

# The Blind

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I'm Ray Peterson, and I'm in the Richmond El Cerrito Berkeley group, community group, and I'm a deacon at this church. Today's reading is from Gospel of John, chapter 8, verse 12, and chapter 9, verses 1 to 7 and 13 and 24 to 41 as printed in your liturgy.

A reading from the Gospel according to John. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned that this man or his parents that he was born blind?

[ 1 : 24 ] Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me.

Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world. After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. Go, he told him. Wash in the pool of Siloam. This word means sent. So the man went and washed and came home seeing. They brought the Pharisees, the man who had been blind.

A second time, they summoned the man who had been blind. Give glory to God by telling the truth, they said. We know this man is a sinner. He replied, whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see. Then they asked him, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? He answered, I have told you already, and you did not listen.

[ 2 : 28 ] Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too? Then they hurled insults at him and said, you are this fellow's disciple. We are disciples of Moses.

We know that God spoke to Moses, but as far as this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from. The man answered, now that is remarkable.

You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

If this man were not from God, he would do nothing. He could do nothing. To this they replied, you were steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us?

But they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out. And when he found him, he said, do you believe in the son of man? Who is he, sir? The man asked.

[ 3 : 27 ] Tell me so that I may believe in him. Jesus said, you have now seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you. Then the man said, Lord, I believe.

And he worshipped him. Jesus said, for judgment, I have come into this world so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind. Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, what?

Are we blind too? Jesus said, if you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ. Good morning. It's good to see you all. And we had a wonderful gathering here yesterday for our marriage seminar.

And I learned from our counselor and speaker that I apparently have lots of room for improvement in my own marriage. And my wife confirmed that at the marriage conference.

[ 4 : 30 ] But it was really encouraging just to see so many people fighting for their marriages, fighting to have a healthy marriage and relationship, a marriage that honors God.

That's so encouraging. I'm also so encouraged by our alpha that began two weeks ago. We gathered again this Thursday night, had eight or nine tables of people just enjoying good food and rich content and honest conversations.

This past week talking about the question, who is Jesus? And just an open space for people who are exploring this question, who is Jesus? And really, this gospel, all the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they were written to help us answer the question, who is Jesus?

And we come today to perhaps one of the greatest stories in the gospels. And I just want to dive right in because there's so much here.

And I want to explore four aspects of the story. First of all, I want to explore the claim, and then the sign, and then the problem, and finally, the encounter.

[ 5 : 42 ] So we're going to talk about the claim, the sign, the problem, and the encounter. First of all, let's just discuss the claim that meets us right at the very beginning of our reading in John 8, 12, where Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. You know, in the Old Testament, God revealed his name to Moses.

Moses, and it's a critical point in the scriptures, where God says to Moses, I am who I am. Go and tell the Israelite people that I am has sent me to you.

That's in Exodus chapter 3. And we learn there that I am is the name for Yahweh. And what's interesting is that in the Gospel of John, seven times Jesus makes these claims.

He makes these statements that begin with the words, I am. Right? We heard it last week. I am the bread that gives life to the world. This week, I am the light of the world. Later on in John chapter 8, after Jesus makes that statement, he says this.

[ 6 : 55 ] He says, before Abraham was born, I am. And the people that heard him say that, they heard him claiming divine attributes. They heard him identifying himself as Yahweh, which is why if you look at the end of John chapter 8, they actually picked up stones to kill Jesus.

Not the last time they would try to kill him there in Jerusalem. Jesus has to hide. He has to slip away from the harm that's intended for him. When we think about this claim, I am the light of the world, it's actually quite a self-centered claim.

Right? That's probably one of the most striking features about the claims that Jesus makes because he's constantly talking about himself. And that's what sets them apart from the leaders of the world's religions.

Right? They tend to be rather self-effacing and point away from themselves and to say things like, that is the light as far as I understand it.

So follow that light over there. But Jesus is self-advancing. Jesus says, I am the light. Follow me. I'll be the one who leads you out of the darkness.

[ 8 : 10 ] And no other religious leader, no other religious founder who dared to say that kind of thing would be taken seriously. Or be allowed to live, I should say.

