

Mud in your eye

They don't pay pastors enough so I decided to open my own business.

Anyone want some snake oil?

No takers?

Anyone want to buy some genuine Arizona dirt?

When you listened to the story that Jim read for us – you can almost get the picture of Jesus trying to be a snake oil salesman. I mean – he was Jesus – there many stories in the Bible about Jesus healing people – and most of them didn't require a mud pack. As a matter of fact, most of them didn't require the person to do anything.

So whenever I read a passage like this I ask myself, why? Why did he put mud in the eye of this man and he didn't do it for anybody else? What is the story for us, today, that Jesus is trying to tell us? Why is this story different from all of the others?

Let's start off by looking at the blind man for a minute. Here is a man that was blind since birth. In the ancient Jewish tradition it was believed that either that man had sinned while in his mother's womb, or his parents had sinned and this was their punishment. So in that society if you were blind, you were ridiculed, lonely, and usually had to beg just to survive.

Then, even when the disciples come up to the blind guy, they don't even speak to him – they just decided to use the blind man as a teaching moment and ask – who sinned, him or his parents?

So Jesus simply said, neither caused this. And Jesus didn't just stand there and say, "Gee what a pity he is blind." Jesus said, "Although this man is blind, the Glory of God will be shown because of him."

Think what the people standing around thought, "Show the Glory of God through a blind man. You have to be kidding. He is nothing but a beggar born of sin. He isn't worth your time!"

Then Jesus did something remarkable – something that just amazes me. He bent down, then he did something we would consider pretty disgusting, he spit on the ground, then in the dirt he formed a mud pack for the healing of the blind man.

When I think of this I think of the story in the second chapter of Genesis which reads, "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

Jesus formed a mud pack with his own saliva, and told the man to go wash off. Just like God forming us out of the dust of the land, giving us life -- Jesus healed the man out of the dust of the land, giving him **new** life.

But I don't think that is the real miracle of the story. To me there were two much bigger miracles in this story than a blind man receiving his sight.

To me the first miracle happened when the blind man, not knowing who Jesus was, listened to him and did what he said. Let me read this part for you again. If you have your Bibles, please turn to John Chapter 9 verse 6.

Jesus didn't tell the blind man he would receive his sight, Jesus didn't tell the blind man that he was the Son of God, Jesus made no promises to the blind man. Now I don't know what was going through the blind man's mind, but he could have easily thought someone was simply playing a joke on him and he could have just wiped the mud off his own eyes saying something like, "Gee, you got me – that was a funny one."

But instead, he stepped out in (pardon the pun) - he stepped out in blind faith, wanting to believe that something would happen – wanting to believe that his life would be changed.

And it was.

And that is when the second big miracle happened - when that formerly blind man went and spoke to people saying that he was healed ---- and gave the credit to Jesus, saying that He must be sent from God because nobody else has ever healed a man blind from birth.

I believe that is a miracle because, for the man, it might have been easier to believe that dirt and saliva cure people. Because that just makes more sense. Maybe it is some new cure that should be shared with others. He could have opened his own snake oil stand selling saliva mud packs. Human nature isn't to believe in miracles. We like to only believe in what we see.

The blind man had never seen Jesus. He got the mud pack from a man he had never seen, didn't know, and from the story we can assume he had never heard of Jesus before this.

This man believed without seeing. He could have easily believed in the mud, believed in the spit, or even believed in the pool of water where he washed his face off. Not for one second did he do this.

Today, we can't physically see Jesus, just like the blind man. But we can still step out in faith and accept that Jesus Christ can change our lives – and we don't even have to do it with blind faith – like the blind man had to.

We have several advantages over the blind man: We have heard the stories of Jesus, we know people whose lives have been changed by stepping out in faith and trusting in Christ, we can even see the Glory of God in the lives of people around us – we have many advantages over the blind man, but yet he is the one teaching us.

Just like the disciples, let's all learn a lesson from the blind man: Let's not put our faith in snake oil, but let's put our faith in the One that believes in us and loves us. And during this Easter season we remember that He loves us so much he died for us while we were yet sinners – that shows an unconditional love in the way only God could show.

We remember that sacrifice Christ made of us through Holy Communion. This is a time where we can come and accept Christ and experience Him in a new way.

Today let's receive Communion with our eyes shut. To remember that we don't have to see something to experience it.

God looks at us today, broken -- sinners. He doesn't say, "Gee, what a pity," but he says, "Watch the Glory of God that can be shown because of them." Let's go from here today and let the Glory of God shine from us.

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