

For the Love of an Imperative Verb

John 9:1-41

The Fourth Sunday in Lent, Year A, RCL

¹As he [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “**Go** [ὑπάγε, **hýpage**], and **wash** [νίψαι, **nípsai**] in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘**Go** [ὑπάγε, **hýpage**] to Siloam and **wash** [νίψαι, **nípsai**].’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸The Jews did not believe he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. **Ask** [ἑρωτήσατε, **erōtēsate**] him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be **put out** of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; **ask** [ἑπερωτήσατε, **eperōtēsate**] him.”

²⁴So for a second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “**Give** [δὸς, **dòs**] glory to God! We know this man [Jesus] is a sinner.” ²⁵He

answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this person were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and you are trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." [NRSV89]

9:7

ὑπάγε, **hýpage**; *vb*: *pres act imperative 2nd pers sg* from ὑπάγω:

translations: **go** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also **ve** [IAdNT]

νίψαι, **nípsai**; *vb*: *aor mid imperative 2nd pers sg* from νίπτω:

translations: **wash** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also **para lavar(te)** [IAdNT]

Brown: See also II Kings 5:10-13 and Luke 17:12-15.

9:11

ὑπάγε, **hýpage**; *vb*: *pres act imperative 2nd pers sg* from ὑπάγω:

translations: **go** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], **go off** [NJB], also **ve** [IAdNT]

νίψαι, **nípsai**; *vb*: *aor mid imperative 2nd pers sg* from νίπτω:

translations: **wash** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also **para lavar(te)** [IAdNT]

John 9:1-41, continued

9:21

ἐρωτήσατε, **erōtēsate**; *vb: aor act imperative 2nd pers pl* from ἐρωτάω:

translations: **ask** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also

preguntad [IAdNT]

9:23

ἐπερωτήσατε, **eperōtēsate**; *vb: aor act imperative 2nd pers pl* from ἐπερωτάω:

translations: **ask** [NRSV89, ESV, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, Brown], also **question**

[NAB], **preguntad** [IAdNT]

9:24

δοῦς, **dōs**; *vb: 2nd aor act imperative 2nd pers sg* from δίδωμι:

translations: **give** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also

da [IAdNT]

Levine & Brettler: “‘Give glory to God,’ *i.e.*, do not credit Jesus with the healing.”

[The Jewish Annotated New Testament]

9:22

See Levine & Brettler [The Jewish Annotated New Testament, p. 197] for a discussion of ἀποσυνάγωγος, **aposynāgōgos**.

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