



GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2019 – ONE ON ONE WITH JESUS

WEEK 4 – MARCH 31, 2019 - JOHN 9:1-12

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) In each of our “one-on-one” encounters with Jesus in this sermon series we have seen him perform a miracle. Share a story about when you have seen something truly miraculous happen.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

(The text and questions for this week are broken down into three separate sections.)

There was a strong belief in the days of Jesus that someone’s illness, disease or physical disability was tied to sin. Either the person had sinned, or their parents had sinned. There are also examples of this in the Old Testament. Jesus refutes this idea, and as he performs his signs he wants the people around him to understand that he is bringing a “new era” of healing and light. This is why he describes himself as being the light of the world. This “light” will reach its fulfillment on Easter morning when the light will shine in the darkness (see John 20:1).

During Jesus’ time the Siloam Pool was fed by waters from the Gihon Spring, located in the Kidron Valley. It is thought that the pool was used for ritual bathing and it could have also been used as a source of fresh water. One scholar has also suggested that it may have been used as a swimming pool because of its size.

There is a strong sense of fear in this text. The Pharisees are fearful that Jesus might be disrupting Judaism, and the parents of the blind man are fearful that they might lose their social standing and temple privileges if they say that Jesus is the Messiah. John will tell us later in 1 John 4:18 that perfect love casts out all fear. However, at this point neither the Pharisees, nor the man’s parents are understanding the message of love and peace that Jesus has brought.

Though the Pharisees are pushing the formerly blind man to change his story and thus give glory to God by telling the truth, the way in which the man gives glory to God is by sticking to his story. He knows what Jesus has done. The Pharisees are convinced that because Jesus is breaking the Sabbath he cannot be connected to God or the mission of God. However, what we are learning from the gospel of John is that there is an inherent flaw in their understanding of the Sabbath.



As we end chapter 9, Jesus moves from the issue of physical blindness to spiritual blindness. Jesus has come to bring light to the darkness so that people can see that the kingdom of God has drawn near. As NT Wright says, "Just as Moses shocked the magicians of Egypt by doing things they couldn't copy (Exodus 8.18–19), Jesus is now shocking the world of his day by doing things for which the only explanation is that God is powerfully at work."

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read John 9:1-12

¹ As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. ⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." ¹⁰ "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. ¹¹ He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." ¹² "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

- 2) In verse 3, Jesus says the man's blindness happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. What does Jesus mean by this?
- 3) How does this story relate to what Jesus says in verse 5 when he talks about being the light of the world? What does it mean to you that Jesus is the "light of the world?"
- 4) Why do you think Jesus used spit and mud in this man's healing? Why not just speak a word and heal him like he had done previously?

Read John 9:13-34

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. ¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." ¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" ²⁰ "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" ²⁶ Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

²⁷ He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" ²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!" ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes." ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

5) In verse 18 the blind man's parents are sent for. They are fearful of what the religious leaders might do to them if they acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. Have you ever had fears about what others might think, or fears of rejection when it comes to talking about your faith?

6) Do you think the blind man was afraid of the Pharisees? Why or why not?

Read John 9:35-41

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." ³⁷ Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." ³⁸ Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" ⁴¹ Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

7) The man makes a progression in his understanding of Jesus over time. In verse 11, Jesus is a man. In verse 17, Jesus is a prophet. In verse 27, Jesus is worthy of following. In verse 33, Jesus is one from God and in verse 38, Jesus is one who should be worshipped. How has your own understanding of Jesus progressed over time?

BRINGING IT HOME

8) **Read 2 Corinthians 4:5-6:** "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."

In light of the story of the blind man being healed, what do you think the apostle Paul is trying to communicate in this quote from 2 Corinthians? How does this relate to our lives?