So who is it that's making this self-centered claim? This is the same Jesus who, in the rest of the Gospels, insists on humility in other people.

Right? It's the same Jesus who is constantly rebuking his disciples for their self-seeking attitudes. Same Jesus who is, you know, wearied by his disciples' desires to be great and to think of themselves more highly than they ought.

So is Jesus practicing something other than what he preached? Does Jesus set for himself a different standard than he has for the rest of us?

Well, C.S. Lewis was a professor at Oxford University and he said this in one of his writings. He says, the discrepancy between the depth and sanity of Jesus' moral teaching and the rampant megalomania, which must lie behind his teaching unless he is indeed God, has never been satisfactorily gotten over.

[ 9 : 29 ] And what Lewis is saying there is, you know, it really makes no sense to respect Jesus. Or to respect that Jesus is a great teacher if, in fact, he's completely mistaken and totally deluded about the one thing that he constantly is teaching about, namely himself.

Right? His claims about himself. I am the light of the world. What, it's one of the most staggering and stupendous statements that's ever been made in the history of the world.

What does this astonishing claim mean? What does it mean? Well, we should remember that the first words that the Creator God speaks in the Bible are fiat lux.

Right? Let there be light. And that nothing exists apart from that light. And the idea that God would call someone to be the means of bringing light to his good yet fallen creation is actually rooted in Moses and in the prophets.

For example, the prophet Isaiah, if you read his book, he says that Israel is to be the world's true light. And that this servant of the Lord is going to come up within Israel.

[10:53] The anointed Messiah is going to bring the light of God's truth and the light of God's justice. And at the climax of the prophet Isaiah, he says that this servant of the Lord is going to die a cruel and terrible death in order to shine the light of God into the world.

And so this is the biblical backdrop for the claim that Jesus makes. I am the light of the world. And you'll notice that it's an exclusive claim.

He doesn't say, I am a light of the world. He doesn't say, I am one among many equally valid and legitimate lights. He says, I am the light.

There's a definite article in what Jesus says. I and I alone am the supreme light of the world beside which all other lights are like candlelight next to sunlight.

That's what he means. I'm not merely a light from within this world. I am the light from outside of this world. I am not a light from below.

[12:01] I am the light from above, Jesus is saying. It's an exclusive claim, but it's also an inclusive claim because he announces that his domain is no less extensive than the whole world.

I am the light of the whole world. Every square inch of the entire cosmos, I've come to enlighten, Jesus says. And so he applies this exclusive yet inclusive claim, right?

This claim that's deeply offensive on the one hand and yet incredibly universal on the other. And he applies it to the particular person's life and practice.

And what he says in John chapter 8 verse 12, he says, The individual following me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of real life.

And what Jesus means there is he's saying, Do you want to know the nature and the meaning and the purpose of human life and existence? Do you want to know how to live and how to die and how to be prepared for eternity?

[13:11] Do you long to live in the fullest and most authentic way you possibly can? Do you want to know how to live in the world?

Do you want to know how to live in the world? Jesus that, yes, you are the light of the world, you'll not only see him as he is, like the rising sun at dawn, you know, bringing light to the world, but what will begin to happen is that you'll begin to see everything else in light of him. You'll see God. You'll see yourself. You'll see your spouse and your marriage. You'll see your work and your co-workers. You'll see your money.

You'll see sex. You'll see power. You'll see your kids, your family. You'll see art and science and society and politics in a brand new, totally new light, like when the sun comes up and all the colors and all the perspective and all the dimensions are dawning on you like a brand new day.

That's what Jesus is saying. So what do you make of this audacious claim, this paradigm time-shattering, life-altering claim that I am the light of the world? That's the claim.

