

Life Group Notes 1/08/2023
Mark Warren John's Gospel Week 9

If you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. -Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 1/8, John 9. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease.

At the end of the message notes, page 6, I have made footnotes (*) to help dig deeper into some of the people and events in this passage. *These notes are offered to enhance understanding, and are not designed to complicate discussions in life group.* This week I covered:

1. On the Pool of Siloam.
 2. On getting put out of the Synagogue.
 3. On the Greek word "worship."
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Mark begins by saying, "We begin the New Year thinking we need to get all these things in order...which is good, but...First and foremost, we need Jesus at the center of everything we're doing. When we don't have Jesus, then we can kind of get ourselves off track a little bit." **Have you discussed priorities with anybody this year? Describe the conversation. How**

did Life Group fit into that discussion? What can this group do to help? Are you fasting? How is it going? (Feel free not to answer.)

Is it possible to be "too smart for our own good?" What does that even mean? What has our culture said about this? How is the mind best trained? Look up 1 Corinthians 8:1: ¹Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²The one who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.... **What is Paul saying? Is it bad to have knowledge? How does love edify? What does love seek to do? Look at 1 Corinthians 14³But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification, encouragement, and comfort. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. **How does knowledge "puff up?" How does love build up? Why is the goal the key to recognizing love?** Pastor Mark talks about "people vs. ideas." **How is "getting stuck on ideas" an impediment to reaching people? Do you understand? Explain. Do you have a testimony?** He says, "The church has been very judgmental, because they do not lead with the love, but they lead with the theology, and the theology doesn't care who the 'who' is, the person God placed in front of you, hurting and broken and in need, so that one whom God seeks leaves more broken and hurt than when he came." **Has this happened to you? Do you have a testimony from either angle?****

Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind

¹Now as Jesus was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth, ²and His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God would be displayed in him. ⁴While it is daytime, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶When Jesus had said this, He spit on the ground, made some mud, and applied it to the man's eyes. ⁷Then He told him, "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came back seeing.

1. Narrate what you just read.
2. What is your response when you see a blind person?
3. What was that of the disciples? What is their assumption?
4. Is their question reasonable? (Take the time, but not too much time!)
5. So...is there sin involved in **any** way in the man's blindness?
6. What have we learned from this? Is personal sin always the reason for personal affliction? Have you ever seen Christians blame the afflicted for their affliction?
7. What are "the works of God" and how are they displayed?
8. React to this statement: "The man was born blind so that John could write about it, and we could discuss his blindness tonight."
9. If Jesus is the light of the World, when is this "daytime" he talks about? What works happen in the daytime?
10. When is this "nighttime?"

11. Can you explain why miracles are less frequent today? Did Jesus predict this? What works do not happen in the nighttime? What do you need to see the miracles?
12. Why spit and mud? Watch this happen in your mind's eye. What are your thoughts? Did Jesus have to do the spit and the mud for the man to see?
13. He sends him to the Pool of Siloam to wash. Why is that appropriate? What happens when one man spits on another? (See the footnote on the Pool of Siloam.)
14. Who else is "the light of the world?" When does the day break, so that miracles can happen again? Why should the church be filled with hope that the days of miracles shall return? If Jesus asked us to be salt and light, what can we expect as we reach out to the blind?
15. Pastor Mark says, "I'm working for the kingdom as I go to work." What will your work produce?

*8*At this, his neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging began to ask, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"

*9*Some claimed that he was, but others said, "No, he just looks like him."
But the man kept saying, "I am the one."

10"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.

*11*He answered, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and anointed my eyes, and He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and received my sight."

12"Where is He?" they asked.

"I do not know," he answered.

1. Who are the first to respond? Who are his neighbors? What would they have done for a living?
2. What is their response? Characterize their response with an adjective.
3. Why would the formerly blind man not know where Jesus is?

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

*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 his eyes was a Sabbath. *15*So the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.

The man answered, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see."

*16*Because of this, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath."

But others said, "How can a sinful man perform such signs?"

And there was division among them. *17*So once again they asked the man who had been blind, "What do you say about Him, since it was your eyes He opened?"

"He is a prophet," the man replied.

1. Who brought the man to the Pharisees? Why, do you think?
2. Why does the day being the Sabbath play a role in this narrative?
3. What was the initial reaction of the Pharisees?
4. What is their judgment when they discover how Jesus healed the man? What did Jesus do to "break the Sabbath?" Is making mud with spit "work"?
5. Answer the question, "How can a sinful man perform such signs?" What is the assumption concerning sin and healing?
6. Why did the Pharisees ask the man what he thought? What is their intent?

7. Pastor Mark says, "Jesus saw this man and He saw his need, and with compassion, he healed him." Explain why Jesus healed. Did He need to prove Himself to anybody? Did the man need Jesus? What does Jesus' compassion always prove?
8. Mark says, "The religious people wanted Jesus to 'observe God's Law' (on their terms—The Scribe), and ignore the man's needs." Discuss this important contrast in terms of Jesus' priorities vs. the Pharisees priorities. Could the Pharisees ever have healed the blind man? How do you know?

*18*The Jews still did not believe that the man had been blind and had received his sight until they summoned his parents *19*and asked, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? So how is it that he can now see?"

*20*His parents answered, "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. *21*But how he can now see or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself."

