

John 9:5-16 "He Put Mud on My Eyes"

JOH 9:5-16 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having 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. 8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man. 10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded 11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see. 12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

This passage of Scripture is in the context of Jesus having found a blind beggar in Jerusalem, probably near the temple area, and His disciples ask the question in verse two: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus responded: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." (JOH 9:3)

And so, what we find in our text is that Jesus is about to do a special work in this blind man's life. This is why our Lord makes the statement in verse five, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

This blind man was being used by the Lord to teach His disciples the connection between physical blindness and the spiritual blindness into which all men are born. And, just as only God can deliver from physical blindness, only God can deliver from spiritual blindness.

And so, when Christ makes the claim that He is the light of the world He is saying that He is the God who opens our eyes to our need for a Savior. He is simply repeating what He already made clear on an earlier occasion when He was speaking to some of these same Jews.

JOH 8:12 ... Jesus ... said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Therefore, our Lord equates life eternal with being united to the Light, who is Himself.

And so, as we come back to our text Jesus is saying all of this while standing next to a blind man. What better way to testify of your claim of being the light of the world than to bring light to a man who literally has lived in the dark from birth.

JOH 9:6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

There are some very interesting things found in this passage, not the least of which is the apparent crude, and some might argue, gross act of bending down low and forming as much saliva as you can muster and then spitting that slimy mixture on the ground with the express purpose of making something even more gross; muddy saliva.

But this is precisely what Jesus does. And you can imagine the crowd surrounding Him at this point beginning to wonder, what in the world is He doing? This was certainly an unorthodox approach to curing blindness, even among these people.

I might add that this is not the first time Jesus does something apparently strange in the process of healing someone.

MAR 7:32-35 ... some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. 33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

In this case, and the case in our text, the question has to be raised: why does Jesus use such physical means to heal someone when all

He has to do is speak and the person can be healed, as He did when the Centurion came to the Lord asking Him to heal his servant?

MAT 8:5-10, 13 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." 7 Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." 8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

And so, we know that Jesus was certainly not dependent on having to touch someone, or smear mud on someone to heal them. In fact, we know that the mud or the spit had nothing to do with the actual healing; that came from the very power of the God/man, Christ Jesus.

So, obviously there must be a reason for Jesus using the means He does in our text; and there is. Let's look at it.

JOH 9:6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

Again, don't forget that this is in the context of Him having said, I am the light of the world.

Some have suggested that what Jesus is teaching the crowds with this demonstration is that He is the Son of God who is also truly man. In other words, He incorporates the dust of the ground, from which man was made, together with His ability to miraculously heal, which only God can do, and therefore was teaching the people that He is both God and man.

A more natural explanation would be found in the fact that just as man was made from the dust of the ground, as God manipulated that dust, so too, Christ can manipulate the dust in such a way as to do God's work in man.

Part of that same imagery of God making man from the dust of the ground must take into account that God had originally spoke such materials as the ground into existence. And so, part of what we see

here is that what comes out of the mouth of Christ, in the form of spit, speaks to His word which is effectual.

And so, what Jesus is doing is demonstrating through this particular sign that the result of this action will lead to something only God can do. And yet, the sign has no power in itself, but the sign points to the One who actually heals.

I mean, what if any other Jew got the bright idea that putting mud on a blind man's eyes could cure him? What would have been the result? Simply put, muddy eyes.

And so, what our Lord is doing is using these common elements He originally created in the beginning of time and is now using these same elements as a testimony to God's power as He speaks to this man concerning what He is about to do, which in essence is to demonstrate the healing ability of living water that removes the mire of clay that blinds men to the truth.

You can imagine the curiosity of the crowd as they saw what was, for all intents and purposes a hindrance to giving sight to a blind man. It's like saying, do you want to see? Then put on this blindfold.

It would have been viewed by the Jews in just that way. And so, Jesus has their attention. And this man has mud on his eyes. He must have looked like a sick raccoon. But our Lord isn't finished with the symbolism as He now tests this man's faith to follow through with the command of His word to go and wash this mud off.

JOH 9:7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

This particular pool was fed by the Gihon spring which is over a thousand feet from the pool. Way back in 701 B.C. King Hezekiah of Judah built a water tunnel through the solid rock of Mount Zion from the spring to the pool as a defense against the attacks of Assyria. (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible).