But then I want to talk not just about the claim, but I want to talk about the sign. In the Gospel of John, as I said, Jesus gives these seven I am statements, right? But he accompanies those statements with seven signs. And these signs are indicators not only of his identity, but of his mission, why he came. And the first of those signs we looked at a few weeks ago was at a wedding, and Jesus turned water into wine. And we saw there in John chapter 2, it said what Jesus did was the first of his signs through which he revealed his glory. And all these signs that Jesus is giving, a sign is a symbol. A sign is, it's a signifier. It's pointing to something beyond itself. And so when we get to this sign in John chapter 9 of recreating this blind man's optic nerve that has never worked in his whole life, right, the sign of granting the gift of sight to someone for the first time in their life, this is not merely a display of Jesus' power, though it is that. But it's a signpost that's meant to point us to a deeper reality, not just good news for this one man, but good news for the whole world. That this is why Jesus came. So let's take a deeper look at this sign. Jesus, again, if you look at the end of

[16:26] John 8, he's leaving the temple in the heart of the holy city of Jerusalem because people have picked up stones in order that they might kill him right then and there. And Jesus is going out

from the grounds of the temple mount, and he looks and he sees this beggar, right? He's a miserable man. He's a blind beggar, and he's been blind from birth. He's never seen the light of day. And Jesus thinks to himself, okay, I think it's time to give them another sign. To give another sign of who I am and why I've come. And so he says in verse, it says in verse 7, or verse 5 actually, he says, while I am in the world, I am the light of the world. And having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. And he said, go wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus has curious methods, right? Because number one, Jesus, and he doesn't just do this here, he does this pretty much all the time. Jesus chooses especially hurting people. Jesus chooses especially miserable people who really have nothing to offer to the world. They have nothing to offer to him, right? And secondly,

Jesus, he doesn't even ask this man, do you want to be healed? He doesn't say, do you believe in me? He just begins to work, just graciously, compassionately, powerfully working on this man. And then the third curious thing is that Jesus uses his saliva mixed together with the dust of the ground by which the creator God made the first human being, the original stuff that we were made of.

And Jesus uses this material, visible, tangible stuff as the means by which to touch us, right? He uses this as the means by which to channel the power of his grace toward us. And it's not just with this man.

He does this continually still today. He uses water. He uses bread. He uses wine. He uses air through vocal cords and reading and preaching and praying in order to put mud on our eyes. He uses the ordinary stuff of the world to put mud on our eyes. And you might be thinking to yourself, well, this is weird.

[ 18 : 54 ] Like, why does he work this way? Why doesn't he just heal this man on the spot? What is he doing? Why would he make this man go with mud on his eyes and just blindly navigate down this really long road, hundreds of steps? You know, tons of people walking on this road. He's bobbing and weaving, people carrying jars of water down to and up from this pool. Why would he have him do this? Why would he make him go down to this pool and then lower himself down into the water to wash? And the answer is because Jesus requires faith. Jesus wants to see if we'll take a risk on him. Jesus wants to see whether or not we'll put the full weight of our trust on him and on his word. Jesus is waiting to see not just if we have faith, but if we'll put our faith into action. And to see whether or not we'll put our faith into action when it feels difficult and when it seems ridiculous in the eyes of other people. That's why Jesus does it this way. And notice that the man, without hesitation, by faith, obeys Jesus. And if he hadn't done that, we'd never have the story. But it says in verse 7, the man went and he washed and he came home seeing. Right? For the first time, he blinks and he can see sunlight. And he realizes that what has banished and what's destroyed the darkness in his life is the light of Jesus himself. That Jesus is what he said he is. He's the light of the world.

And so I imagine this man running. It doesn't say this, but you can imagine he's shouting, right? For joy. He's never seen in his whole life. He's going and hugging complete strangers as he's making his way back up this road with a new life, with an abundant life that's come by faith in the power of Jesus. And remember though that Jesus doesn't intend this only as a way of displaying his power. Jesus intends it as a sign for us of his entire mission. This man with congenital blindness from birth represents the entire human situation.

Right? That we are all by nature spiritually blind from birth and not receptive to the light of God. God. And that until our eyes are opened by the light of the world, all of us are living in darkness. But if the true light finds you, if the true light speaks to you, if the true light touches you, if the true light washes you, then he'll destroy the darkness in your life.

[ 22 : 01 ] And so this is not just a healing for this blind beggar. No, it's a signpost of what Jesus has come to do for everybody. And so the question is, do you see that you too are a blind beggar in need of the light of the world to open up your eyes?

