make them religious, economic and societal outcasts, like their son is.

Not leaving well enough alone they decide to have another go at the blind man. He is getting more attention than when he was blind. They say give glory to God since Jesus is a sinner but the blind man said he did not know if he was a sinner he only knows he was once blind and now can see. They want to know what he did to him to which he responded he had told them but they would not listen. In an angry and abusive manner, they state he was his disciple but they are disciples of Moses. They know God spoke to Moses but they do not know where Jesus comes from. The blind man says it was astonishing that they do not know where Jesus comes from but yet he was able to open his eyes. He says it is known God does not listen to sinnersbut he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Since no one has ever been able in the history of the world if Jesus were not from God he could do nothing.  They responded you were born in sins and you are trying to teach us? They drive him out.

When Jesus hears this, he found him and cut to the chase and asked “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” The blind man asks him to tell him so he could believe. Jesus says he has seen him and he is talking to him, to which he responds in faith “Lord, I believe.” And he worships him. Jesus says he comes to the world for judgement so that those who do not see can see and those who do see become blind. When some of the religious leaders near him hear this they don’t know when to quit state, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”  Jesus says to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” The local religious leaders are too spiritually blind to see the spiritual message that the light of the world’s work reveals. None are so blind as those who don’t see.

What today’s narrative shows us is we do not see what God sees. One thing is crystal clear from the healing miracle of the blind man, we are to share Christ with others. Amen.