The conduits that supplied the water to the pool were called Senders, thus the name Siloam or Sent. Being a spring fed pool it was living water, not stagnant. And of course, we know who the living water is. It is Christ Himself.

And so, when Jesus sends the man to the pool of Siloam He is sending Him to living waters where He will find light so that in turn he might return to the true light found in Christ.

But, in sending the man, Jesus commands him to wash the mud from his eyes. Again, as we use the mud in its symbolic sense, which is a reference to the flesh, we see Jesus commanding the man to wash so as to make the flesh clean so as to see.

And as with anything our Lord commands for our good we must act in faith and obedience, which is precisely what this blind beggar does.

JOH 9:7 ... So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Some of your translations say, he came seeing or came back seeing. The implication is that he left the pool being able to see. Whether he tried to go back to the spot where Jesus first placed the mud on his eyes or he went back home the context seems to suggest that he went home as verse eight speaks of his neighbors encountering him.

JOH 9:8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

If this man were still blind this question would never have come up. Instead they see and hear this man's testimony that he is no longer blind. Well, since he went to work in the morning, (in this case he went out to beg because he's blind), and then came home seeing, they weren't sure this was the same guy.

They thought that it certainly looked like him but some weren't sure.

JOH 9:9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

If you can imagine the scene, you've got a variety of people with different levels of information. You've got the crowd, who Christ was talking to, who saw our Lord put the clay on the man's eyes and then who, certainly out of curiosity, went to see what would happen when this man went to the pool, and now you've got the neighbors and acquaintances encountering him for the first time after that incident.

And so, there is a lot of excitement in the air and a lot of confusion on the part of those who are wondering what happened. They were asking each other what was going on. Some were obviously

responding by saying that yes, he's the same man. Others who weren't there are saying he only looks like the man, he obviously can't be the man since these types of miracles don't happen.

The one fascinating thing here is that in all of the confusion these people are discussing these things among themselves all while this man is standing in their presence. They apparently didn't think of asking him directly.

And so, he speaks up. JOH 9:9 ... But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

JOH 9:10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.

'All right. If you really are our neighbor who's been blind all your life, then how in the world do you explain this sudden new sight?'

It's interesting what they don't ask. They don't ask who opened your eyes, but rather, how were your eyes opened?

Now, this is not to suggest that they were somehow being obstinate about a person being able to heal. If you or I had a friend or relative who was blind one day and was suddenly able to see the next, our first question might be similar. How did this happen?

And this is what we have before us in our text. And now this former blind man is about to tell them.

JOH 9:11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

The first thing out of this man's mouth is to testify to a person who made this possible. And it seems that he didn't formerly know this person. "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes."

Even he didn't know who did this. He had to ask someone who placed the mud on his eyes. After all he couldn't see when this all took place and so as he is either walking to the pool of Siloam or after he had his sight restored he asked those who were with him who this man was.

But you'll notice that he gives only what he knows. He doesn't exaggerate the story, he doesn't go beyond what he knows to be true. "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

A man of few words, but they're all true words. And this is a lesson for all of us who have been given spiritual sight by Christ. It doesn't mean we can't expound on what has happened to us, but it does mean that we should give people the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

This is what a witness does. And you don't need a theological degree to do this. A babe in Christ can witness to the fact that he once was blind but now he can see as he has embraced the only one who can give life, that One who is the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

This man didn't know everything about Jesus. He didn't know He was born of a virgin. He didn't know He grew up in Galilee. He didn't know He had turned water into wine. He may not have even known that Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah. But he knew that a man called Jesus put clay on his eyes and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam and that in obedience he did and was then able to see.

When you and I were confronted by the truth when a witness of the Lord shared the gospel of Jesus Christ we knew very little other than what was shared with us, which is that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and then rose bodily from the dead to defeat sin and death and gave us the victory as we placed our faith in Him for our own salvation.

It was the Spirit of God who opened our eyes in that moment, and it was the Spirit of God who regenerated us and indwelt us and enabled us to see this truth for what it was as we were given a faith to believe in Christ. And once we were delivered from the darkness of sin into the light of the truth, who is Christ, we were capable of being a witness to that truth if asked.

