

The Man Born Blind

(A Study of the Gospel of John; Message #34)

John 9:1-12

- A. This is the only instance in the Bible where a person born blind is healed by the power of God
- B. This is an incredibly rare opportunity to address the problem of pain
- C. Jesus passed on the opportunity. Here's the story...

THE SIN AND SICKNESS QUESTION (9:1-2)

- A. Our text begins with a consoling truth: Jesus notices hurting people
- B. 9:2 - The disciples pose the ultimate question: "*Rabbi, who sinned?*"
 - 1. Some say one can obviously sin prenatally in the womb (cf. Gen. 25:22,26)
 - 2. Others say parental sin has consequences for their children

"You shall not make for yourself and idol...for I the Lord punish children for the iniquity of their parents to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me..."
(Exodus 20:4-5)

- C. It seems best to leave cause and effect here unidentified - as Jesus does

THE MISSIONAL ANSWER (9:3-5)

- A. The spiritual leaders of Jesus' day discussed such issues at length; Jesus has little use for such fruitless debate: "*This man didn't sin, nor his parents!*"
 - 1. Such debates are condemnable because they leave lives/world unchanged
 - 2. Jesus says this man's "aweful" birth was so God's grace could be dramatically communicated

- B. The plural "we" (9:4) are Christ's disciples, Christ's community

"As the Father sent me, so now I am sending you..." (20:21)

- 1. This is an invitation to join the most exciting mission of all time in the company of the greatest missionary of all time
- 2. The healed blind man will become the personification of what that looks like
- 3. "*Nighttime is coming when no one works*" underscores the urgency of mission

- C. 9:5 - "*Whenever I am in the world, I am the light of the world*"

- 1. Sadly, Jesus isn't "shining" in everyone's life/world: many are oblivious...

"Jesus: Whenever I am in a life, I illuminate that life. If one does not want to live in the home of my Word (8:31), where my light and truth fill and free the house (8:32), they will be left in darkness and meaninglessness."

- 2. Jesus isn't just talking individually he is also talking corporately

Jesus: "*You people [his' disciples] are the very light of the world. A city built on a hill [on Jesus] cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp [as I have just lit you] and then puts that lamp under a basket; no, the lighter puts his lamp on a lampstand [as I have you] so you can give light to the whole house. In this same way, you [disciples] please let your light shine before others in such a way that when people see the way you live they may give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*" (Matthew 5:14-16)

- 3. Jesus purpose with this statement is to move his disciple hearers into the world

THE HEALING (9:6-7)

- A. Jesus spits on the ground, makes a mud pie, smears mud on his eyes, and invites the blind man to go wash in the Pool of Siloam
 - 1. In theological terms, we call this "grace"
 - 2. The best way to receive his gift is simply doing what Jesus asks
 - 3. In 9:6, John is saying, "*Jesus smeared mud on his eyes, what about your eyes?*"
 - a. John is doing the work of evangelism
 - b. John's committed to bring light to the darkness. Have your eyes been touched?
 - 4. Siloam means "*Sent One*" (lit. missionary) (a favorite name of John for Jesus)
 - a. So the blind man washes in the "*Pool of the Missionary*" (i.e., *Sent One*), Jesus Messiah; and his life was transformed
 - b. Jesus: "*We've [the church] got to be doing the works of the One Who Sent Me*"

THE NEIGHBORS' SIMPLE QUESTIONS (9:8-12)

- A. The man now speaks for the first time (and answers their question): "*I am he*"
 - 1. Is John suggesting that when the blind man washed himself in the "*Pool of the Missionary*" he became identified with the Missionary I AM himself?

"As the Father has sent me, so I am now sending you" (John 17:18; 20:21)
 - 2. Or is his "I am" simply an honest and unpretentious response to the question?
 - 3. John underscores that this healed man and his Healer are deeply connected
- B. In 9:10-12, he tells the story and proclaims his healer's name: Jesus (First step!)
- C. The once blind man's testimony "*I went, I washed, I saw*" trumps his contemporary Caesar's "*I came, I saw, I conquered*"
 - 1. The first is a short description of life change; the later is a short declaration of pomp and pride
 - 2. The first is the path to real victory