

## Lent 4A - Comments and questions about the lessons for March 15, 2026

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

- This story introduces David into the history of Israel. God has rejected Saul as king, and then God commissions Samuel to anoint the next king – though he is to do so in secret. David is the youngest of Jesse’s sons. Samuel wants to pick the oldest, but God’s directive is powerful: “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”
- When do we focus more on outward appearance? What can encourage us to look at the heart?

### Psalm 23

- What does it mean to you, “I shall not be in want”?
- Reflect on the following verse: “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me.” When have you felt God’s presence in your darkest times?
- When we hear the line, “your rod and your staff, they comfort me,” we do not typically consider how the “rod” can be a comforting image. How can we consider the rod/discipline as comfort? What does it mean to combine that image with the staff?

### Ephesians 5:8-14

- What does it mean to you to “live as children of the light”?
- How can we “expose” the “unfruitful works of darkness”?

### John 9:1-41

- The opening of the story exposes our desire to assign blame or find reasons: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” In response, Jesus says that neither is the case: “he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.” What if we change our approach to tragedy to reflect this outlook? How can God’s work be revealed in suffering?
- The woman at the well last week shows an example of witness among an eager audience. The one born blind shows an example of witness among an unwilling audience. The man continues to come back to his story and what Jesus has done. We are called to witness what Jesus has done in our own lives.
- The story also deals with themes of physical and spiritual blindness. The man not only is healed of his physical blindness. He also now can see clearly spiritually. The others in the story remain blind to their own sin, whether through fear (the parents) or willful ignorance (the Pharisees). Where do you struggle with “blindness,” an unwillingness to see God at work?
- How might baptism be considered a cure for “blindness,” as the pool of Siloam was for the man born blind?
- As a reminder, John 2-12 can be seen as imitating a journey of life, reconceived in a spiritual sense. Such a structure would look like this:

John 2 -	The wedding - Water into wine
John 3 -	Being born (from above) - Nicodemus
John 4 -	Life essentials – water (as living water) – Woman at the well
John 5 -	Learning to walk – Healing of the lame man
John 6 -	Life essentials – bread - Feeding the 5000
John 9 -	Opening our eyes – growing up – Healing of the blind man
John 11 -	Dying – Raising of Lazarus
John 12 -	Burial – Mary anointing Jesus

During Lent, we touch on four of these stories. In the lesson for Sunday, Jesus uses the image of sight and blindness. In this story, Jesus challenges us to see how blinded we can be in a spiritual sense and what might set us free. In the context of a journey, this can be seen as our “growing up” or our maturity.