Do you see that he must come and find you? He must speak to you. He must touch you. He must wash you. He must give you the gift of spiritual sight.

Has he done that for you? Has he enabled you to see? That's the sign. Right? So the claim, I'm the light of the world.

The sign. The healing of a man born blind. But I want to talk also about the problem. There's a problem in this story that we're going to see in just a moment. Because this man, he can see.

He barely knows anything about Jesus. But what he knows is enough. And he starts just sharing with his neighbors. Right? He immediately begins to testify the good work that Jesus has done in his life.

[ 23 : 11 ] And his testimony is just one of simple gratitude. Verse 25. You know, famous words. We sang it in Amazing Grace. I was blind, but now I see.

Amazing testimony. I once was blind, but now I can see. And this reminds us that you don't have to be a Bible expert. You don't have to be a persuasive speaker to share the good news of Jesus. Right? This man barely knows Jesus. But he just goes out and he starts to say what he's heard. What he's experienced about Jesus. And what Jesus has done in his life.

He just says, I was transformed because God is at work in and through Jesus. But this is what brings us to the big problem in our story. Because his witness about Jesus, his testimony about Jesus is not appreciated.

It's not accepted. Right? He boldly and courageously tells the truth that he knows about Jesus. But what happens? It ends up costing him dearly.

[ 24 : 15 ] Right? He's scorned. He's rejected. He's excluded. Ultimately, he's thrown out. And Jesus' work in his life is powerful, but it leads to difficulty.

As it often does. And what we see here is the people who are resistant to Jesus, the people who are opposed to Jesus, they launch an investigation.

Right? And we didn't tell the whole story. Most of the chapters about this investigation, I encourage you to go and read it all. But they begin to ask questions of this man. They say, hey, are you sure you used to be blind?

Are you absolutely positive that you experienced the healing today? And what about this Jesus? Is he a credible person? Is he somebody we can trust?

And you can see that their line of questioning reveals that they've already reached a verdict. Right? Without due process. They've already reached a verdict before the proceedings have even begun.

[ 25 : 21 ] They've already decided with closed minds that they're not going to believe either in the supernatural sign of Jesus or in the credible testimony of this man.

And the key mantra that the people who oppose Jesus continue to repeat in verse 24 and verse 29 is they say, we know. Right?

We know. We already know. We can see everything we need to see about Jesus. And what we know is that Jesus does not come from God.

And they're sitting in judgment on Jesus. And what does Jesus say to his judges, though? Jesus says in verse 39, he says, For judgment I have come into this world so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.

And some of the Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and they asked, What, are we blind too? And Jesus said, If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

[ 26 : 25 ] See, now we've come to the point. Because Jesus healed this physical blindness. Not just to heal physical blindness. He healed this physical blindness in order that he might confront and judge spiritual blindness.

Jesus is saying, Look, if you pridefully and self-righteously claim, We know. And we can see everything we need to know about God and about Jesus already.

Jesus says, You are actually spiritually blind. You are, Jesus says, You're guilty of the sin of not being open-minded toward me.

You're guilty of the sin of thinking that you don't need what I've come to offer you. And Jesus says, This is, This kind of blindness, This kind of spiritual blindness and darkness, Is actually way harder to cure than congenital physical blindness.

Imagine you go to the eye doctor, right? And you, You go to them and you say, My vision is perfect. Right? I don't need any intervention.

[ 27 : 36 ] I don't need glasses. I don't need surgery. I can see fine. Just the way that I am right now. You're going to be a tough patient to cure.

By the way, I can't see any of you right now. The deepest blindness is blindness to your own blindness.

If you cannot admit that you have a problem with your sight, You're never going to see. If you shut yourself into a closed circle of thinking, A closed circle of living, Which systematically excludes the

way that God is shining his light in and through Jesus, Then what he's telling you is that you've locked yourself, You've bolted yourself into a spiritual darkness of your own devising. That if you suppress the truth of the one who created and the one who is enabling and sustaining your optic nerve, Even this very second is sending 100 billion signals to your brain every single second.

And yet you claim that you see reality clearly. Something is seriously disconnected in your life. You're a creature who's been created, Who's denying your creator.

