

GOD'S BUSINESS

THIS IS JESUS: John 9

- As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I Am the Light of the World." Having said these things, He spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then He anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to Him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. -John 9:1-7 (ESV)

- PRAY
- Paul, whenever he was mentoring young Timothy after he was set up as the pastor in Ephesus, he writes him 2 different letters of encouragement and giving him some leadership advice and coaching
- And among my favorite pieces of advice that he gives is this: **"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels." -2 Timothy 2:23 (NIV)**
- It's one of the greatest pet-peeves of mine, whenever I see Christians more focused debating people theologically, rather than loving people compassionately
 - What gets on my nerves about that the most, is that they're more often than not just arguing with other Christians, rather than focusing on the mission at hand.

- *The disciples are walking into the Temple with Jesus, on the way to participate in a worship service together, so they're feeling spiritual*
- So they bring up a topic of spiritual conversation
- They see this blind beggar, and this has been a point of contention and debate among the religious Jews, so they want to get Jesus' take on it and they ask Him:
 - Who's sin caused this man to be blind, was it his? Or his parents??
 - It was an interesting question because it dealt with some theological issues
- Was it his personal sin that caused him to be born blind?? How could that be? He was BORN blind? How could it be his sin??
 - Well there were certain Jews that believed in prenatal sin, they believed that a fetus could sin within the womb. That if a baby was kicking too much in the womb they were dealing with the sin of anger already and things like that
- But of course, many did not agree so it was a topic of debate
- Also this brought up the issue of the "Generational Curse." Now I don't know if they used that exact term back then, but there was thought that the consequences of a parent's sin could be passed down to their children, and in this case, the consequence would result in this man's blindness
- Again, a topic of theological debate, and in the disciple's minds, it was either one or the other. They don't ask Jesus "IF" either of these is the case, they ask Him "Which one is it??"
- Jesus says, "NEITHER!"
- *And when I first started putting this message together, I wanted to go in the direction of debunking those theories...but then I realized, that's not what Jesus did.*
 - Instead He shifts their focus

- “Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day...” John 9:3-4 (ESV)

- That word, “Work” can be translated, “business”

- It reminds me of whenever Jesus’ parents found Him in the Temple teaching whenever He was 12 years old, and we see Jesus’ first recorded words, in Luke 2:49, **“And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” -Luke 2:49 (NKJV)**

- Here’s something we need to understand about Jesus:

- **JESUS IS MORE ABOUT GODLY BUSINESS THAN HE IS “GODLY” DEBATE**

- I put “Godly” debate in quotations because a lot of times we think that if the topic of

conversation is theological or spiritual in some way, than it must be godly

- But that’s not the case at all, because *it is impossible for something to be Godly, that does not come from a place of love and compassion*

- LOVE is God’s business

- For God so LOVED the world

- Anyone who does not love, does not know God because God IS LOVE

- If we are about God’s business, we will be about it in a loving manner, and if it is not loving, than it’s not God’s business

- Let’s go back to Paul’s instructions to Timothy. He tells him to have nothing to do with foolish and stupid arguments. Then he goes on to say, **“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading**

them to a knowledge of the truth..." 2

Timothy 2:24-25 (NIV)

- He says that we should be filled with such love for the opponents of our faith that our hope should be, not to win an argument, but to see them come to repentance and a loving relationship with God
- But angry Christians love to quote 1 Peter 3 that says, "Everyone must be ready to give a defense for the Hope that is in us!"....but then leave off the next part that says..."Yet do it with Gentleness and respect..."
 - John Wesley once said, ***"If one opposes the truth... he cannot be brought to the knowledge of it, but by gentleness."*** -John Wesley
 - *Argument and debate pretty much never results in faith. But compassion and care can*
- As as we'll see here, faith is the work that Jesus is here to accomplish

- We see the real work come to fruition in verse 38, when this man says, *"Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.*
 - Jesus is in the business of making the broken whole
 - And yes, He is going to heal this man, but there is a greater business at work here
- And the way Jesus goes about this is, He takes their topic of discussion and makes him the object of His compassion
 - The disciples didn't even take the time to see this man as a person to be cared for, they just saw an argument to be won
- So Jesus switches the focus, He says, "You can stand here and debate the why's and the how's all you want, but what really matters is working the works of God"
- He says, "We got to take advantage of the time that we have to do the works of God!"
 - And if you remember from chapter 6, they ask Jesus what works they should be doing

to do the works of God, and Jesus responds, ***“Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” -John 6:29 (ESV)***

- People coming to believe in Him, coming to put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior is the work that He wants to accomplish so that we can obtain eternal life.
- And once we come to faith, our work is now to do everything we can to lead people to come to that same faith and experience that same salvation
- And we only have a limited time to be able to partner with God in this endeavor. Think about it, never again in all of eternity will we have the opportunity to evangelize, make disciples, share our testimony, or help lead someone to come to faith in Him.
- Once we're in heaven there will be no one around us that is lost and in need of being saved.

