

HE FIRST READING IS FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF
SAMUEL

The LORD said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.'

But 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 sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.'

And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel.

And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen these.'

Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?'

And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.'

And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.'

And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome.

And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.'

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.

The word of the Lord

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me; he revives my soul.

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

He guides me along the right path, for the sake of his name.

Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.

Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You have prepared a table before me in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing.

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life. In the LORD's own house shall I dwell for length of days
unending.

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE LETTER OF ST
PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

Brothers and Sisters:

At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore it says, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

The word of the Lord

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING
TO JOHN

NARRATOR As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that 'he was born blind?' Jesus answered,

Jesus 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'

NARRATOR Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him,

'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'It is he.' Others said, 'No, but he is like him.'

He kept saying,

'I am the man.'

NARRATOR So they said to him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered,

'The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and received my sight.'

NARRATOR They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said,

'I do not know.'

NARRATOR They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them,

‘He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.’

NARRATOR Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.’

But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, ‘What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?’

MAN **‘He is a prophet.’**

NARRATOR The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them,

‘Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?’

His parents answered, ‘We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.’

His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, ‘He is of age; ask him.’

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, ‘Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.’ He answered,

‘Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.’

NARRATOR They said to him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’

‘I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?’

NARRATOR They reviled him, saying, ‘You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.’ The man answered,

‘Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.

We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’

NARRATOR They answered him, ‘You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?’ And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said,

Jesus ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’

MAN ‘And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?’

Jesus ‘You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.’

He said,

Man ‘Lord, I believe’,

and he worshipped him. Jesus said

‘For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.’

NARRATOR Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things,
and said to him, ‘Are we also blind?’

NARRATOR *Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have
no guilt; but now that you say, “We see”, your guilt remains.’*

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

THE REFLECTION

As well as listening to Jesus John would have walked around, talking and listening, to pick up what others are thinking. Today he develops a miracle story to reveal it was talked about but with malice as well as respect. John's gospel is much richer in supplying the scene when Jesus' miracles take place and the reactions of people around. It's the sabbath and no-one is working so the people can wander about picking up the news and gossip.

Jesus is often challenging the Religious establishment; What John calls "The Jews" and it will lead to his death, even though his work brings healing and inclusion to those who have been suffering. To us it is a story of Jesus' kindness but Jesus realises how difficult it would be to change hearts and minds in the most important matter of the day, what is the best way to please God, by actions of sacrifice in the temple or being squeaky clean in the actions that others can see.

The pharisees see Jesus as a challenge to their prestige and respect. They and the Jewish establishment want to destroy his reputation. They criticise him for doing doctors' work on the sabbath, try to use the man's parents and tell the man he was born in sin, his blindness because of him or his parents, like the apostles were thinking.

Gossip to bring someone else down is ageless, in our time as much as his. It is tempting to join in, I was told it can be terrible at a girls school and I can say it is just as bad in a boys' school!

To love in a Christian sense is to seek the true Good for someone, hard if they do not want to see it for themselves. Jesus recognises how hard hearted his opponents were.