

Wednesday, March 1, 2023  
Season of Lent  
Day 7

### **Matthew 9:27–34**

<sup>27</sup> As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

<sup>28</sup> When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied.

<sup>29</sup> Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; <sup>30</sup> and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.” <sup>31</sup> But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

<sup>32</sup> While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. <sup>33</sup> And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

<sup>34</sup> But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.”

### **Reflection**

One of my Seminary professors would often say “first, we build the building, then the building builds us.” It is a caution to think carefully the way our church (and other) buildings have the power to restrict us or force us into a certain way of thinking. It’s about “formation.” It is a similar notion to what Paul says in Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world.” The things around us have the power of forming us into particular shapes, and that (often) happens without us knowing. Does a fish know it’s wet?

The height of this formation is the practice of idolatry. Idolatry is the practice of ascribing the work of the One Creator God, YHWH, to things within the creation. These are often things that we have shaped with our own hands; idols. Now, no one who makes a little statue believes that is their god. No that statue is a symbol of the thing signified. Worship at the statue connects to the spiritual reality behind the statue that we can see. So, not only do we ascribe God’s work to the work of our hands, but we also ascribe it to the work of our minds. The glory that belongs exclusively to God, we give over to our own creative abilities.

This has a spiritual impact on us who have been made in the image of God. We become like what we worship. We become like our idols. Having eyes we do not see. Having ears we do not hear. Having mouths we do not speak (right!). In the opening of Romans, Paul the Pharisee rehearses humanity’s idolatry. Clearly the nations who have not received God’s self revelation practices idolatry and have therefore effaced the image of God within themselves. Then he turns and says, and so have my own people Israel as they have copied the nations. All human life is under the curse of their own idolatry.

So, what’s happening in our passage this morning? Two blind men come to the king (son of David; who images God to his people) to have their eyes opened—they have eyes but cannot see. Then a deaf man, who has a little more spiritual reality than is good for him, comes to be healed—they have ears but cannot hear. Once again, the kingdom has come! Humanity—Jews and Gentiles—are forgiven (idolatry) and restored (remade in the image of God/Christ).

With this understanding of good news I hope you can hear how problematic the response of the Pharisees is. Once again, they are ascribing the work of God to the power of evil. They have eyes but cannot see and ears but do not hear. What idols do we worship today? How are the things around us shaping us without our knowledge? Lent is a time to intentionally turn to God and invite him to reveal ourselves to ourselves. It is a time of purging idols and focusing on Him.

### **Prayer**

Lord, we confess that we have ascribed that which is good and properly comes from you to other things in our lives. We repent and believe that you can heal us. Open our eyes and ears we pray and inscribe your image, the image of your beloved Son, in us. Amen.