- So we have the greatest opportunity and privilege while we are still here on this planet to be a part of this work!
 - So MAYBE we need less Christians wasting time arguing about petty theological differences (that we may not ever fully know the answers too on this side of eternity), and more that will focus on the mission at hand
- Now, to be fair, there are theological issues and false teachings that we are supposed to stand against. Any gospel that opposes grace alone through faith alone, or contradicts the truth that Jesus is the only way unto salvation will not be tolerated in our church.
- But those are not the extremes that we are talking about today.
- We're talking about the petty differences that are not issues of salvation
 - I'm talking about the denominational or church splits that happen because they can't agree on the exact timeline of the end times.

Sunday, March 5, 2023

- I'm talking about debates that happen over bible translations and worship styles.
 - I'm talking about those that get caught up more on their church preferences than how they can serve and be a part of advancing the kingdom of God.
 - I'm talking about predestination vs free will.
 - College stories
 - I had to realize, we believe in the same Jesus and the same great commission, we're on the same team. We may have different thoughts on the ins and outs of how it all works, but the reality is we're both wrong on some level and we won't fully understand it on this side of eternity so it's better if we just focus on the Savior and seeing people come to Him rather wasting time debating each other.
 - What's the point?? We need to be about the Father's Business more than anything else!
- And that Business must always start from a place of Love and Compassion
 - The disciples aren't taking the time to show this man any compassion, so Jesus does.
 - And He does so in such a strange way. He spits on the ground, makes mud, rubs it on his eyes, and then tells him to go clean himself up...What??
 - Now why would Jesus do it in this specific way?? Now I've done some reading and research on this, and I've come to the conclusion...I don't know
 - There's a lot of speculation out there, there are some that talk about the healing components that was thought to be in the specific soil that was there
 - Some talk about the symbolic correlation between this and God making Adam from the dust of the earth and the redemption of humanity being seen here

Sunday, March 5, 2023

- And there's a lot of cool symbolism that can be sorted through but at the end of the day, we don't really know...(but I'm definitely going to ask Him one day!)
- But here's something that really stands out to me about this situation:
 - **Jesus Shows Compassion Without Even Being Asked To.**
 - This guy didn't come to Jesus asking for a miracle like so many others did
 - He wasn't the guy yelling, "Son of David don't pass me by!"
 - He didn't have his friends lower him through a ceiling
 - He's just sitting there minding his own business
 - Probably has his tin cup out asking people coming to and from church for some change
- There's a lot of commotion going on, he probably doesn't even hear the discussion going on 10 feet from him.
- As far as we know, all he hears is some guy walk up near him, spit on the ground, and then feels something being rubbed on his face!
 - I'd probably be thinking, "WHOA! NOT COOL MAN! WHAT'D YOU PUT ON MY FACE!"
 - Jesus just say, "Go to the pool and wash it off..."
 - Who knows if he is even thinking that this is going to result in a miracle or his sight....he's been given NO CONTEXT here! He could just be thinking, some guy just rubbed something on my face, it feels gross, and I wanna wash it off!!
 - But then he gets to the pool, washes his face off and all of the sudden he can see...
 - WHAT. JUST. HAPPENED??

- And He realizes...Oh, That was Jesus that everyone has been talking about...He gave me sight...I didn't even ask for it.
- And here's something that we need to remember: You never need to ask God for His love and compassion.
- You will always have it.
 - Now we need to ask for His grace, mercy and forgiveness, and an awareness of His love in our lives
 - But He is always going to love you and have compassion on you whether you ask for it or not.
- That's true love! Giving everything of yourself for another, without expecting anything in return.
 - He is always going to love you, even if you don't love Him back.
- Now, He wants you to love Him back. He desperately wants to have a personal relationship with you!
 - And there is no such thing as a one way relationship. You cannot be in a loving relationship with a person that YOU don't love back.
- But His love for you, is never predicated on your love for Him. He is going to love you regardless.
 - John tells us, "We love, because He FIRST LOVED US."
 - Paul says, "Even when we were yet sinners, He still showed the greatest act of love in all of human history by dying for us."
- The only question is, will you love Him back?
- Paul tells the church at Ephesus, "[I desperately pray for you, that you] **may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**"
-Eph. 3:18-19 (NKJV)

