**None So Blind As They Who Will Not See (3-26-17)**

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

1 Samuel 16:1-13 Epesians5: 8-14 John9:1-41

**Responsive Reading**: Psalm 23

**Summary:** “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in the world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” C.S.Lewis

The Hebrew Scriptures tell the story of Samuel’s anointing young David as God’s choice for king of Israel. Of course, Samuel feared to do this. Saul still reigned and, if news of a new anointed one got out, Samuel and whomever he anointed would be executed. C.S. Lewis wrote: “It is not that we doubt that God calls for our best, it is that we fear how painful that best may become.” I see how terribly Jesus suffered for me because he wanted God’s plan most of all. Jesus didn’t want that pain. There were alternative, safer ways for Samuel and David to do God’s will, but not for Jesus. I am afraid, afraid that if there is no way to avoid pain that I might avoid God instead.

There is an even harder challenge here. As Samuel discovered, God sees and values what is in our hearts rather than outward appearances, the pain involved in calling out our best may be more than physical suffering. Taking up a physical Cross and facing pain and even death is actually less terrifying to me than the likely possibility that God will ask me to discard ways which are not in His best plan for me.

I have a good friend who told me about a dream in which he felt himself in the presence of God. With great fear, he asked God what was the most important thing about himself which he should work on to please God. He was dreading that God would talk to him about his being gay and his attraction to black men. Then, God replied: “I’d really like you to work on the problem you have forgiving others.”

Psalm 23 speaks of God’s blessings overflowing our lives when it is poured out. Goodness and mercy will soak all those we come near. Love will follow after us because, as Paul says in Ephesians, we are called to be imitators of God. If become filled with God’s light, as Rev. Jim said last week: somebody testify!

That brings us to the Gospel story of the healing of the man born blind. That man faced the consequences of being true to the One who healed him. He is expelled, excommunicated, for being honest about how he sees and what he now understands. And, in an explosion of irony, the blind ones are the very authorities who say, “We see,” meaning, “We understand,” when they so obviously do not.

There are none as blind as they who will not see. This is why I quoted from C.S Lewis in my summary. “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in the world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” I have that restlessness which finds no respite in this world. Do you? We could shut our eyes and stay as we are, but we are strangers, refugees, and nomads who desire a better, that is to say, a heavenly country.

This courage to admit we are blind and this desire to see is why God is not ashamed to be our God, God has prepared a place for us and Jesus accepted the price. Let’s dare to live like people who can see where they are headed. Amen, Church?