

The Disciplines of Lent: Work John 9.1-7 Lenten Midweek 4 - March 17, 2021

In the gospel today Jesus says, “We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.” (John 9.4) Throughout John’s gospel we see Jesus doing the work God the Father sent him to do. In chapter 2, Jesus blesses the wedding at Cana by turning water into wine. (John 2.1-12) In chapter 3, Jesus proclaims the gospel to Nicodemus during their night-time chat: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3.16) In chapter 4, Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah to the Samaritan woman. In chapter 5, Jesus heals the man by the pool of Bethesda. In chapters 6, 7, and 8 Jesus feeds the five thousand, He teaches in the temple, and He forgives the woman caught in adultery. And that brings us to chapter 9, and our gospel for today, where Jesus says, “We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.” (John 9.4)

While it was day Jesus was busy doing the work God the Father sent him to do. And every bit of work Jesus did during his earthly ministry pointed to one final work. All of Jesus’ work culminated in the greatest work anyone has ever accomplished in all of history. Jesus’ holy, innocent, bitter, sufferings and death during Holy Week—and his resurrection on Easter Sunday is a work far greater than any other ever done. By this work, Christ forgives us our sins. Christ creates new hearts within us. Christ saves our souls from hell.

Christ’s Passion his suffering, death, and resurrection is THE work that is above all work and that surpasses all other work ever done by any human being. Our work is less miraculous, and much more ordinary. During our younger years work was a major part of our lives in some business, the farm, or in the home. Retirement—still work, but in different ways. Now, In retirement homes and seniors centres, some of you still work—even in ways lots of folks wouldn’t even recognize, but you still work. We will all work until the day we die, because God has given us work to do until we die. And our work is imperfect and is infected by sin. (Isaiah 64.6)

Lent is a good time to reflect on our work. But it’s an even better time to reflect on the work of Christ, because NIGHT IS COMING WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK! Contrition, Confession, and Absolution—clinging to the work of Christ. Christ’s work accomplishes EVERYTHING that must be done: And through Christ’s work, done on our behalf, God has set up the work that he wants us to do. So, work as always, but daily reflect on that greatest work of all, done for you.

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Amen.