Sunday, March 5, 2023

- Do you want to really know God? Do you want to be filled with the fullness of God?? Do everything you can to comprehend how much He loves you!
- And whenever you do, you're going to change, and people are going to notice.
- Verse 8 goes on to say, ***"His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!" - John 9: 8-9 (NLT)***
- Whenever you recognize and accept the Love and Compassion of Jesus, you're going to look different.
- *Now, the year of my life that I regret the most is my sophomore year of high school...*
- And I was filled with so much gratitude and joy in that moment and was able to really appreciate how much the love, grace, mercy, and compassion of Jesus Christ had changed my life
- I may have looked like the same guy he knew back then, but I wasn't that same person anymore!
- And that's why your testimony is so powerful.
- People can argue theological and doctrinal differences with you all that they want, but they can never argue with you about your story.
- That's why your testimony is the most powerful and influential tool that you have in your arsenal for evangelism.
- God can use your story, and He can use your struggle to accomplish His work.
- I do not believe that God is the bringer of Pain, but I do believe that He brings purpose to it and through it.
- The next that we see from Jesus in this passage is that:

- **JESUS CAN TURN A TRIAL INTO A TESTIMONY**

- It's one of the greatest questions and hang ups that people have whenever it comes to God:
 - “Why do bad things happen to good people?”
 - “If God is so good, why does He let bad things happen?”
- Jesus even acknowledged on the sermon on the mount that God sends rain on the just and the unjust alike
 - That doesn't seem fair
- Now I don't believe that God causes pain and suffering in our lives, some might argue with me on that, but either way there is no denying that He at least allows Pain and Suffering to be in our lives
 - We can probably all think of something that we have experienced in our lives where we have wondered why God would allow that to happen?
- Now going back to the disciple's question: The reality was, this man *WAS* blind because of sin. Now where they went wrong was trying to pin it on someone specifically and play the blame game.
 - But it was sin, in general, that caused this man's blindness. He was blind because we live in a broken world.
 - Bad things happen because we live in a broken world that is infected with sin.
 - Because sin exists, it causes ripple effects all throughout this life and world and causes chaos
 - And God does not completely eradicate sin, because in order to do so, He would have to eradicate all of humanity because we are all still sinful individuals
 - And there will come a day when all sin will be done away with but until that day comes, He's giving as many people time and opportunity to come to Him

- Now, like we talked about last week Jesus has set us free from the accusations of sin and consequences of sin
 - But we are still susceptible to the effects of sin
 - And we may find ourselves asking God, *“Why are you letting me go through this??”*
 - *“We’ve read in this passage that You healed this blind man, why don’t you do something like that for me??”*
- But what we fail to recognize is that this man had been blind from birth! How many decades had he spent there, blind and begging, before his healing came??
 - We read in John chapter 5 about Jesus healing the lame man...but he had been there 38 years first!!
 - Just because they were healed doesn’t mean they hadn’t suffered!
- But the beauty of the work of Jesus is that He works ALL THINGS OUT for the good of those

who love Him and are called according to His purpose

- He gives purpose to the pain, He brings salvation through the suffering
- *You know it could be argued that God’s glory is shown more through the suffering than the healing*
 - The New Testament tells us that we cannot become more like Jesus unless we suffer in some way
 - The Old Testament refers to Jesus as The Suffering Servant...Isaiah calls Him a Man of Sorrows
 - God can use our suffering, use our story, use our trial in a number of different ways
- I wanna talk about a few ways that I believe God can use our suffering. Again, I do not believe that He creates our suffering, but I believe God can take what the enemy means for evil and turn it for our good.
- So one way **God can use our suffering is to:**

- **LEAD US TO HIM**

- There are some that don't give God or faith a single thought, until something bad happens. And then they get mad and blame God for it
- And I don't think that God minds that. Why? Because at least they're acknowledging Him. And the Hope is that they're acknowledging Him will turn into leaning on Him.
- ***“No doubt Pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument... it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul.”***
-CS Lewis
- If God has to use suffering to get your attention, to get you to realize, truth, I promise it will be worth it
- Because: “A pleasant life will not be worth the suffering of hell. But suffering in life, will all be worth the pleasure of Heaven.”
- That's why Paul says, ***“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not***

worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” -Romans 8:18 (ESV)

- If some form of suffering is what leads you to eternal life, no matter how hurtful it may be, I promise it will be worth it
- Because this life is but a vapor, and you will have all of eternity to look forward to where there will be no more pain, He will wipe every tear from every eye, and suffering will exist no more
- And even for those of us who have already come to faith, sometimes God can use our suffering to steer us back to Himself whenever we've lost focus on Him
- Paul also says, ***“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts***

through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” -Romans 5:3-5 (ESV)

