

I can't see how God will use me - John 9

Opening: Kids camp; 3 workshops- purpose, marriage. Parenting next. **THANK YOU!!**

Never been done before. Why? Inviting our community- evangelism ; equipping and discipling; that is who we are, who we have been and who will continue to be as we participate with God in the transformation of people to become Fully Devoted Followers in Jesus Christ. We are not slowing down or fill gaps, we are moving forward with the mission God has called us to do. If you are waiting for someone; my hope His name is **Jesus**.

Beginning the sermon series: The story I'm telling myself

It's easy to become the people we tell ourselves that we are. Sometimes we tell stories that make us feel strong and powerful. Other times, we tell stories that diminish ourselves and make us feel worthless.

Jesus was a master at entering peoples' story. In this series, we will look at different stories in which Jesus entered someone's story and rewrote their ending.

We are going to be in John 9 today and read a story about a man blind from birth. Literally and figurately he **could not see how God would use him**. However, his life was changed from an encounter with Jesus. His story was rewritten...

I have asked Brianna to come and read the first part of John 9.

Brianna reads bible passage on stage with real Bible – John 9:1-7, 24-25 (mic on stand)

1As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. **2**"Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

3"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. **"This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.** **4**We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. **5**The night is coming, and then no one can work. **6**But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. **7**He told him, **"Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam"** (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

V24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, **"God should get the glory for this,** **8** because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

25"I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. **"But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!** Reading from NIV

Hook

Are you blind? Anyone ever told you that?...this week/ often. Not that funny if you are one of the millions of people whose vision is physically impaired. Some of us can relate to losing some degree of vision...but can you imagine what is like to be blind? Much less born blind?

The closest experience I have to blindness was in one of those cave tours, where they turn off all the lights...trip to Carlsbad cavern in New Mexico. Amazing barrage of sensations when the lights went off...and when they came back on! Absence of Light

A far cry from real blindness. Back to the story

Read V1. "As Jesus *went along*, (bad day at the office, chap 8), I AM statement, they picked up stones to stone him. **he saw** a man who had been blind from birth. - this verse is screaming for attention. HE SEES what everyone else ignores. Jesus sees our current state of affairs, our current circumstances, our hopes, dreams, fears. He SEES your limitations.

Prayer

JESUS SEES YOU!

***He sees you in your blindness BUT
He sees the story of you yet to come.***

Disciples initiate the lesson in theology; "who is responsible?" in doing so are not talking to the man but talking about him (do we do that). Jesus's response answers a tough question and debunks some bad theology and practice. Jewish law of Retribution.

3 "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. 4 We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. 5 The night is coming, and then no one can work. 6 But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

Yes...

- a. there are consequences for sin and bad decisions; BUT
- b. many calamities happen that are not the result of our direct sin or bad decisions

Jesus response illuminates two things: Puts to bed the blame issue;

Uses this as an opportunity to demonstrate His authority and His purpose.

Read vs. 8-25

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?" ⁹Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"

But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

¹⁰They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?" NIV "HOW were your eyes opened?"

¹¹He 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!"

¹²"Where is he now?" they asked.

"I don't know," he replied.

¹³Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, ¹⁴because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. ¹⁵The 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!"

¹⁶Some 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.(brain trust)

¹⁷Then 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."

¹⁸The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. ¹⁹They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

²⁰His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. ²³That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, “God should get the glory for this,^b because we know this man Jesus is a sinner.”

25 “I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. **“But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”**

Why is the dialogue important at all??...because they are all blind AND

WE are ALL born blind!

Our blindness clouds our thinking and perspective

It limits our future

Here we have the story and the two main characters:

Jesus-Healing a man blind from birth is a big deal. Only Jesus is recorded as doing that. Prophet in the OT talked about the one who will come and will give sight to the blind– Isaiah 35:5, 29:18, **42:7**

Healing a person blind from birth is a big deal. There should be no question as to who this man is that heals the blind.

Blind man- did what most blind people did in 1st century – beg for money, that was his occupation. He did not ask for help or ask Jesus to heal him. He was willing to be further humiliated with spit and mud. Can you recall a time of grief and humiliation, before experiencing a breakthrough? **MUST BE WILLING TO LET JESUS WORK ON YOU. MAY BE PAINFUL...WILL REQUIRE SACRIFICES**, there is a cost. Allow Him to re write your story

He **SEES** for the first time; begins to see things as they are; not as they were. Begins to impart wisdom. This is what happens when we see Jesus. **AND LET HIM WORK ON US.**

v. 30-33

Why, that's very strange! The man replied. He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God he couldn't have done it.

