**TO DISPLAY THE WORKS OF GOD**

John 9:1-41

Key Verse: 9:3

“‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’”

Our conference theme is “Light “. As we learned through previous message, Jesus is the light of the world and whoever follows him will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life (8:12)”. In continuation with theme of “Light”, Jesus healed a man who was born blind. Jesus opened this man’s eyes and enable him to see bright sun light. Not only that, Jesus opened this man’s spiritual eyes and enabled him to see another light - Jesus. This one blind man’s changes illustrated who Jesus is - Jesus is the light of the world. Today we especially want to think about the meaning of Jesus’ words, “This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

**Part 1. Whose sin was it**

Look at verse 9:1-2. As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”. The disciples’ question reflects the Jewish’s belief of the day. In their viewpoint, his disability and suffering must be the result of someone’s sin, and God must be punishing him for that sin. Especially in the case of a birth defect, they thought either that the baby had sinned in its mother’s womb, or that the baby’s parents had sinned.

The disciples had same way of thinking as Jews had, so their question was already including the answers - the man’s blindness was a consequence of sin. They were very fatalistic about the power of sin, so wondering whose sin caused his blindness. As Jesus’ disciples they should think outside the box, but they couldn’t break out the common Jewish point of view, so they judged his sin rather than had compassion on him like Jesus had.

So they asked Jesus a very theological question, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” This is a cause-and-effect way of thinking. Many people tend to conclude that every misfortune result from their wrong doings. Also, they look for someone to blame when the bad things happen. But this is not what the Bible teaches, and it's not how God wants us to think.

**Part 2, “that the work of God might be displayed” (3).**

How does Jesus answer his disciples? Look at verse 3. “‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’”. Jesus’ answer was totally different from what they expected. He declared that he was born blind so that God could reveal his great work of salvation in him through Jesus Christ. In the sovereign providence of God, this man was born blind, and Jesus could heal him of his physical blindness. Jesus did not regard all human suffering as a result of sin. His view was that It was preparation to receive a great God’s blessing.

If we think that all suffering is caused by sin, whenever we suffer in some way, we quickly conclude that God is punishing us. This makes us fatalistic. And whenever we see others’ suffering, we quickly conclude that God is punishing them for some sin. This makes us judgmental. However, there is no fatalism in Jesus. Jesus saw in everything the opportunity to glorify God. There is no judgement in Jesus. He demonstrated his compassion on suffering people in many ways.

We all experienced or are experiencing hard time because of many reasons. Physical problems, mental problems, financial problems, relationship problems, family problems, job problems, future security problems, etc. By the way, have you ever thought “I am facing difficulties because God is punishing my sins”? Of course, In the bible suffering often is result of sin, but it is not always. This is not a biblical attitude. It is important for us to know that our suffering or limitation does not mean God is punishing us for our sin problems. Rather than we fall into this fatalistic minds, we should know suffering is s an opportunity for God to work for us.

Also, when we experience sufferings, we tend to blame someone or something to protect ourselves. We do blame game - between friends, family members and even church members, or in a broad sense, economy, society and finally God. This is not the biblical attitude too. Instead of finding someone to blame for your difficult situation, we have to look for what God can do through us.

Nick Vujicic spent eight years asking God, "Why? Why was I born this way? I don't understand how can You say You love me when You allow me to stay in this pain. “Please give me arms and legs. But if You don't give me arms and legs, I trust You." This has been Vujicic's prayer. He said his commitment to Jesus is "to want God’s plan, and not his own plan, even when he doesn’t understand." As you know, his physical condition has not been changed anything, still without legs and arms. However, he glorifies God through his uncomfortable life conditions. We are compelled to see God’s mighty work is being displayed in him. He could find hope even in the hardest of situations by not just maintaining a positive attitude, but finding strength in a personal relationship with God, and glorify God.

