

To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. <sup>7</sup> And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

Text: John 9:1-7 A 8/27/17 Judges 7:1-2, 7-9, 16-22a 2 Cor. 12:7b-10 Ps. 56 Resp. Ps.: 31  
Hymns: 19, 520 (1-4) (alt. tune: #473), 520 (6-8, 10) (alt. tune: #473), 427 (1, 3, 5, 7)

### **WHEN GOD TESTS OUR FAITH**

- 1. He has a gracious purpose in mind**
- 2. We place our trust in Him and His Word**
- 3. He will deliver us**

All praise to God, who reigns above,  
The God of all creation,  
The God of wonders, power, and love,  
The God of our salvation!  
With healing balm my soul He fills,  
The God who every sorrow stills,—  
To God all praise and glory!

The Lord forsaketh not His flock,  
His chosen generation;  
He is their Refuge and their Rock,  
Their Peace and their Salvation.  
As with a mother’s tender hand  
He leads His own, His chosen band, —  
To God all praise and glory! (TLH #19:1, 4)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

— 1 —

Jesus and His disciples came upon a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” The disciples assumed that the man’s blindness was a punishment from God for something he or his parents had done

wrong. Jesus told them, *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned.”* God hadn’t punished the man by allowing him to be born blind.

While it’s true that our actions have consequences, when something bad happens to us we shouldn’t assume that God is punishing us. If God punished us every time we did something wrong He would be punishing us all the time. We read in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, *“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He ... does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities”* (vv. 8, 10, NIV). God is very patient with us, and very loving and merciful toward us.

Jesus said that God had allowed the man to be born blind so *“that the works of God should be revealed in him.”* God had allowed the man to be born blind so that God could do some wonderful things for him and through him, as we learn in our text and the verses afterwards. But think about the man’s life up to this point. He was born blind. Although there were many things he could do, there were also many things he couldn’t do. The Bible says that he survived by being a beggar (v. 8). He had never been able to see a sunrise or sunset, a beautiful flower, or any of the other wonders of nature. He had never seen the face of his father or mother, or of anyone else he loved; nor had he ever seen the places and things that were an important part of his life. God knew this would happen to the man, yet He allowed him to be born blind.

There are some things that God allows to happen to us and to others that we just don’t understand and that can be very hard for us to accept. God sent the Old Testament believer Job a long, painful trial. Job came to say, *“My complaint is bitter.... Oh, that I knew where I might find [God] ...! I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me”* (Job 23:2-5). As Job learned, being angry at God and complaining about His will for us is wrong. It doesn’t help anything, and we only make things harder on ourselves.

Jesus said that the man’s blindness was so *“that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me....”* Jesus then miraculously healed the man. That resulted in a complete change for the better for him, not only physically, but as we’ll see, especially spiritually. Jesus’ miracle was also a blessing to everyone who knew the man. As with all of His miracles, Jesus drew people’s attention to Himself with the intent that they would learn about Him and come to believe in Him and be saved.

When God tests our faith He always has a gracious purpose in mind. Sometimes God’s gracious purpose for us also includes others. My Aunt Winnie died of cancer when she was in her early thirties. It was a sad, difficult time for our family and others who loved her. But Jesus took her to heaven. She had a friend who was an unbeliever. Her friend saw how the Lord comforted and

strengthened her while she was dying. She saw the confidence my aunt had that she was going to heaven. After my aunt died her friend said, “I want what she had.”

When God tests our faith, sometimes we can see what He’s doing for us at the time. Sometimes we see God’s purpose later on. Sometimes we never see in this life why God allowed certain things to happen. The Bible tells us, “*God is love*” (1 Jn. 4:8). Everything God does He does out of love for us. He tells us in His Word, “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, ... thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope*” (Jer. 29:11). We don’t always understand God’s ways. But we can be confident that God knows and does what’s best for us in everything.

– 2 –

We’re told, “[*Jesus*] spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.” Jesus put the clay on the blind man’s eyelids, which let him know that Jesus was in the process of healing him. “*And [Jesus] said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ .... So he went and washed.*” The man placed his trust in Jesus and went and did what Jesus told him to do.

The Bible says, “*Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass*” (Ps. 37:5). “*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths*” (Prov. 3:5-6, NASB). We entrust ourselves and our lives completely into God’s hands.

“*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*” – Psalm 119:105. God’s Word shows us the way, and we follow. Jesus says, “*Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock*” (Mt. 7:24-25, NASB). We place our trust in God’s Word, and act on what God tells us.

– 3 –

The blind man washed in the pool of Siloam, as Jesus had told him, “*and came back seeing.*” In His infinite power and love, Jesus healed him of his blindness. Healing the man of his physical blindness was part of what Jesus meant by saying, “*I must work the works of Him who sent Me.*” Jesus especially came to heal him of his spiritual blindness. We learn after our text that Jesus spoke to him further, and he came to believe in Jesus as his Savior (vv. 35-38). God had laid a heavy burden on him by allowing him to be born blind and live many years without being able to see. But when Jesus healed him, he could not only see with his physical eyes, He came to see Jesus with the eyes of faith!

When God tests our faith, He will deliver us. He tells us, *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me”* (Ps. 50:15). The Bible says, *“[The LORD] gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. ... Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint”* (Is. 40:29, 31). *“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

When Jesus said, *“I must work the works of Him who sent Me,”* His greatest work was to die on the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus said, *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* During His earthly ministry when He looked like a normal human being, Jesus was the light of the world. Jesus is always the light of the world. Jesus says, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (Jn. 8:12). Jesus has opened our blind eyes to see and believe in Him as our God and Savior!

“Heavenly Father, when You test our faith, help us to know that You always have a gracious purpose in mind. Help us to place our trust in You and Your Word, and act on what You tell us in Your Word. Thank You for Your promise that You will deliver us. Thank You that You have delivered us from our sins in Jesus. And thank You that You will deliver us from every evil one day in heaven.”

Commit whatever grieves thee  
 Into the gracious hands  
 Of Him who never leaves thee,  
 Who heaven and earth commands.  
 Who points the clouds their courses,  
 Whom winds and waves obey,  
 He will direct thy footsteps  
 And find for thee a way.

Leave all to His direction;  
 In wisdom He doth reign,  
 And in a way most wondrous  
 His course He will maintain.  
 Soon He, His promise keeping,  
 With wonder-working skill,  
 Shall put away the sorrows  
 That now thy spirit fill. Amen. (TLH #520:1, 8)