

**Hurst Green**  
**29<sup>th</sup> Mar 20**  
**The man born blind**  
**John 9:1-41**

So the reading I had planned for today was this one from John – a long story of another healing but this story is not here for us to wonder at the healing but rather to learn from the reactions of those around.

Firstly the disciples

**John 9:2 (ANIV)**

<sup>2</sup> *His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

This reaction is based on the simplistic notion that was common in those days that suffering was the result of sin and the only question was who had sinned.

As Jesus answers them -

**John 9:3 (ANIV)**

<sup>3</sup> *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*

This is a very different view of suffering but what it shows us is that suffering has a purpose. Unfortunately we are not always told what that purpose might be! But remember Jesus has experienced all things before us and he experienced suffering and a large part of his teaching to his disciples on his road to the original Easter was that he must suffer.

Another reaction to God at work is the man's neighbours some of whom would come up with any solution rather than admit that God had worked in this man's life. They did not rejoice with him but rather questioned him and then took him to the authorities – The Pharisees.

The Pharisees also would not focus on the work of God being displayed but were determined to find fault.

It had happened on a Sabbath – the fault? Mixing saliva and earth to make mud was work and you must not work on the Sabbath! Even if you are displaying the work of God.

And the man himself – he knew what had happened and would not deny it. He did not understand the how or the why any more than we do when we see God work miracles but he knew the what and he stuck to that.

He had been given his sight.

Then we come to the crux of the story when Jesus reveals who he is to the man so that the man might believe and he does.

But this whole thing has been about spiritual blindness. The miracle itself was so that the work of God was displayed but the recording of it in the gospels is so that we might understand spiritual blindness.

For God is at work in this nation even today while we go through this terrible virus with all its uncertainty and fear God is still at work.

It may not be in miracles of healing although those are still happening in our land if you go looking for them but the work of God is being displayed.

Even in the simple things in life – the new morning, the new spring happening all around us, the blessings we have of being in a rich country during this time.

And yet all around us we find spiritual blindness just as this story shows us.

There are many who deny our God even as they live in the blessings he has given us and our nation.

There are those who will point to the suffering in the world and say that is why there is no God without examining our claim that God is using that suffering to call people back to him.

People will find any and every excuse to try and deny God even when they are shown him at work in our world today.

Our example is the man in this story.

We know what God has done and no one can deny us that. They may make their excuses but we must stick to what God has done for us and is doing for us.

These times are a classic example of how Christians are not excused the troubles and suffering of the world but have God's peace to take us through them.

But we must also be careful that we are not blind to God's work among us because we are the body of Christ and we have a work to do at this time.

There are many issues in the world around us that we must be aware of, homelessness, modern slavery, the refugee situation, and the displaced people in huge camps in various part of the world.

And in this look back at the miracle itself for there are two parts to it.

The first is the gracious work of God in finding us for in verse one it is Jesus that saw this blind man. It was not the disciples as it is in the case of the boy with demons. The man is not brought to Jesus as with the paralytic being lowered through the ceiling. No this time Jesus finds the man.

And God has found us.

God then does his part in the work. In the miracle by rubbing the mud on his eyes. In our case by dying for our sins.

Then it is down to us. The man has to go and wash – all we had to do was accept the claims of our Messiah to be the way to heaven.

We did all that and for that we had God do so many works in our life.

- He forgave our sins

- He made us Holy
- He made us righteous.
- He gave and gives us power through the Holy Spirit
- He gives us the fruit of the Spirit
- He gives us the gifts of the Spirit

Those are all the work of God being displayed today. Our role is the same as the man's. We don't deny it or try and hide it we simply say it the way it is.

We know the what of the work of God. We do not need to know the how or the why although the why is easy – he did it because he first loved us.

We know the what and must bear witness to that just as the man did.

Even in these unusual times – Especially in these unusual times.

Remember the man born blind and emulate him in your life this week.