

Service for Sunday, March 22, 2019 – Provided via Elim's website, Email, and Facebook

Greeting

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The Word

A reading for you today from the 23rd Psalm:

<A Psalm of David.> The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; ³ he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

Today's Gospel is from 9th Chapter of John: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

As he walked 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 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."

The Word of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Today we are in the midst of unknowns. Unknowns that can be frightening. Unknowns that we've never faced before in our lifetimes. The Corona Virus and disease and infection can be scary. But it is important to remember that nothing unknown is too big for God. God shares God's glorious light with us by the Son of God and Son of Man.

If you look back at our Ash Wednesday service, we put dust on each other's foreheads, and we heard the words, "You are dust and to dust you shall return." Dust. The dust of creation where God breathed life into Adam, created from dust. And the dust that reminds us of humanity and our sins – for we will return to dust. How often we see God use dust, God's medium of choice. Life created from dust and death back to dust again.

And once again, we see a story where another of God's miracles revolves around dust. Jesus spat into the dust and put the mud on the man's eyes -the man born blind. If you take notice, the text for today doesn't say blind man, but a man born blind. Here in this text the focus is not on the man's blindness nor the cause of his blindness but on the opportunity for God's works of healing. You might have perceived that Jesus says, "The works of him who sent me." God's good work in this world.

Jesus also says that "We must work the works of God who sent me." We. It is not just Jesus doing the work that God desires. It is Jesus' followers, we – we are the followers, we are the disciples of Jesus. And we are called to do God's work. And we are sent – just as the man born blind was sent to Siloam to wash his eyes so he could see. And do you want to know what the Hebrew word Siloam means? It means sent. Sent.

And did you hear Jesus say, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." That word light certainly is appropriate, for a blind person cannot see, and we cannot see in the dark. So there is a double meaning here. Jesus is the light until his work on the cross is done – "as long as I am in this world." But Jesus is also the light. Remember the verse from John, Chapter 1, verse 5? *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* Jesus Christ shines with the light of God and nothing, absolutely nothing, can be brighter, can outshine God's most Holy Light, the Light of Jesus, the Christ.

These verses referring to the Light, are so important in this dark time, when no one knows when or where this virus will attack. But when things in our lives seem overtaken by darkness, we can know, without a doubt, that nothing is too unknown, nothing is too big, nor is anything too dark for the Light that radiates from God.

Jesus came as a light to the world. The Son of Man is the One who shines to expose the darkness in this world and to heal the world from its sins. And because Jesus' actions are for the good of all, we are sent out to shine in the world that needs the light of Christ more than ever. In today's Gospel, the word Siloam means sent and that is the place the man who was

born blind was sent to wash away the mud from his eyes. He was sent and we are sent. He was blind but now he sees.

Be the light of the world, my friends. You are sent, sent to shine with the light of the One who loves with a love that passes all understanding. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of insight, open the hearts of the church and the world to all who testify to your deeds of power. Raise up voices in your church that are often silenced or overlooked due to age, gender expression, race, or economic status. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, empower us to care for the land and all living things that dwell in it and beneath it. Provide rich soil for crops to grow. Bring rain to lands suffering drought. Protect hills and shorelines from damage caused by erosion. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, bring peace to all people and nations. Anoint leaders who seek goodness, righteousness, and truth on behalf of all. Frustrate the efforts of those who would seek to cause violence or terror. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, you care for our needs even before we ask. Come quickly to all who seek prayer this day, especially those we name in our hearts.. Accomplish healing through the work of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists, and all who tend to human bodies. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, you call out to those who are asleep and awaken them to new life with you. We give thanks for your saints, especially those who have recently joined the in the eternal dance of light and life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of healing, we pray for this world as we deal with the unknowns around this virus. Protect those who are not ill, heal those who are, and give comfort to those who have lost loved ones. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray together the pray we have been taught.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

The Sending

And now receive out Lord's Blessing.

May you know the Holy Light and Life in this time where there are more questions than answers. In the name of the God, + Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Go in peace.