Nick’s case is very drastic story, and hard to generalize. Let me share story about very normal person, me. I am a parent of an autistic two-and-a-half-year-old boy. He manifested the common symptoms of autism from around 18 months. When he was diagnosed autism spectrum, I and my wife were shocked and thought “Why!”. I was thinking God punished our lack of faith – we didn’t tithe faithfully or we named him from the handsome Hollywood star not from the bible. However, God helped me to hold John 9:3 - “‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’” in this difficult time. I can barely see remarkable progress from Ryan, but, I can keep praying for him based on word of God. Moreover, God help me to expand my spiritual eyes. Ryan’s healing will be the great work of God. Not only that, God changed my attitude about suffering in Godly way. I believe this is great work of God which is displayed in only 30 months’ Ryan’s life. I really thank and praise God who fulfilled his word in my life. I pray that God’s marvelous work will be displayed in Ryan’s life so that he can glory God through his life.

**Part 3. the time to work of God (4,5)**

Look at verse 4-5 “As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”. The word “day” refers to the time when we have life, while “night” refers to after death. While we have life, we must do the works of God. After death, we cannot do the work of God any more. We must do God's works while we have opportunity. Jesus knows he has limited time to do God’s work. He will die on the cross for our salvation soon. He wanted to use his remained lifetime to display God’s glory, so he made the blind to see, not only with his physical eyes, but also with his spiritual eyes.

Jesus tell us “WE must to work of God”. In verse 3 and 4, Jesus mentioned work of God repeatedly. If we must do work of God, then what is it? We can find example of God’s work through Jesus’ life. He did many things during his three years of earthly ministry. If we summarize what he did, they are teaching, healing and preaching. Jesus used all three of God’s work to give us true salvation and expand His kingdom on earth. Like Jesus, we can also do God’s work in our life – many one to one bible study, preaching gospel to young people in campus and serving sick people with love and compassion. This is very important task to expand God’s kingdom in this world.

There is another reference about God’s work. According to John 6:28–29, which says “Then they asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’ Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’” God’s work is the work of believing in Jesus. The man in today’s passage was born blind. He has lived his entire life without sight. He has never seen the light of day. He has lived in darkness. But when he believed in Jesus, God’s work was occurred in his heart, and he could please God with faith.

**Part 4. Jesus opens the blind man’s eyes (6-7)**

Now Look at verse 6-7. “After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). When we imagine this scene, Jesus’ way of healing for this blind man looked very interesting, even seemed nonsense. The disciples were wondering what Jesus is going to do. We can’t find any record in the bible that Jesus promised this man if he allowed Jesus to put mud with saliva on his eyes and go wash in the Pool of Siloam, Jesus would heal his blind. However, this blind man was willing to obey Jesus’ direction without any hesitation.

The Pool of Siloam is outside the walls. The distance from temple where Jesus and this man were to the Pool of Siloam is about ¼~1/2 miles, which is a relatively long distance for the blind man. On the way to the pool of Siloam with funny face, people might have laughed at him. However, he didn’t give up, and he obeyed Jesus’ direction no matter what people made fun of him. He was getting ready to experience great work of God. Finally, he made it to the pool of Siloam.

Look at the end of verse 7 what happened. “So the man went and washed, and came home seeing”. The blind man kept Jesus’ word “Go, and wash in the Pool of Siloam” in his heart, and trust Jesus so that he was willing to do whatever Jesus told him to do. He was healed not by spit, not by mud, but by God’s power and his obedience and humility. Moreover, his active step of faith would bring about not only physical but also inner, spiritual healing.

Jesus healed many blind people in the bible. Matthew chapter 9, Jesus restored sight by touching their eyes. Mark chapter 8, Jesus spit on the man’s eyes, and put his hands on him. Mark chapter 10, Jesus healed the blind Bartimaeus by speaking the words. Jesus used different method to heal blind people in every single miracle. Jesus didn’t want people focus on his technique or method, but on Jesus himself. Jesus wanted people to know Jesus is the Lord and Messiah through miraculous work.

**Part 5. one thing I do know**

After the blind man was healed, he was confronted by unexpected pressure and persecution by people. When we see verse 8-34, however, no one supported him. No one celebrated his “reborn” and praised God who had done miracle work for him. Rather, the former blind man came to meet various spiritual blindness people - neighbors, parents, and religious leaders.