*22*His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews. For the Jews had already determined that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. *23*That was why his parents said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

*24*So a second time they called for the man who had been blind and said, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

*25*He answered, "Whether He is a sinner I do not know. There is one thing I do know: I was blind, but now I see!"

26"What did He do to you?" they asked. "How did He open your eyes?"

*27*He replied, "I already told you, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

*28*Then they heaped insults on him and said, "You are His disciple; we are disciples of Moses. *29*We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this man is from."

30"That is remarkable indeed!" the man said. "You do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. *31*We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does listen to the one who worships Him and does His will. *32*Never before has anyone heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. *33*If this man were not from God, He could do no such thing."

*34*They replied, "You were born in utter sin, and you are instructing us?" And they threw him out.

1. Narrate in your own words what you just read.
2. How is it possible that the Jews "still did not believe?" What handicap is on display here?
3. Why bring in the parents when the man is of age?
4. Why would the parents be afraid of the Jews?
5. Describe the blind man's response to the Jews questions. What strikes you? Where does he get his courage from? How does the simplicity of his answers serve to dissolve the Pharisees attack on him?
6. How fun is this answer: "Do you also want to become his disciples?" Describe the Pharisees response to this statement.

7. Does this statement, "Never before has anyone heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do no such thing," remind you of Nicodemus in chapter three? Who is the blind man's teacher? Is he born again?
8. "I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now, I see." Mark relates the blind man's experience to our own, where Jesus found us and moved upon us with compassion. How does it relate? What does He do first? Teach the Law? Or Love?

Spiritual Blindness

*35*When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, He found the man and said, *"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*

36"Who is He, Sir?" he replied. "Tell me so that I may believe in Him."

37"You have already seen Him," Jesus answered. "He is the One speaking with you."

38"Lord, I believe," he said. And he worshiped Jesus.

*39*Then Jesus declared, *"For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind may see and those who see may become blind."*

*40*Some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard this, and they asked Him, "Are we blind too?"

41"If you were blind," Jesus replied, "you would not be guilty of sin. But since you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

1. Is the blind man better off or worse off, being "thrown out?" Why? In what way?
2. Why doesn't the man recognize Jesus until now?
3. Don't miss this: Why is this statement significant, "And he ***worshiped** Him?"
4. Look at Jesus' words in verse 39. Compare to what Jesus told Nicodemus in chapter 3: *17*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. *18*Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. How does He come for judgment, but not to condemn? Where does the condemnation come from? Look at Jesus' last answer to the Pharisees in verse 41. How does this confirm what Jesus told Nicodemus in 3: *19*And this is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. *20*Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. *21*But whoever practices the truth comes into the Light, so that it may be seen clearly that what he has done has been accomplished in God."
5. How does the Holy Spirit take Jesus' love and cause us to grow...leading with love and compassion on behalf of the "who" whom Jesus seeks? Do you know anyone who has turned away from compassion? If so, was that compassion as relentless as Christ's compassion?
6. Mark prays that our spiritual eyes and ears become more sensitive to the people around us, that the knowledge of God's word transcend a theological exercise to become our approach to His heart and His love become our motivation unto compassion for our neighbors. Respond.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's notes:

- 1. On the pool of Siloam.** One of the most rewarding results of studying the Bible is the continuous discovery of sites mentioned in the Bible that archaeology continues to uncover and confirm. The Pool of Siloam, buried in 70 A.D. by the Romans, was re-discovered in 2004, and continues to be excavated. Most recently, it has been announced that this site will be open to the public in 2023. [Where Is the Original Siloam Pool from the Bible? - Biblical Archaeology Society](#)
According to Wikipedia, "The Pool of Siloam" refers to a number of [rock-cut](#) pools on the southern slope of the [Wadi Hilweh](#), considered by some archaeologists to be the original site of [Jerusalem](#), located outside the walls of the [Old City](#) to the southeast. The pools were fed by the waters of the [Gihon Spring](#), carried there by the [Siloam Tunnel](#).^{[1][2]} The Lower Pool or "Old Pool" was historically known as *Birket el Hamra*, literally "the red pool". The Talmud teaches that this was the traditional entry into Jerusalem for those coming on pilgrimage. Ritual cleansing would happen at the lower pool, and then pilgrims would proceed up to the Temple Mount. Jesus sent the blind man to cleanse himself, probably in the lower pool. It's also interesting to note that Jesus made the blind man ritually unclean by applying his saliva to the man's eyes. One's own bodily fluid, like spit, would make another unclean.
- 2. On getting "put out of the synagogue."** If you have Roman Catholicism in your background, you will be able to relate to this practice. Excommunication means to expel one from further fellowship and union and to forbid access to communion, the rites and rituals of the church. A Jew that is put out is treated as a Gentile, and will never be allowed in to the Temple, the Synagogue or any place that is ritually clean. He has been pronounced ritually unclean.
- 3. On the blind man worshipping Jesus:** The Greek word used here for worship is *προσκυνέω* *proskuneo*, which, significantly, means "to go down on one's knees to do obeisance to, to worship. Properly, it's the practice of prostrating before a superior, to adore on one's knees. No man will ever worship another man, and Christians were first martyred for refusing to *proskuneo* before Caesar or a statue thereof. When the New Testament depicts people worshipping Jesus and Him accepting and allowing it, it's highlighting His undeniable, divine nature. These are moments that could be overlooked, but should not be for their significance.