Now, obviously, once we believe we are to seek the things of God and His word and we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, but the point is that a brand new baby believer has the truth, and if called upon, God can use that babe in Christ to be a witness as the Spirit gives him utterance. But like this man we ought to be willing when called upon.

He was more than willing to give them the truth and yet those he spoke to wanted to get more answers by going to the horse's mouth, if you will.

JOH 9:12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

Again, he is simply being honest. He only knows what he knows. Well, if the crowd can't find this Jesus, and since they want to know what to make of this miraculous and mysterious healing, they do what most Jews of that time would have done. They went to their spiritual leaders for answers.

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

Okay, so up to this point everything is kosher. These people think they're doing what is lawful and right by bringing this man to be examined by the Pharisees, possibly thinking that they will confirm that God has done a work in this blind man through this Jesus. But this isn't going to be the case.

JOH 9:14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

Oh brother, here we go. John is mentioning this to give us a heads up for what is about to come. You would think that the Pharisees would be praising God that this man was given his sight back and could now be a productive member of Jewish society. But no, this was not to be. Why? Because the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

JOH 9:15-16 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

This division within the ranks of the Pharisees is actually good news. It seems that some of them were possibly sympathetic to Christ's ministry. We know that Nicodemus certainly was.

On an earlier occasion many of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem condemned Jesus for doing the exact same thing; healing on the Sabbath. This incident also took place at a pool in Jerusalem called the Pool of Bethesda. It was an invalid who was waiting to be put into the pool to be healed.

JOH 5:5-12 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he

had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" 7 "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." 8 Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, 10 and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." 11 But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" 12 So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

Never mind that this man has been made whole; they only see their legalistic approach to the law. By the way, this man at the pool at Bethesda also didn't know who healed him. Later he would find out it was Jesus and when the Jewish leaders found out we read this.

JOH 5:16-18 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. 17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

These very Jews who condemned Jesus for working a miracle on the Sabbath, in the case of the lame man, are the same Jews who are once again confronted with Jesus who is continuing to heal on the Sabbath.

I've got to believe that Jesus was doing this, partly, to yank their religious chains. He could have healed any of these people at any time and yet He strategically waits until a Sabbath. And so, back in our text what do we have?

JOH 9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

To heal once on the Sabbath is one thing. To heal a second time on the Sabbath is unacceptable for some of these Pharisees. But for others it raises some questions as to how this could be. And instead of concentrating on the day a miracle takes place they begin to consider the miracle itself.

In an odd sort of way this is how the world views us. It is one thing to be a Christian on Sunday and possibly midweek, but to be a Christian seven days a week, fifty two weeks a year for life, is something that the world will either view as being closed minded on our parts, as we claim Christ is the only way, or it will cause some of them to wonder how such a thing can be?

Some will want to persecute us like they persecuted Christ, and yet others may see the consistent testimony of a life sold out for Christ as something that cannot be ignored as they see the love of Christ being shed abroad in our lives.

Is this not how our Lord wants the world to see us as we demonstrate a love for each other?

JOH 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The converse of that statement is just as true. If you do not love one another all men will know that you are not my disciples.

Jesus was being consistent as He did the work of His Father. Whether people loved Him or hated Him He continued to do the will of God. You and I have an obligation to our heavenly Father to work and to will for His good pleasure whether the world hates us or loves us.

If we keep our eyes on the world to validate our walk and ministry with the Lord then our ability to serve Christ will be greatly diminished. We'll get frustrated, fatigued and possibly despairing.

Christ served people, but ultimately He was serving the Father. It was always about pleasing the Father, not people, that Christ loved us to death, even death on a cross.

People will invariably disappoint us. People will invariably be less than faithful to the work of serving God. But that should never keep us from going forward, knowing that we are serving the Lord.

COL 3:17, 23-24 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

If we keep this attitude then we will not only serve for the right reasons, but we will serve in the strength of the Lord to His glory.

And as we serve Christ, as we love Him above all, His love will spill out of us to those around us.

Christ was loving and serving these Jews in our text. Some of them hated Him, some of them were favorable towards Him. But in the final analysis He simply loved men because He loved the Father.

His love always translated into serving the Father. Our love for the Christ should always translate to serving each other and the world.

Next time we'll pick up on this previously blind beggar still in the thick of things, but I'll leave you with this.

GAL 5:13-14 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."