- Another way that God can use our suffering, is:

- TO GROW US

- If life were always easy, you would never grow. You would never gain wisdom, you would never become a stronger individual.
- Paul says, suffering will not crush you, but rather because you have God’s Spirit and love in your life, suffering will produce endurance, strength, and character in your life.
- And the more that endurance, strength, and character is produced, the more that you can have Hope. The confident expectation that even in the midst of suffering God is working in and through it, not just to benefit you, but also everyone else around you.
- Which is a 3rd way God can use our suffering:

- TO HELP OTHERS

- Which is the basis of this entire 2nd point, that God can Turn Your Trial into a Testimony
 - How many times have you gone through something difficult, just to eventually come across someone who has gone through something similar and then you get the opportunity to speak into someone else’s suffering??
 - If your Trial or suffering helps lead someone else either TO Jesus or to Grow IN Jesus... would it be worth it??
- James says, ***“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” -James 1:2-4 (NIV)***
- Now, how can that help others? Well if you are able to find joy in the midst of your trials, and

have perseverance or patience in the most difficult times, people will notice

- And that is the hope that people so desperately want to find in their lives
- And they will ask, how in the world you are able to find peace and contentment, in the midst of the most difficult circumstances??
- And that will give you one of the most powerful platforms to speak Jesus into their lives.
 - That's what people are really searching for. Sure, we all love the thought of Healing in the Moment but what we're really looking for is Hope for the Struggle.
 - And we can't share that Hope unless we struggle.
- Now you might say, how does this point fit with this passage??
 - This guys was healed! He wasn't going through a trial!

- Oh but he did go through a trial...and he would again. At the end of this chapter we actually see that he gets kicked out, banned, excommunicated from the synagogue as a result of all of this!
 - But Jesus had opened his eyes to see a greater truth
 - And other people's eyes are going to begin to be opened as well
- Let's pick up the story again in verse 10, ***"They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?" He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!" "Where is he now?" they asked. "I don't know," he replied. Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over***

my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man Jesus is not from God, for He is working on the Sabbath.” Others said, “But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?” So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

• LETS NOT BRUSH OVER THAT!

- ***Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed you?” The man replied, “I think He must be a prophet.” John 9:10-17 (NLT)***
- Here this man used two phrases that I think way more Christians and pastors should use..
 - “I DON’T KNOW & I THINK...”
- I hope you never feel the need to prove that you’re some theological scholar whenever you’re at our church
- Lord knows, I’m not!

- But there are going to be people who bombard us with questions or accusations about our faith.. and if we can learn the power of “I don’t know” our faith will be much more authentic and genuine then trying to manufacture some sort of answers that we don’t have!
 - I love the way this guy handles these conversations...verse 25 he says, ***“I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. “But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!” -John 9:25 (NLT)***
- That is the spirit and culture that I so desperately want our church to have
 - “How could God forgive you with the past that you have??”
 - I DON’T KNOW....BUT I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE!”
 - “Why do you feel the need to be so generous?? Why don’t you take care of yourself before you take care of others??”

- I DON'T KNOW....BUT I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE!"
- "Oh you're a Christian now? Which translation of the Bible do you believe to be out accurate?"
 - I DON'T KNOW....BUT I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE!"
- "Did you choose God, or did God choose you?!"
 - I DON'T KNOW....BUT I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE!"
- "Well now that you have come to faith, what are your views on the eschatological timeline?"
 - WHAT? I DON'T KNOW....BUT I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE!"
- Now I'm not saying these things don't have value and there is not a time and place for these things to be studied and discussed... because there are
 - But these are things that we should never break fellowship over, take away from the mission at hand, or get in the way of us showing Love and Compassion to others.
 - Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, ***"But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church. Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much."*** -1 Corinthians 8:1b-2 (NLT)
 - Jesus tells these Pharisees that the way they can recognize if they're spiritually blind, is that they think they see everything clearly.
 - "You think you see it all and know it all? That's how you know you're blind."
 - Now, I'm not promoting ignorance. I'm not saying that you shouldn't have your personal studies and try and learn all of the theological and spiritual truth that you can. Because you should.

Sunday, March 5, 2023

- I just want you to know, that we are not in this life to compete with or try and impress other Christians
- We are in this life to be about the Works of God and seeing people come to faith in Him. And petty differences of opinion should never get in the way of that.
- EQUIP CHURCH