



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

We call them *handicapped* or *disabled* – people without the use of one or more of their senses or their mobility. We recognize that these people are not able to participate fully in some areas of our common life, and need special consideration and care of various sorts. We even have programs to help the *able-bodied* understand better the challenges which these conditions present. But while we hope and dream of *cures* and *miracles*, we don't expect them.

Consider, then, what a drastic change happens when such healing occurs. Since we tend to identify people by their work – or in this case, their disability – this would mean a whole new identity for someone so cured! Along with this is a fresh complex of relationships. Caregivers and families have new connections, often from protection to teaching new skills and social graces.

Many of Jesus' miracles, including this restoration of sight to the blind man, cause consternation for just this reason. They upset the order of *life as we have come to know it*. Cripples no longer need to be carried (and let down through rooftops!); the blind don't have to be led; lepers can freely reenter society. Such drastic change is hard to believe and adapt to...for the Pharisees who led strictly ordered lives, and for us in our modern world.

Yet even today we discover that encounters with Jesus frequently do involve us in changes in our lives, and not everyone will believe those metamorphoses are really possible. Blindness can come in many forms in our lives, and needs to be addressed. Our world still needs those new relationships with Jesus which give us new life and new sight.

— Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence

Consider the Source John 9:1-12

A Family Affair

Read John 9 together. Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus who sinned? When Jesus was on earth, many people believed that if someone was sick it was because they had done something really wrong. In this particular story, the man was born blind, so maybe they thought his parents did something wrong before he was even born.

Jesus explained that the man was not blind because of his own sin, or his parent's sin. Jesus said the blindness was to help others see that Jesus is the light of the world. Even when Jesus did something wonderful like healing a blind man, the religious leaders (Pharisees) became very angry at him. They did not want to believe in Jesus' connection with God and power to heal. It was like they were blind to understanding Jesus. They could see him with their eyes but, they were blind to understanding his message.

Even though we cannot see Jesus with our eyes today, we can learn about his love by studying his life and how he treated others. We even have the opportunity to shine Jesus' light to others in our world. Do you know the song "*This Little Light of Mine*"? If not, look it up together. Sing it with your family this week and talk about ways you can share Jesus' light with others.

Dear God, thank you for your Word and all it can teach us about Jesus and his love. Help us not to be blind to understanding Jesus so we can share his love with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children's Ministry

Monday: John 9:1

This miracle is a bit unusual in that the blind man did not cry out for help, and indeed seems to have been oblivious to the possibility of Jesus helping him. Instead it is the disciples who call attention to him with their question. At least they noticed....

- Who are those around us who pass without our notice?
- Are there needs that we choose to pass by, or that we only notice to condemn?

Tuesday: John 9:2-3

The disciples are quick to assume that there is blame to be assigned. "Who sinned?" Too often in our daily lives we live to assign fault, and too often "blame the victim."

- Pay attention today to the ways we place blame for things that happen around us...and how often we don't know the reality of the situation.

Wednesday: John 9:3-5

Jesus sees instead an opportunity for God to be glorified, for God to be at work in the life of the blind man, and around the disciples as well. Light, incidentally, helps us see better! Jesus is the light of the world....

- Today, look for "God-sightings!" How many times and places can you notice God making a difference in relationships, or providing blessings to the people around you?

Thursday: John 9:6-7

Jesus expects the blind man to participate in his healing – to wash the mudpack from his eyes in the pool of Siloam. Too often we expect God to do all the work in changing the world or changing our lives! We need to step up, too!

- How will you work with God this week to make a change, to make a difference in the world or in your relationships?

Friday: John 9:8-12

Perhaps the point of this story is not the power and authority of Jesus to heal the blind man but the resistance of the bystanders to believe what had happened. A variety of explanations are proposed, while the plain reality is before them.

- During Lent in particular, be alert to the times and ways we are slow to recognize Christ at work in our midst. What are the reasons we give for not following more closely to his invitations?

