

Scripture Readings, March 15, 2026

Tony Rudié: In scripture there are a variety of trends: themes that continue across centuries and writers. God's love for creation. God's call to justice. The complexities of leadership, follower-ship, temptation and love. The promise of a Messiah — Emmanuel, God with us. Among others.

Liz Ramos: In Jesus' day if you had money, food, safe housing, and maybe even education your life expectancy was solid. Methuselah was said to be 969 years old, but a healthy person with assets could certainly live into their 70's. It was different for peasants, workers, servants, and of course Jesus. So we hear many stories of lameness, leprosy, blindness, and of course what some thought were demons. Likely mental health issues. These stories reveal Jesus' devotion to healing.

Steve Willner: As we approach the climax of Lent we seek the vision of Easter. So we encounter numerous stories of blindness. In Genesis both Isaac and Jacob were blind when they were old: remember how Isaac gave his blessing to the wrong son because he couldn't see straight? In Second Kings the Arameans are struck blind by God, and much later in Second Corinthians the one described as "the god of this world," which means Satan, blinds people to Jesus' faith and call.

Tony: Listen to a rapid-fire assembly of stories of blindness in the Bible, so we can see what they mean:

Mark 8: (Jesus) came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

Liz: Matthew 9: When (Jesus) entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." And their eyes were opened.

Steve: And then again in Matthew 20, when Jesus is on his way to the cross: There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Tony: Isaiah 35 prophesies, Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. ... He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy." Later Luke 4 says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to

the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." But there's more, in Matthew 11: Jesus answers (inquisitors), "Go and tell John (the Baptist) what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Liz: Luke 7 says the same. Luke 14 describes God's vision, God's table, saying "When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." And on and on until one day Saul of Tarsus is persecuting Jesus, he's on the way to Damascus, and he is struck blind by a light he cannot comprehend. Others with Saul hear God's voice, and then this happens: "Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.'... (After debating God) Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored."

Steve: In today's Gospel Jesus uses spit, wit, mud, and prayer, so that everyone can see the light of the world, who is God's messiah. Psalm 146 promises that God will open the eyes of the blind. And Ephesians 8 offers as good as any explanation for why: For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."