

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 work of God might be displayed in his life. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the work 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 Having said 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.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 do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided. 17 Finally 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." ...34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. 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."

WAS BLIND, BUT NOW I SEE!

Children's Sermon: Children, I want to pretend that you are blind and you cannot see. So close your eyes real tight and don't open them. I want you to think of a dandelion flower. What color is it? Now I want you to think of the sun going down at night. What color is it? Now I want you to think of your mother's face. Can you picture her face? What color hair does your mother have? O.K., now you can open your eyes. If you were born blind like the man in our story, you wouldn't know what the color yellow was. You could feel the sun on your face and it would feel warm, but you would not know that the sun had a special red color at night. And if you tried to imagine your mother's face, you wouldn't be able to picture it in your mind, if you never saw it in your whole life.

Can you imagine how happy the man in the story was when Jesus opened his eyes so that he wasn't blind anymore? He could see everything for the first time, and it was all so beautiful! He was so happy that he met Jesus! He was especially happy because he knew that Jesus was his Savior, and he believed in him.

Children, can you see the statue of Jesus at the altar? You can thank Jesus that you can see with your eyes all the things around you - the sun, the flowers, and your mother's face. You can also be thankful that you know who Jesus is, and what he has done for you. He died on the cross for your sins. He died to give you a place in heaven. He rose from the dead and now he is with you every day wherever you go. Shall we pray to Jesus and thank him this morning?

“Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us eyes to see, the flowers and the trees, and the books we read. Thank you also for opening our hearts to see what you have done for us and to believe in you as our Savior. Amen.”

Dear friends in Jesus, the more time I spend studying the Bible and listening to Jesus, more Jesus opens my eyes to see things I never saw before. Jesus opens our eyes through this story this morning.

1. *Jesus makes me see things I never saw before*

“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 work of God might be displayed in his life. Think about the question that the disciples asked and the implications. Is God angry with the blind man because he sinned, or is God punishing this man’s parents because of a sin that they committed? If the disciples represent the prevailing opinion of their time, you can imagine how this must have affected this man. He not only felt bad because he was blind, but he also felt bad because he thought that God was angry with him!

That wasn’t just the prevailing opinion that people held in Jesus’ time. You hear people say the same thing today - maybe most often about themselves. Pick your measure of pain in a person’s life. For one it may be blindness. For another person it may be getting cancer. For still another it may be failing in school, or getting laid off from work, or being in poverty. Did I do something wrong? Is God angry with me? Is God punishing me for my sin? Jesus gives us a solid answer to that question. He says emphatically, “No. You are wrong even to think that way!”

Paul says the same thing in that great chapter on human suffering (Romans 8). He begins the section by saying, **“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8.1** If God punished all our sins in Jesus on the cross, how can we think that my blindness or my cancer is God’s punishment for something we did wrong?

Then why was this man suffering from blindness? Jesus said, **“So that the work of God may be displayed in his life.”** That very day God’s work was displayed in his life. Jesus opened his eyes so that he could see. Jesus showed him and the people in Jerusalem that he was the Savior and the Son of God who has the power to give sight to the blind.

God still uses pain and suffering **“so that the work of God may be displayed”** in our lives. I’ve been reading a book about suffering. In the book the author says, “When God gives cancer to an unbeliever, he also gives cancer to a believer, just so that the world can see the difference.” I don’t know if I would go so far as to say that God always gives a believer pain whenever he gives an unbeliever pain, but the point is well made. God’s shows the difference that his grace can make in the life of a believer when he gives us pain and suffering.

LaDonna Thompson was one of those people. Periodically she would come by my office to give me a report on her cancer. She never complained. She took her chemotherapy with courage. And she would always say the same thing about her prognosis. “I hope that I can fight this, but if God has something else in mind, then I am ready to go home to heaven.” This is how God displays his work in and through the lives of believers. They know that Jesus is with them in life and they know they have nothing to fear of death, because by grace they are saved and have a

place in heaven. People who know such people can see the difference. They see God's handiwork in their lives.

In the church where I served my internship, there was an older woman who was terribly crippled in her legs from the time that she was born. She lived in an upstairs apartment and had to navigate a long flight of stairs when someone picked her up for church. It was painful just to watch her. The church didn't have handicap access, and there were more stairs. In spite of her handicap she was in church every single Sunday. God's Word meant that much to her. And through her pain, God's displayed his work in her life.

