

Sermon Title: **God's Works Might Be Revealed**

Bible: **Psalm 23 & John 9:1-7**

Where & When: 4th Sunday in Lent at Gilroy UMC on March 22, 2020

Audience: YouTube Live-streaming, about 35 English-speaking Church Members

** Because of the YouTube automation system, even if I use some terms with good intentions, this live-streaming could be stopped. So, I will point out some words (the coronavirus, staying home, social distance, Asian-phobia, etc) rather than saying them out loud. Please listen and watch the screen together. **

To Remember Two Gilroyans Who Passed Away, Due To the Coronavirus

According to Santa Clara County Public Health, as of 5pm last Thursday, March 19, a total of 8 people passed away because of the virus. Among 8 people, there were 2 Gilroy residents. So, I would like to have a time of silence to remember them: (while lighting two small candles) an 80-year-old Gilroy woman, and a 67-year-old Gilroy man, Gary Young. Let us keep them in our silent prayers. (1 minute)

Oh, Lord, open your arms to receive them. When we feel weak, please give us your strength.

When you are lost, offer us your hope. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, please give us your love and grace, in this time of the unknown. While we are practicing keeping social distance, we are learning how to love more in a smart and healthy

way. Please be with us in your peace, love, and joy. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. A Question of “Who Sinned?”

Today's Scripture Readings come from the lectionary, for the 4th Sunday in Lent: “The Lord is my shepherd,” in Psalm 23, and the story of the blind man in John 9. In the story of the blind man, the first question from the people was “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” This can be a very scientific question: cause and effect. Because something was wrong in the past, the bad result is here and now. Many people were looking for what had happened in the past. Many times, this is very helpful, because we can find the cause of something, and then we can solve the problem.

However, sometimes, our answers, or even our questions, can be the wrong ones, like in the story of the blind man, and in this time of the unknown. In the story of the blind man, Jesus confirmed that the blindness was not his fault, nor that of his parents. In the time of the spread of the virus, we hear of some discrimination against Asians. There is hatred and phobia against Asians. Sometimes, there is physical violence, beyond verbal violence. However, Chinese and Asians are neither enemies nor viruses. They, and we, are the same people, who are suffering from this new virus. Occasionally, in Gilroy, I feel some uncomfortable eyes that look at me, during this time. But thankfully, nobody has told me to go back to my own country. I know that our congregation still welcomes and loves me, as I am. And I am so proud of our congregation, who loves and takes care of Asians, and all people, with the same love and the same care.

2. “I am the Light of the World, even though [we] walk through the darkest valley.”

Our Jesus’ direction is different from ours. It looks like we are in the darkest tunnel. Many people see the darkness, and question what makes this darkness. But Jesus sees the light at the end of this tunnel, and as the light, Jesus guides us. While people see the darkness, Jesus looks for *the light* and *the hope*. Jesus looks for where God is: how God reveals Godself in the time of this darkness. What Jesus does is like a flash in the darkest tunnel. Because Jesus himself is the light of the world, Jesus leads us to the light. As Psalm 23:4 says, “Even though [we] walk through the darkest valley, [we] fear no evil.” God is with us. God shows God’s rod and God’s staff. We have *phones and smartphones*; we have *emails*; we have *YouTube*. We can love more and more in a smart and healthy way. And we will find out more ways of how to love each other in this season. As Jesus is the light of the world, we are the lights to each other, we are the lights in Gilroy, in the States, and of the world.

3. “You Prepare a Table Before Me in the Presence of My Enemies.”

We do not know how long we need to *stay at home* or *practice social distancing*. When we look at Psalm 23:5, somehow, “The Lord prepares a table before us, in the presence of our enemies.” Even though the problems are still there, we can live our normal lives. Probably, it is a new normal life, because we need to *stay at home* as much as possible, and we need *6 feet of space between us*. However, what is life? We can still love each other, we can still connect with each other, on the phone, and like this: YouTube. We can still pray for each other. We can still take care of others. What else can we still do? (reading books, listening to music, cooking

together, watching Netflix, laughing together, etc.) The darkness cannot beat the light. God's light, and our lights will conquer the darkness. Just let us shine to each other. Then, God will reveal Godself in us.

Closing Prayer

In the time of the darkness, oh, Lord, please show us your light. Please guide us to your light. And please lead to shine your light through us. The world needs your light, and our lights. Please be with us through your peace, and your presence. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Questions.

1. Where do we see the light of God in the time of uncertainty?
2. What can we still do in the time of "Shelter in Place"?