

John 9:1-41

9:1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.

9:2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

9:3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.

9:4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

9:6 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes,

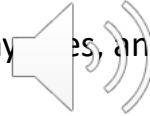
9:7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

9:8 The 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?"

9:9 Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man."

9:10 But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

9:11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."



9:12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

9:14 Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

9:15 Then 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."

9:16 Some 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.

9:17 So 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."

9:18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight

9:19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"


9:20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

9:21 but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself."

9:22 His 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.

9:23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

9:24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

9:25 He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing  I know, that though I was blind, now I see."

9:26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

9:27 He 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?"

9:28 Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

9:29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

9:30 The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.

9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.

9:32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

9:33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

9:34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

9:35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

9:36 He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him."

9:37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the  speaking with you is he."

9:38 He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

9:39 Jesus 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."

9:40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"

9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

In this reading is Good News for God's people.

May the Spirit of the Living God be with us today! Amen.



“Some Needed Mudslinging.”

It is always quite difficult to move ourselves out of comfort zones.

And yet that is what has been happening to many people, in various ways, over this past week.

It only seems like mere hours ago we were out doing everything we love to do, kids were in school, restaurants were busy, stores were bustling with activity, sports were in full swing, people were jogging and riding 4-wheelers and most of us were living non-fearful lives.

Wow, how things have changed.

Stock markets are in a downhill slide... Gas prices are falling, (not really a good thing) People are being laid off, and much of our world's businesses and the economy are struggling not to go “down the tube”.

And did you ever hear the term “social distancing” before this virus implanted itself in the world.

And hoarding toilet paper! Who'd would o' thunk it. (spell checker don't like that word)

And what happens in a preacher's world... God brings us a lectionary scripture reading this week, that is so in keeping with how things are in the world.

John's gospel story of the “man born blind”.

41 verses long. But important to the telling of this gospel.

If it was only about physical healing, it would have only needed a few short verses.

So, one can assume it is about more than a physical cure.

I like someone's comment that this story might better be titled, “The Story of the Man who can now see”.

It reads like a “curing” story, and there may have been some curing of blindness happening here.

After all, when we get a bee sting what are we encouraged to put on it... correct... MUD.

For me though, this is more a story of how someone came to see life and all that goes along with that, in a more light filled way, than in the darkness that many seem to live their lives within.

A story about curing “spiritual blindness”.

There is a lot packed into this story from John.

The notion that blindness was caused by someone’s sin.

The disobedience of not keeping Sabbath as the Pharisees interpreted the Law.

The interrogation of the blind man, not once but twice by the Pharisees.

The interrogation of the blind man’s parents.

The community’s non-acceptance or non-belief of the man now changed.

Discipleship of those who were blind but now see. (seeing Gospel truths)

Jesus as the one who can judge who can “see” and who is “blind” to the good news that he provides.

And also, Jesus boldness in calling out the Pharisees and their spiritual blindness.

There are many who are currently going through a time when it feels like the darkness of the world is upon us.

There is great fear and foreboding.

Some people may even deign to use the word, “Apocalypse”.

And the shadow part of many people’s thoughts takes over from a sense of rationality, calm, and common sense.

We are acting blind, to the light of seeing “wide-eyed”.

That was the life saving action that Jesus brought to the man who could now see.

The light of Jesus is something that can come to all of us in our lives.

It is truly the good news that comes to us, through a belief in him.

What is, (or can be) that light for us?

The light of living into hope in our lives.

Things can look pretty bleak for people,

Especially in the current situation.

But we can look forward in hope to a better day.

Jesus gave and encouraged that day for the blind man.

The light of being calm in all situations.

Especially the current situation.

We rarely see any times when Jesus gets filled with so much anxiety about something that he makes poor decisions or uses irresponsible words.

Good example for us.

The light of reaching spiritually outwards to many.

Jesus reached a whole community when he supported the blind man's return to his community.

Even though he was not immediately accepted in his community, Jesus pushed him and the blind man was accepted.

When prayer has an effect on others, that effect reaches beyond many boundaries.

I can just imagine how many prayers are being extended around this world currently.

Prayers for those who are ill, their family members, those who lives have succumbed to the illness, ...

Prayers for the many people who are doing their job, risking their health for others, working on the front lines.

Prayers for those who are struggling with life due to the illness.

Financially, mentally, and just the practicality of looking after family members.

These prayers may not specifically cure anything, or instantly change lives, but they will most certainly help raise the spirits of many who are feeling a lot of that blindness and darkness that the man in John's gospel was feeling and bring them into the light.

When we think about the spittle and dirt that Jesus made into a healing substance for the blind man, I think we can metaphorical extend that healing cure to many areas of our society and our world.

Jesus, doing "Some Needed Mudslinging" on our worlds behalf.

To Jesus the Christ who knew us and loved us before we were who loves us now and will love us forever. Thanks be to God.