[ 29 : 02 ] And Jesus is saying that the only way to heal that kind of spiritual blindness, The only way that you can spiritually see Jesus as the light of the world, Is for the Holy Spirit to come down.

The Holy Spirit to come inside of you, And enable you to see, On the one hand, Enable you to see your own darkness. To help you see your own pride. And your own self-sufficiency.

But on the other hand, To help you see the beauty and the brilliance and the grace of Jesus himself. That's the only way you'll be healed, Is if the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to these things.

And one of the key things that the Holy Spirit does when he comes in, Is he enables you to particularly see, That when Jesus is on his cross, Darkness comes down.

Right? And it's not just a physical darkness. Jesus is crying out from his cross, My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me? He's plunged into a kind of spiritual darkness. This man, Jesus, Who saw everything perfectly.

[ 30 : 07 ] He could see into the heart of a human being. He could see God clearly. Jesus can no longer see. Right? He's losing his sight. He's losing the light of God's face.

The light of God's love. He's being spiritually cut off in the darkness. And the reason Jesus did that, Is so that the Holy Spirit could come, And open the eyes of your heart spiritually, So that you could see the light of the world.

So that you could, You could see the one crucified yet risen, Who's inviting you into the light of Easter, And the resurrection life, That he's come to give you.

So the question, The question is, Will you resist the light? Will you choose to remain, In the darkness of your own devising? Will you choose to, Continue to boldly declare, That you see everything, Just as you ought, Without any help, From anybody else?

Or, Will you come into the light, And allow it like this man, To heal you, To change you, To give you new life? So that's the claim, I'm the light of the world, The sign, The healing of a man born blind, The problem, Is that we claim, That we can see, Spiritual reality clearly, Without God, Without his son Jesus, And the, The fourth thing I want to talk about, To close, Is the encounter, Right, You have to have an encounter, And this is what it is, In verse 35, It says, Jesus heard that, They had thrown him out, And when he found him, He said, Do you believe, In the son of man?

[ 31 : 47 ] And this is amazing, Because this blind man, This man who used to be blind, He was created by Jesus, He's been powerfully healed, By Jesus, He's actually been telling, Other people about Jesus, But he's never actually, Beheld Jesus, Right, He's never yet, Seen Jesus, He doesn't know, Who Jesus truly is, He doesn't, He's not yet in a personal relationship, With Jesus, And maybe you're like that, Maybe you know about Jesus, But do you really, Know Jesus?

And the good news is, That Jesus comes, And he seeks this man out, And that's the only way, Anyone ever, Ever becomes a Christian, Is Jesus comes, And he finds you, Jesus begins to talk to you, Jesus begins to, Question you, And he says, To the man, In verse 35, Do you believe, In the son of man?

And he says, Who is he sir? Tell me, That I might, Believe in him, So far, In the story, This man has been, Kind of feeling his way, Out of the dark, Just gradually, Incrementally, Inching his way, Toward the light, That he didn't have, When he started the day, Right, This strange man, Says, Go wash, He washes, He can see, In verse 11, He starts talking about, This man they call Jesus, And then in verse 17, He starts talking about, This man who, I think might be a prophet, And then in verses 31, To 33, He starts talking about, This man from God, This man who, Does the will of God, And, It's kind of like that game, When they send you out of the room, And they hide something, And you come back in, They're like, You're cold, You're getting warmer, You're getting warmer, You're hot, You're red, You're red hot, Right, Same thing, The Samaritan woman, We saw in John 4, She, She said, Oh this man, He's a man, No he's a Jew, He's a prophet, He's the Messiah, He's the savior of the world, Started ice cold, Getting much warmer, This man says, Jesus is a man, He's a prophet, He does the will of God, He's got an increasingly, Higher view of Jesus, Which is really great, But it's not high enough, And that's why Jesus seeks him out, And says, Do

you know the son of man?

