

Lent Midweek 5 – March 29, 2017  
Text: John 9:1–7, 13–17, 34–39  
Theme: Give Us Daily Bread

**As we talked about on Sunday, Jesus healed a man who had been born blind, and he did it on the Sabbath. This alarmed the Pharisees, who sprang into action and launched an investigation. They interrogated the man who had been healed. Their big question was “How?” How did he get his sight back? “How?” is usually the focus when people have doubts about God. We don’t ask “Who?” We want to know “How?” Everything has to fit into our boxes or we won’t believe. People move the “How?” question front and center when they doubt God.**

**The modern world has answers aplenty to any number of “hows.” Do you ever watch “How it’s Made?” Have you seen the YouTube videos that show how magicians do their tricks? We want to know how everything is done. The danger comes when we begin to believe that if we can’t understand the how of something, it must be impossible. That leads us to forget how impossible God is every moment of every day.**

**It is frighteningly easy to climb out of bed in the morning and go through much of the day, or even all of it, hardly thinking about God and the miracles he performs all around us! On a daily basis we receive thousands of miraculous gifts: food, drink, clothing, shoes,**

**and air to breathe. We might spend a little time reflecting on how some of them work. But are we thinking about who made all of them? Are we remembering who gave all of them to us? It is “practical atheism” when we say the words “God exists,” but in practice we live as though he doesn’t, or at least as though he doesn’t really need to.**

**Even when God registers in our minds, do we acknowledge him as the Creator and Provider of everything, of all our daily bread? Are we regularly thanking him for supporting and sustaining us? The Small Catechism says,**

**“God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers. . . . We pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving” (SC, Fourth Petition). God is a loving and giving God. He is the one who gives us every single thing we need for every single moment of every single day. God is not some heavenly computer, an unthinking system of reward and retribution with specific penalties in this world programmed automatically to correspond with particular offenses. If God were this way, it might have made sense when the disciples inquired whose sin caused the man to be born blind. In other words, who pushed the wrong button or entered the wrong data and created this wrong outcome?**

**When the disciples posed this question, Jesus said that this man was blind “that the works of God might be displayed in him” (v 3). Do you ever consider that whatever you think is wrong in your life may well be God setting the stage for a miracle? Someone flat broke gets a job. Someone with cancer goes into remission. Someone called retarded shares amazingly progressive and powerful faith.**

**God is always involved with his creation. Whether providing wine for a wedding feast, healing the sick, walking on water, or feeding thousands of hungry mouths, Jesus was showing himself to be the Son of God. For Jesus it is not about how. It is about who, because who makes how irrelevant.**

**When the soldiers were marching out to arrest Jesus in the garden, he let them know who they were dealing with. He stepped forward and asked whom they sought. They called back, “Jesus of Nazareth.” He said, “I am he.” Literally, he said, “I AM,” the great Old Testament name of God. At that, the soldiers fell to the ground. He made his point. That’s the who. The power of who, knocked the soldiers to the ground. Before they crucified him, he made sure we knew that he could knock them to the ground with his name. He let them crucify him for you.**

**I AM HE. I am the Christ who died for you, who redeemed you from sin, death and the devil. How does he do this? We'll never understand, but who? That we get.**

**Jesus is the one who rolls up his sleeves and gets dirty for us. Real sweat ran down his brow along with the blood that flowed after they put a crown of thorns on his head. There was real dirt under his fingernails when his hands were nailed to the cross. In the text, he used spit and mud when he healed the blind man. To this day, the Sacraments do not speak of "how" they work. They deal with "who" gave them to us and who we receive through them. They enable us by faith to grasp him who gives us grace.**

**Don't lose your grasp on him, that grasp of faith. Be like the blind man in the text. He had only a vague idea as to the how of his healing, but a very firm sense about who had healed him. Our window shows 7 stalks of wheat bound together with a single cord. Seven is a number in the Bible representing divine completion. God gives us everything. EVERYTHING! Not most things. EVERYTHING. We don't know all the "hows," but by God's grace we know "who." And the who is our Lord, Jesus Christ, who meets every need we ever have in this life, the greatest of which is salvation.**