

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A

A little bit of history

There are two books of Samuel.

As we heard in part today, the first records the transition of Israel from the time of the Judges to a monarchy.

The second book covers the history of King David's reign. First over Judah and then over the whole of Israel.

When the Israelites left the desert Joshua was in overall control. After his death the 12 tribes were basically left to their own devices and a period of lawlessness evolved.

Then followed a time when leadership was in the hands of some powerful men called Judges.

They were not judges in a legal sense, but were respected men, mostly military leaders. One of the better known being Sampson.

Our author today, Samuel, was the last of the great judges. At the time of his death he had, more or less, succeeded in forming a loose confederation of the 12 tribes.

The people, however, were looking for something better, with more unity and political security.

Israel was surrounded by powerful pagan nations, all ruled by Kings who were successful in battle and in providing security for their people.

So, in spite of the Lords warnings, they wanted something similar for themselves- they wanted a king.

The Lord relented and gave them Saul as their first king.

He was successful in battle but not in his relationship with God, so he lost his kingship.

Today's 1<sup>st</sup> reading records how God chose his successor.

David became a great king, and for a long while he and his people lived under the sovereignty of God.

The life and achievements of David were legendary so it was understandable that when the time came to look for a Messiah, they expected that he would be a "Son of David"

The gospel today is about one of Jesus' greatest miracles because of its message in reminding us that we should be constantly on our guard against spiritual blindness.

A blind man will be our companion and will help us to see this clearly

This poor man has never known what it is to see.

His world is complete darkness.

More than that he is often despised for his condition, as if he himself, or his parents, were to blame, and his blindness a punishment from God.

But that is not so, and Jesus plainly says so.

This man will help us all now, to see who Jesus really is.

The Pharisees as religious authorities, believe that they know everything. All the rights and wrongs of life are defined and encoded by them.

They believe that God is on their side and that their word is law. They also enjoy many worldly advantages and comforts, so if anyone appears who seems to rock the boat, they come down on them very quickly. As was the case with Jesus.

They quickly bring the man in for interrogation, this whole scene is a threat to their position and authority. So blind are they that they cannot see the truth that stares them in the face, they cannot accept the idea that Jesus might be a good man sent from God, or that He may be the promised Messiah.

But the blind man knows and the blind man sees.

In spite of the severity of the interrogation and the threats made to him and his family, he stands up for Jesus, and so in this respect he becomes our teacher and our guide.

The astonishing healing power of Jesus, proves that he is doing God's will

“Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God he couldn't do such a thing”

Jesus is the healer of our inability to see.

What form does this lack of perception take in our lives?

Is it accidental, like the man born blind.

Or is it willful, like that of the Pharisees?

It may come from our own prejudices, or the weakness of selfishness.

Or it may be more dangerous than these, coming from willful pride, a sense of superiority over others.

We are all aware of the darkness in our lives, and we should take any opportunity of reconciling ourselves with Jesus.

St Paul's advice to us today is:-

“Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you”

Let our darkness be dispelled every day by Jesus, the light of the world.