Isn't this an eye-opener? Pain isn't always a bad thing in our lives. ***God can use the pain in our lives for our good and to display his grace in our lives!*** How many other eye-opening experiences have we had and will we continue to have - because we have the chance to listen to Jesus? Jesus says he is the "**light of the world.**" The more time I spend with Jesus, the more he will open my eyes to see things that I never saw before. And most importantly ...

2. *Jesus makes me see him as my Savior*

What else can we learn from this story? Jesus healed this man in an unusual way. He spit on the ground and then made some mud with the spit. Then he took this mud and wiped it on the man's eyes. To told him to go the pool of Siloam and wash his eyes, which he did. Why this unusual twist on one of Jesus' miracles? I think this was how Jesus indicated to this blind man that he was doing a miracle for him. It wasn't the mud - or the water in the pool. It was Jesus who made him see for the first time in his life.

Can you imagine what that was like? When my oldest son was in the seventh grade, we realized that he was not seeing as well as he should. We took him to the eye doctor and he got a pair of glasses. On the way home, he looked with wonder out the window. "Dad," he said, "I never realized that when you look at a tree, you can actually see all the individual leaves. Or look at the church! I can actually see the individual bricks that make up the wall. Before it just all looked like a brown slab!"

If you can imagine the wonder of a boy who can see better, can you imagine what it must have been like for the man in our text this morning, who was blind from birth? What was it like to see a flower blooming, or to see the sun set in the west in a blaze of orange? What was it like to see people's faces and realize that you could tell if they were happy or sad or angry? He was so happy, he was telling everyone what happened!

But some people weren't so happy in our story. **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 do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided. 17 Finally 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."** If you knew someone who was blind, even if it was a perfect stranger, wouldn't you be really happy for him? The Pharisees weren't happy about this at all. They were angry. *Because Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath day - the day they were supposed to rest.* So they argue that Jesus could not be from God because he healed someone on the Sabbath.

It is hard to understand the Pharisees and what they were thinking. They were the seminary professors of their day and they really studied the Bible. They memorized much of the

Bible. Sometimes they memorized what famous rabbis said about that the Bible says. Sometimes they even memorized what rabbis said about what other rabbis said about the Bible. But somehow they could not see the forest because of the trees. They studied the scriptures, but they didn't see Jesus in the Scriptures. Remember what Jesus said to them? **"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life."** How could they study the scriptures and not see Jesus?

You will notice that there are quite a few verses missing in our text chosen for today. After the Pharisees cross-examined the man and couldn't get him to change his story, they brought in the man's parents and cross-examined them. They were so afraid that the Pharisees would excommunicate them from the synagogue that they said, "Look, he's old enough to speak for himself. Ask him." Then they brought the once-blind man back in the cross-examined him again. When the man wouldn't change his story and say that Jesus was from the devil, they threw him out of the church.

And that's when Jesus comes back into the once-blind man's life. **"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."** This unlearned man could see what the Pharisees were blind to see. He saw Jesus as his Savior, the Son of God, the Messiah.

Can you imagine what it would be like not to see Jesus clearly? What would it be like to come to the moment of truth - that moment when I know that I am going to soon die - if I couldn't see Jesus? What would it be like to think that I must face God in judgment with all my sins that I have committed - if I couldn't see Jesus? What would it be like just not knowing if God is going to take me to heaven or send me to hell - if I couldn't see Jesus?

This is the greatest eye-opening experience of them all - seeing Jesus as our Savior. I know that Jesus died for me because he died for the sins of the whole world. I know that Jesus' death has atoned for every sin I ever committed - because the Bible says so. I know that God has a place for me in heaven, which cannot be compared to the miseries I experience in this life - because Jesus said he has prepared a place for me in his Father's house. I know this by faith - because Jesus opened my eyes to see. I was blind, but now I see!

I can only imagine what a joy it must have been for the blind man to be able to see clearly every flower, every face, every sunset. And yet, I suppose there came a time in his life when he took his sight for granted, just as we do. We will never take seeing Jesus for granted. Every moment of every day, we can be thankful that we see Jesus as our Savior. **I was blind, but now I see!** Amen.