And he invites this man to, Declare who he is, In relation to the son of man, And every first century Jew, Would know, That the son of man, Is from Daniel chapter 7, The prophet Daniel chapter 7, And here's what it says, In Daniel 7, The ancient of days, Took his seat, His throne was flaming with fire, 10,000 times 10,000, Attended him, And one like a son of man, Approached the ancient of days, And was led into his presence, And he was given authority, And glory, And sovereign power, And all the nations, And peoples of every language, Worshipped him, And his dominion, Is an everlasting dominion, That will not pass away, And his kingdom is one, That will never be destroyed, And Jesus says, Who are you, In relation to, The son of man, And the man says, Well who is he, Because if I know, I'll believe in him, And Jesus says in verse 37,

[ 35 : 07 ] You've now seen him, In fact, He is the one, Speaking to you, You see, He's confronted, He's confronted, He's confronted, By Jesus, Confronted by, The self-revelation, Of the light of the world, And in this revelation, He receives, Not merely, The lesser gift, The lesser gift, Of physical sight, But now, He receives, The much greater gift, Of spiritual sight, And he's been given, An open mind, He's been given, A willing heart, He's been given, A humble attitude, And he's been enabled, To say, You know, I want to know, If it's possible to know, I want to believe, If it's possible to believe, In the son of man, Whose kingdom, Will never be destroyed, And boom, Suddenly, The picture begins, To come into complete, Focus for him, And he can start, To see Jesus, For who Jesus really is, Right, He can start to see,

The wonder, Of Jesus' true, Identity, And when he does, He acts out, The most logical thing, You could possibly do, In this situation, And in verse 38, It says, He says, Lord, I believe, And he worshipped, Jesus, Jesus is not, Merely respected, Or confessed, Jesus is believed, And worshipped, As the son of man, To whom the ancient of days, Has given authority, And glory, And sovereign power, And who will have, Everlasting, Dominion, And so the question, As we close, And come to this table is, Have you had this encounter, With Jesus?

Have you bowed your knee, To Jesus in faith, Saying, Lord, I believe, Have you worshipped, Jesus, Not only as your personal Lord, But have you worshipped him, As the Lord of the whole, World, Whose kingdom, Is never going to be destroyed, If you have, If Jesus is your Lord, The question then is, Are you following the pattern, That he set for us?

The question is, Is his mission, Your mission? Have you committed yourself, To do the things, That Jesus does? Well what does Jesus do? Jesus went, In search of this miserable man, Right? He went, He went and he found, This blind beggar, To bring blessing to him, To bring healing to him, Jesus again, Went and he found, This cast out, And rejected man, In order that he might, Bring him in, Jesus went, To this man, Who had some ideas, But who needed, A more complete gospel, In order that he might, Have the eyes of his heart, Open to spiritual reality, Jesus went, And he took him, Into a deeper discipleship, Inviting him into, Not half-hearted belief, But whole-hearted belief, Whole-hearted worship, Jesus went, And he welcomed him, Into a spiritual family, Where he would belong, Not just for the rest of his life, But forever, And so if Jesus is, Our Lord, If Jesus is the one, In whom we believe, If Jesus is the one, Whom we worship, The question is, Are we following in his mission?

[ 38 : 37 ] Who is the one person, At least one person, That, That, He's put into your life, And he's just waiting for you, He's waiting for you, To do what he did, Waiting for you to go, And seek that person out, Waiting for you to go, And bless them, Waiting for you to go, And bring them in, Who's that one person, Who needs to hear, The complete gospel, Who is that person, Who needs to be invited, To stop worshiping things, That aren't worthy, Of our worship, And to begin to worship, Jesus wholeheartedly, Who is that person, In your life, Who needs to be welcomed, And who needs to be accepted, Into the belonging, Of Jesus spiritual family, I think that we're invited, To imagine our friends, Imagine our neighbors, Imagine our co-workers, And our family members, That God has put into our life, Not at random, But with a purpose, And to imagine them,

Looking at Jesus, With healed spiritual sight, Looking at Jesus, With eyes that can see him, For the first time, For who he truly is, And hearing them say to us, This is the one, I've been wanting to trust, Someone like this, My entire life, I've been wanting to adore, Someone like this, And I didn't even know it, But I finally found it, I pray for those kind of encounters, More and more of these kind of encounters, To be happening, Among us here, At Christchurch, And in our lives, In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Thank you.