

ESF, Lord's day Message
10/21/2018

The Light of the World

John 9:1-7

As he went 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?" 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.⁴As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶Having 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.

When we see hopeless or miserable situations in our lives, we may say, "It is dark." There are many dark situations in our lives. But in today's text, Jesus turns the dark into light. Jesus can turn the hopeless and miserable situations in our lives into joyful events.

Through perspective in God's goodness

Perspective can make a difference in our lives. A negative perspective makes us miserable. A positive perspective makes us joyful and happy. It is easy to see our lives negatively. But it is hard to see them positively.

There is a story of a beggar who was sitting across the street from an artist's studio. The artist saw him and thought he would make an interesting portrait study so from a distance he painted the defeated man whose shoulders drooped and eyes downcast and sad. When he was finished, he took the portrait over to the beggar so he could look at it. "Who is that?" the beggar questioned. The painting bore a slight resemblance to himself, but in the painting before him he saw a person of dignity, with squared shoulders and bright uplifted eyes, almost

handsome! He asked the artist, "Is that me? I don't look like that." But the artist replied, "but that is the person I see in you."

How can we see our lives positively? Especially when our lives are really bad and seemingly hopeless, how can we maintain a positive perspective?

Here Jesus teaches us how. Through his perspective on a blind man, Jesus teaches us how we can always see our lives positively.

One day when Jesus' disciples were walking down the street, they saw a man blind from birth. In those days, the common belief was that such misery was the result of a sin. The disciples knew of this common belief.

They were troubled by the man's misery. They asked Jesus a question: "Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The disciples could see only two possible causes of the man's blindness—either his parents' sin or his own sin. If the blindness of the man was caused by his parents' sin, it was unfair. Why must an innocent child pay for his parents' sin? If it was caused by the man's own sin, he must have sinned when he was in his mother's womb. Then how could a person sin even before the person was born? So, with both questions they were confused. Also, such thoughts gave them a negative perspective on the blind man's life.

But Jesus had a different perspective on the man's condition. Rather than connecting the man's blindness with any sin, Jesus connected the man's blindness with God's work: "*Neither this man nor his parents sinned...but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*" While the disciples were struggling with a negative perspective on the man's handicap, Jesus saw God's positive opportunity in it.

Jesus saw that God had a plan to do something good even in the blind

man's life. Jesus did not deny that the man was suffering. Jesus saw God's goodness in the man's suffering. Jesus sees God's goodness in all our sufferings and trials. Jesus teaches us that we can see all things in our lives positively if we see them with faith in God's goodness. Philippians 2:13 says, *for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

When we face difficulties and trials in our lives, we tend to have negative thoughts and perspectives of our lives. But Jesus helps us to see all our trials with a positive perspective, with faith in the goodness of God. Yes, when we believe that God has a good purpose even in our sufferings and our problems, we can have a positive perspective on all our problems and sufferings. Hope can begin when we see our trials and difficulties with such positive perspective.

When a group of tourists saw a legless war veteran go to the Shrine of Lourdes, they whispered and laughed, "Does he suppose God will give him back his legs?" The veteran overheard this remark. Turning to the group, he said, "No, I don't expect God to give me back my legs. I expect him to show me how to live without them."

Even if we suffer due to our own sins, Jesus can redeem the suffering and bring forgiveness. He redeems the price of our sins and heals us.

Isaiah 53:5 says,
*...he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

1 Peter 2:24 says, *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

When you suffer from a disease, tragedy, or any trial, you may have such questions like, “Why did this happen to me?” “What wrong have I done?” or “What sin have I committed?”

Bring those questions to Jesus. Then he will show you God’s good opportunities in your life. He will help you see everything in your life with his positive perspective. Jesus will let you see that God can turn your troubles and difficulties into opportunities to reveal his glory. Jesus can redeem you from all your troubles.

Don’t let negative thoughts about your life depress you. Don’t let yourself sink into depression bemoaning your problems. Constantly believe that God is good to you and always turns all trials to good. Look for God’s good opportunities, not handicaps. Then you can see the light in the darkness.

