*For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says: “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

Ephesians 5:8-14

*As He walked along, 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: “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We 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.” 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, saying to him: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 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?” Some were saying: “It is he.” Others were saying: “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying: “I am he.” But they kept asking him: “Then how were your eyes opened?” 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.” They said to him: “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.” 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. 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. ”Some of the Pharisees said: “This man is not from God, for He does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said: “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man: “What do you say about Him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said: “He is a prophet.” 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 we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would 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 they said to him:* *“Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered: “I do not know whether He is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”* John 9:1-25

 *After listening restlessly to a long and tedious sermon, a 6-year-old boy asked his father what the preacher did the rest of the week.*

 *"Oh, he's a very busy man," the father replied. "He takes care of church business, visits the sick, ministers to the poor.... And then he has to have time to rest up. Talking in public isn't an easy job, you know.*

 *The boy thought about that, then said, "Well, listening ain't easy, either."*

I Was Blind and Now I See

1. What happens when God enters one’s life? Which changes in life do we become aware of? More importantly, which changes do we still need to experience? When asked and answered, these questions obviously bring a very personal response. The important question however still remains: Do we really know what have changed in us? Do we really see what precisely happened with us when God moved into our life? The one important and obvious change is that we begin to rely more and more on what the Scriptures tells us about God. However, while doing so, we also discover something that may seem distressing. The Bible tells us that our God is God of love and comfort, and yet the same Bible also says tells us this: *“’Vengeance is mine’ - says the Lord.”* Doesn’t this sound as a contradiction in a description of God?

2. I personally find such contradiction to be of our own creation though. As an old axiom that says: *“The truth is in the eye of a beholder.”* Consider this, our personality has remained the same, after we decided to follow Christ, as it was before. The change that occurred in us simply redirected our attention. Take Paul for example, after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus he was Saul no more, but his knowledge and his zeal for Christ was the same when he became Paul as it was for God when he was Saul. The same is with the messages of Scriptures that initially we may see as contradictory. If we study the Bible carefully we clearly see that there are no contradictions in the Scriptures, and the different messages or accounts in the Bible serve an important purpose. It is not by chance that we have two accounts of the creation story. The blind man upon hearing the comments made by the Pharisees might have been torn in deciding what was truly important, Jesus braking the Law or caring for him. In the end however his answer was clear: *“I know only this: ‘I Was Blind and Now I See.’”* It was the Pharisees who created the contradictions because they could not accept Jesus for who He was as He did not fit their vision of the Messiah.

3. Upon closer examination, all the contradictions that seems to exist in the Scriptures are nothing else but the *“surface inconsistencies.”* We must understand that the Bible is not just another book, another literary product; it is the guide for life, but we may fully understand this guide only with the help of the Holy Spirit. We need Scriptures to know who we are and what is the purpose not only for our existence but also to answer why we are who we are as a species. Without the Word of God we would simply drift in the ocean of time and space and without God in our life we would be doomed. Look around, what we see in this world is nothing else but the mockery of God, of His Word, and of His teaching. All this is being done in the name of the human philosophy disguised in the idea of a *“freedom and equality*.” Everywhere we look, in the media, in the social interactions,we see deep moral degradation of our society where only one side of the issue might be presented as a true and valid. The same applies to the education system, whether on the elementary school or the graduate studies levels, and everywhere in between. Only one view counts. And yet, there are always, and always have been, two sides to every story. Where does all this *“one size fits all”* mentality lead us to?

4. Our society seems to *“know it all,”* but regrettably is blind to the truth. Modern society uses bigotry, one sided politics and selective justice to defend its views. To make matters even worse, many churches succumb to the prejudice against those who stand against the vims of the corrupt society and accept sin as a norm. In our Gospel reading, Jesus opens the blind man’s eyes so the man could see the world as it is. The Pharisees, these religious scholars, and politicians of a day, were obviously blinded to Jesus’ divinity and blinded to seeing the world as it was. So many people today also cannot see the obvious that surrounds them. They focus on their interpretation of the events and of the affairs of the world. Yet, Jesus wanted people to understand that they must see the reality as it is and not as they want it to see. The Mosaic Law brought to the Hebrews from the Mt. Sinai by Moses was good, but it needed to be interpreted not by the *“letter”* but by the *“spirit”* of it and Jesus wanted all to realize that.

