

*As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2His 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; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. 4We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 7saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.*

*8The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 12They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."*

*13They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." 16Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 17So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." 18The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." 25He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. 32Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.*

*35Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." 37Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." 38He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.*

*39Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." 40Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" 41Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.*

I want to have it all and Jesus too.

Nice looking clothes, a good car, and Jesus too.

Keeping up with everything that is popular on TV and in the movies and Jesus too.

Being a fan of the Indians and the Cavs and the Browns and Ohio State and Jesus too.

Having a nice home and enough money to buy the things that will furnish it and Jesus too.

Being safe and knowing that the chaos that is apparent in the inner city will never touch me and having Jesus too.

Making sure that I will have the very best health care for myself no matter what happens to the left behind ones and the can't pay their own way ones and having Jesus there for me too.

Knowing that I will have a secure retirement so that even if things get tough for others that Sue and I will have enough to go see our kids and enjoy our later years – yes I want all of that and Jesus too.

I want Jesus there for me – free – without any cost to me or to my lifestyle. That is my dream. But we just heard the story of a man who learned the cost of following Jesus.

At first encountering Jesus was a good deal for him. He had been blind since birth – Jesus came to him and spit on the ground and mixed a paste of mud that he put on the man's eyes and told him to go wash in the pool named Siloam. And he did and he could see.

Now Jesus could have done all of this for him on a Wednesday or a Thursday – God had made no rules about those days. But Jesus did it on a Saturday – the Sabbath – the very day God had forbidden work for God's people. This was not just some minor rule but one of the Ten Commandments that Jesus had broken for his kneading that mud and placing the mud on the man's eyes was working on the Sabbath. For any observant Jewish person this was a problem – how could Jesus be from God if Jesus broke one of God's commandments. So Pharisees came to make it clear that this man Jesus could not be from God.

But the man who had been blind knew the blessing of sight Jesus had given him so he would not turn his back on Jesus. It cost him – the Pharisees drove him out.

Behind the gospel writer John's telling us this story was the situation for Christians in his time about sixty years after Jesus resurrection. For at first Christians were part of the Jewish faith – Christians worshipped in the temple on the Sabbath and then on Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection that came to be known as the Lord's Day Christians gathered to share the meal of bread and wine remembering Jesus last meal with his disciples. In those first days Christians remained part of the Jewish people – welcome at the local synagogues where people worshipping each Sabbath. But by the time John's gospel was written those who worshipped Jesus had been driven out of the synagogue. The complicated part of this was that the Jewish faith was a recognized and protected faith in the Roman Empire – the Christian faith was not at that time. Christians who were not part of the synagogue were persecuted and often killed by Roman officials for taking part in an illegal faith. All of this is behind John telling us that they drove the man who had been blind out.

One more time, Jesus came to him – received him, taught him. And this man for the first time worshipped Jesus. Though believing in Jesus cost him being part of the community he had known all his life he had joy in Jesus. He had to choose between belonging to Jesus and having all the rest.

The world we live in has changed in the 24 years I have been here as a pastor. It used to be that Sunday mornings were off limits to children's activities – the only reason families had for not coming to worship was sleeping in or that they were out of town. But now sports and other activities are claiming more and more of families' time. Can people have all that the culture offers and have Jesus too? When it comes to using our time we have to choose.

As I near retirement I think of all the choices that will lie ahead for me. Will I build my life around my pleasure? Or will I volunteer for responsibilities that will cost me time with my children and grandchildren? I am sure Jesus does not want me to put my enjoyment right in the center but I can see that will be a great temptation. The scriptures seem to say that I cannot have it all and Jesus too. Which will I choose?

And what about money? Will anxiety cause me to store up more and more for an uncertain tomorrow or will faith in Jesus free me to give and to share.

One thing I am sure of we all have to choose. We will not be sorry if we choose Jesus. Amen.

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