Through the transforming touch

After Jesus encouraged the disciples to see the blind man’s life positively, he actually healed the blind man. Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. Then he told him to go to a pool nearby and wash his eyes. How could the mud mixed with saliva open the blind man’s eyes? Nobody could understand what Jesus was doing.

During His public ministry, at least four times Jesus opened blind eyes. Each time, he did it differently.

In Matthew chapter 9:27-31, Jesus opened the eyes of two blind men by touching their eyes. In Mark 8:22-25, Jesus spat on the eyes of a blind man. Then he put his hands on his eyes, and made the blind man look up, and his sight was restored. In Luke 18:35-42, a certain blind man cried, saying, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.’ Jesus simply

said, 'Receive your sight,' and the man was made whole. And, in today's case, Jesus uses saliva and mud and the water of a pool to open the blind man's eyes.

Jesus brings light into our dark problems through many different ways. Why?

Jesus treats each person differently because every person is different. He does not treat you as he treats another person. He treats you personally and individually to solve your unique problem and to meet your needs.

Jesus uses ways beyond our expectations or understanding. He does not necessarily follow our understanding or reason. He may do something that does not make sense according to our reasoning.

Let's imagine the condition of the blind man who had mud on his blind eyes before he washed the mud away and his eyes were opened. With the mud on his blind eyes, he still could not see. He met the Lord, received the ministry of the Lord, was touched but still could not see. He could have felt that his blind eyes now were even more messed up.

Jesus said to the blind man who might have been confused but was patient with what Jesus was doing, "*Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam.*" Can you imagine this man's amazement as he washed the mud from his eyes? He sees light! He sees people! He has eyesight for the first time in his life! We see the obedience on the part of the blind man. If he had not obeyed Christ, then he would have never been cured.

Jesus is doing a similar thing to you today to bring light into your life. You must be ready for the mud. Jesus may have touched your blind eyes, but you still can't see. You may feel that your blind eyes are covered in mud. But don't let the mud discourage you. You must pass the mud test to receive the light.

This kind of mud can be anything that troubles you more when you come to God seeking his blessing. When you come to God seeking healing from your sickness, you may get sicker. When you ask God for financial help, you may get into more trouble financially. When you pray that God bring peace to your home, your home may fall into more conflict.

But as long as you believe in God's goodness, all those things are just temporary mud. God is working for you. God is listening to every single prayer you pray and will answer your prayers according to his time. Therefore, never give up on the hope of God's good will for you. Wait patiently on God's timing for deliverance.

There is an ancient Chinese legend of an old man and his only son. One night the old man's horse escaped, and the neighbors came to comfort him in his loss. "How do you know this is a bad thing?" he asked them.

Several days later his horse returned with a herd of wild horses. Now his friends came to congratulate the farmer for his good fortune. But the old man said, "How do you know this is a good thing?"

While his son was trying to tame one of the wild horses, he was thrown and broke his leg. Again his friends gathered to bemoan his new misfortune. But the old man asked, "How do you know this is a bad thing?"

Soon a warlord came to recruit able-bodied youth for his army, and the farmer's son escaped conscription because of his broken leg. In true fashion, the farmer's neighbors came and expressed their pleasure over the man's good luck. "How do you know it's a good thing?" he asked. The story can go on forever.

If you wait for the Lord's timing after dark times, he will bless you. Don't be discouraged by the mud. Don't give up believing in God's deliverance. Praise God even while you have mud on your eyes.

Just because you can't imagine how you're ever going to solve a big problem, don't despair. The Lord has no limitations! Don't limit God's ways of solving your problems. Don't limit God's ways to your ways.

God has ways of doing things you've never dreamed of. He has unlimited ways and resources to take care of your needs.

Isaiah 55:8-9

⁸ *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the LORD.*

⁹ *"As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Put your trust in his abilities. Place your life in his hands. Do the tasks he has assigned you to do and then trust him to do the rest.

You may ask God, "show me something to see, then I will believe." But God says to you, "believe and obey, then you will see." You must first believe and obey what the Lord asks of you. No matter how strange it may seem, when you obey it, you will receive the light.