5. When God enters one’s life, the one becomes aware of the problems life presents and consequently needs to solve them. This is what the changed heart does. As a Christian I cannot stay idle when God is being mocked. I cannot stay idle when I see the society moving into the direction of destruction of the existing norms. I cannot stay idle when I see the so called *“progressive”* actions that devolves us as a species and lead us to embracing the destructive power of sin. I do not care who does it, the politicians of every level including the president, the media, the educators, the religious leaders, or just ordinary folks. As a Christian I may allow only the Holy Spirit to guide me, to guide us, so we can see the destructive powers of Satan who disguises himself in the ideology of the supposed human justice and equality. In the end, evil’s equality is only for the chosen few, those who agree and follow him.

6. When God enters one’s life the one’s heart becomes aware of the sharp contrast between good and evil. It is true, to see the contrast between the good and the evil is sometimes difficult. It is especially hard when we are surrounded by the world that tries to convince us of its values to be good and valid. In result the doubt often creeps up into the life of a Christian and sometimes we are not even aware of this. That’s why we must be vigilante and able to see the truth. It is so important in our life. It is quite easy to become indifferent to God’s voice when we listen to the messages our society constantly broadcasts. In our story the Pharisees, who so clearly represent our modern society, go at first after the man’s parents, and yet, when the parents do not *“bite”* their *“lure,”* and deflect the Pharisees’ questioning, the Pharisees, go after the healed man Just as the society today does today with the true Church: *“Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”* and *“Accept that you are wrong, because we are right!”*

7. Thankfully, the healed man did not allow them to intimidate him. Our society intimidates those who are against the society’s views. Those of us who would stand against the society’s views are called phobic, rednecks, racists, privileged etc. It is so common to describe with these slurs those who remain true to the ages old moral and ethical values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, yet we, just like the man who was healed, must not give in to the woke, progressive, cancel culture bullying and must faithfully and firmly respond in faith, just as he did: *“I do not know if He is a sinner or not, what I know is this: ‘I was blind and now I see.’”* The Pharisees could not argue with this blunt truth, and neither can the modern society. What the devil, through our society confronts us with, is just as arrogant and as false today as it was then in the Pharisees’ approach. In the end, the evil and his pursuit of sin cannot diminish the light in the darkness! What, however, is often so disheartening, is the fact that some people, including many Church leaders, get intimidated and so they keep silent in the face of sin. What is most tragic is that many of them do not even realize what they do, because the ideology they seem to embrace sounds so good and so positive on the surface and reveals its true face only upon a very close examination or in practice.

8. Modern world has rationalized life and unfortunately the Church often follows suit. Recently, a Christian psychologist I talked to said something very important. *“The major problem of the modern Church is lack of growth.”* He concluded that many Christians stopped growing spiritually and I believe he was right. Very often the Church members become so comfortable with the status quo that they do not pursue the greater understanding. They just give up, because they do not want to experience suffering, intimidation or bullying, but in the end they forget that when God enters one’s life, that one becomes aware of the moral excellence Christ offers and this excellence cannot be shortchanged or disregarded. No matter how much the evil tries to persuade us otherwise through the ideological and philosophical views of the modern world, we must not give in to his endeavors.

9. As Christians, we must know where we stand and why. It is not an issue of adaptation, but it is the issue of one’s values. As Christians we must take a stand and I for one will always make my stand clear, even if it means to being unpopular, being intimidated, called names etc. It is not enough to say: *“I will live my life as best as I can…”* or to say: *“This is a decent thing to do…”* It is wrong to say: *“This is what everyone else does…”* Our God wants us to ask: *“What is God’s will for me in this case?”* The healed blind man was blind not because of his or his parents’ sinfulness. He was born blind so Jesus would offer us a clear understanding of what is truly important in life: *“To see and to follow Him.”* I cannot help but to recall now the immortal words of Joshua: *“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*