

Easter Is Coming

*A sermon by The Rev. Daniel Simons
at St. Paul's on the Green, Norwalk, CT*

LENT 4, MARCH 15, 2026

READINGS (YEAR A): 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13; EPHESIANS 5:8-14 ; JOHN 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-38

The scripture focus today is all about seeing.
But it's a certain kind of seeing.
It's seeing through appearances
to the REALLY REAL.

Ironically, in the Gospel story,
and very intentionally,
the only one who can really see
is the man born blind.

Everyone else wants to fit what happens to him
into what they already know.

The religious leaders want to enforce the rules.
The disciples want an explanation.

And so they cannot update their frame of reference.
They lack insight.
They cannot imagine
that God might be doing something new.

The blind man, on the other hand,
sees clearly what Jesus is up to —
it's to give people SIGHT.

All this points us toward a key to the spiritual life:

Stay a little unattached to your opinions.
Stay curious. Stay open.
God is ALWAYS up to something bigger than you can see.

Our hearts are like Velcro.
They want to latch on.
The heart wants security.
But when we attach too tightly,
we become fixated,
or dogmatic.
And that stops us from seeing.

With cultivation,
the heart is ALSO like a compass.

On a long journey you can get lost.
You can wander in fog or thickets or bad weather.

But if you have a compass,
and know how to read it,
you can still orient yourself,
in any weather.

Right now the world feels a bit like that fog,
or black smoke.

Many places are living through
heartbreaking, excruciating circumstances —
the Middle East, eastern Europe, northern Africa.
Even here,
where neighbors without the right credentials
are hounded and hunted down.

It is easy to lose our bearings.

Our work right now is to get really good
at reading a compass.

Which starts with us loosening our grip
on some of our certainties,
and learning to see through the smoke and the noise and the spin.

The prophet Samuel looks at Jesse's sons
and assumes the obvious choice
must be the strong and impressive one.

But God interrupts him:

*"God does not see as mortals see...
God looks on the heart."*

Paul says something just as urgent:
he calls his congregation to "rise from the dead!"
and start living as children of light!

Last week I spent a few days at the monastery
in Boston where I once lived for seven years.

Being around the brothers reminded me:
seeing is something you practice.

They spend a lifetime
learning to look beneath the surface of things.
To see more deeply into what is really happening.

It rubs off.

I come back with slightly altered perspective.

I learned again among the monks
that another way of seeing is possible.

In the Confession in Lent,
we say that:

*We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.*

We repent of:

*the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.*

What we call sin is often a form of blindness.
We do harm because we cannot see clearly
what is real or what truly matters.

Sometimes the velcro is easier to cultivate
instead of the compass.

So, maybe the question isn't simply whether we see or not.

The real question is this:

**What are we doing about the blindness that is everywhere
including in us?**

How are we **learning** to see
just a little bit more clearly?

Because faith is not the same thing as certainty.
Faith is learning,
slowly,
together,
how to read the compass.

And then following it
into the woods,
the smoke,
the night.

The compass tells us
that the Love which can never die,
which always rises again
is the Really Real.

It tells us with magnetic conviction
that Easter. Is. Coming.