What happened when this man returned to home and met neighbors? Some of them didn’t believe it was him. Neighbors were skeptical about him and discouraged him. What happened when the Pharisees were confronted with this man? They tried find something wrong in order to distort the truth. They debated the fact that the man might not be blind at all.

Most of all. they said Jesus is sinner because he didn’t keep the Sabbath. They found the day on which Jesus healed the man was a Sabbath. So they asked how he had received his sight. The man simply told the facts, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see” (15). As the Pharisees’ interpretation, it was violation of the Sabbath law - mixing mud and saliva was working. Though they saw amazing God’s work, they were busy to pervert the truth. They only focused “When” and “How” to discredit Jesus and his work. If they focused on “Who Jesus is” and “Why Jesus did”, they must have accepted Jesus is the Messiah. Their legalistic mind was hindering their spiritual eyes and made them spiritual blind.

What about this man’s parents? Because the Pharisees didn’t get answers they wanted to listen from the man, they called his parents. How did they respond? The parents should have stood on the side of truth, telling the facts of what Jesus had done for their son. However, they were afraid of being thrown out of the synagogue. They avoided admitting what Jesus had done, so they said “We don’t know how he can see now or who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is of age” (20-21). The man’s parents were blinded by fear.

So far we saw the groups of spiritual blind people because of skeptical mind, legalism and fear. Now Let’s see the former blind man. While he was facing persecution from religious leaders, we can see how God’s work is being displayed in him, in other words, how he is glorifying God through his testimony. During the long conversation with religious leaders, there is progressive development the title of Jesus when he called Jesus.

In verse 11, he said a man who is called Jesus, and that is all that the blind man knows about Jesus. In verse 17, He is going to realize that He is a prophet, and verse 33 he admitted He is a man from God. Finally, he confessed Jesus as the Son of Man and called Lord and worshiped him. We wonder how he can make spiritual growth? Did Jesus give “some hints” to him? No, as we can see, Jesus was one step behind from him when he was facing rejections. This man was not afraid of confessing who Jesus was. He was not afraid of man in spite of hardship. Let’s look at verse 25. “He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”.

He has never seen Jesus before, but he remembered only one thing Jesus had done for him. Because of this marvelous grace from Jesus, he could give a beautiful testimony to people who refused to believe in Jesus. In contrast, the religious leaders have seen Jesus, and many of the miracles, however, they refuse to know who Jesus is. They only have lots of head knowledge about God but they don’t have grace of God in their hearts. They thought they had spiritual insight, however, it was nothing but their spiritual pride. The former blind man was much better than them in Jesus. Those who humble themselves and admit they are spiritual blind, Jesus can help them to open their spiritual eyes. But those who claim to see and reject Jesus remain in their spiritual blind.

Sometimes we feel like we don’t have enough bible knowledge to tell someone who Jesus is. When we see today’s passage, the blind man told only one thing what Jesus had done for him rather than answer every objection. This is a good example how we can share our faith with others. I believe we all have at least one God’s grace we experienced. Most of all it is amazing God’s grace that we can see Jesus as our savior who has saved us from our sins -This is one thing we know and I know. I pray that we are able to share our faith and our work of salvation from Jesus with spiritually blind people around us.

**[Conclusion]**

In today’s passage, Jesus opened the eyes of the physically blind, like prophet Isaiah prophesied that “In that day out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see (Isa 29:18)”. Jesus also opened his spiritual eyes, so that he could confess his faith and worshiped him. He was no longer walk in darkness, and had the light of life (John 8:12).

Let’s think about our conference theme again. Who Jesus is. He is the light of the world. He shines us when we are in the darkness. He made us to live for the glory of God alone. We are truly happy when the work of God is displayed through us, no matter what our human condition. I believe God is able to make us better through hardship we are experiencing now, so don’t’ be disappointed with God, and don’t blame other people and even God. Instead, we must have a clear purpose of life to glorify God. I earnestly pray that we never forget Jesus’ love - his suffering and death on the cross for our salvation. And we may share Jesus’ love with many spiritual blind people around us in family, school, work and campuses.