Rest of the cast are in four groups:

Disciples-they at least acknowledged a blind man, though did not address him directly

Pharisees – blind man was an irritant; only could see the blind man in his past. Do people see you in your past ? do you dwell in the past based on other’s perceptions. They wanted proof, they asked **HOW?** V.10. **ARE WE THEM SOMETIMES?** We insist on the how, want to see progress, prove it! Miracle in plain site, but could not see.

Parents of blind man- see their son as a burden; not willing to defend him; feared the establishment and went with the norm practiced in their culture. ARE WE THEM SOMETIMES?

Neighbors- Could not recognize him. Ever met someone who dramatically changed in lifestyle or appearance? Maybe you? Do others notice a change in you? Why could they not recognize him? Or could they?

Do I have a witness to this transformation here today? Is there someone who can say I was changed and it was noticeable?

Each group has a vital role in this story; each has a perspective on how God works; each has a risk factor. Each are blind.

I WONDER, who and where are you and I in this story?

We all come into this world blind.

Jesus Invites You...to see!

We need to see things as Jesus does... Not the story you are telling yourself- not the story others are telling you...

WHEN you realize he sees you...

When you start seeing people as Jesus does...

Story – Who are those unseen? Who are those invisible in plain site? perhaps seen but ignored. infinities not of their own doing...mental or physical impairment, speech difficulties, a little bit slow, any acronym...ending in disorder. We all have some kind of real or perceived limitation to the things of this world. Who isn't experiencing this in yourself or your extended family.

Story of Wade - Bob Ross Toaster

Its tough enough having some limitation. but especially for a kid, the comments, the jokes or isolation.

Do we just see the limitation, or do we see the story yet to unfold?

WELLLL, Jesus sees us differently and he has a differ story for us, not the one we are telling ourselves or the one others May be telling us.

I believe God will give Wade something else to say. But regardless of what I can't see or what Wade can't see, Jesus will give him a script he can follow.

– “but, this happened so that **the works of God might be displayed in him**”

Vs 35-38

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

36 The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

37 "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

38 "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

Jesus shows **compassion**.

He knows when we are down, broken – He is nearest at those times. Joe can see, but lost his job, his family part of his community and kicked out of church.

Jesus gives an **invitation**.

Jesus saw him and Jesus sees you. He sees you on the other side of limitation.

THE PROPER RESPONSE

a. True Worship

Jesus invites- **YOU MUST RESPOND!!!**

Because the eyes of his heart was opened. Now he sees Jesus as Jesus sees him.

Man's **response** was not the typical thank you and joy, it was WORSHIP

Not just singing- way of life----Singing, a shout, a whisper, dancing, whistling, humming, a joyful NOISE, a humble posture or an ecstatic expression -----ALL are acceptable and proper ways of WORSHIP

39 Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."

b. True Community

Joe, AKA blind beggar needed a new community. The old one ditched him. And he needed to ditch them as well.

We were never meant to go through life alone. Worship on Sunday is a necessity and essential to our faith. But life goes on daily and we need a community of people, brothers and sisters in Christ who will walk along with us, encourage us, illuminate truth to us, pray for us and do life with us. At Covenant Grove we call these LIFE GROUPS. Fall signups begin this next week. What would a church look like if all Adults were part of a LIFE GROUP? Look forward to seeing your name.

c. True Direction - Mentoring

On the other side of blindness is enlightenment, wisdom, freedom

Our own eyes deceive us, betray us, and fail us. We need Jesus to give us sight.

We also at times need specific people to help us navigate through life, who have sight, insight and vision. Who can speak wisdom and encouragement into us. We call these Mentors. Let one of our Pastors know if you are interested in going through a mentorship. Or simply indicate that on your connect card.

Helen Keller, world renowned author, activist, and poet became blind at 19 months old.

“The only thing worse than being blind is to have no vision”

Jesus offers both sight and vision....

We were all BLIND...BUT now we can see.

Prayer of Invitation

Who wants to see the story Jesus sees about your life?

1. Do you believe Jesus sees you?

2. Do you want to continue to believe the story you are telling yourself or the story Jesus sees in you?

3. Do you want to see others as Jesus sees them

How will you respond?

I once was blind... but now I see.