

Theme: God's work revealed

What's a mirage? Usually something someone sees in the desert when longing for water. Off in the distance, there is a pond, a small stream, water, so the person runs to it and diving in, realizes it's sand. Sometimes, they give way to the mirage and dig frantically at sand hoping beyond desperation to find something in there. Really, what is it? Heat waves radiating off the ground distorting visual perception of things close to the horizon at a distance. A mirage is nothing, unless the person acts like it's something. There are all manner of mirages of thought also, they are everywhere really. What do we think we see, think we know, hurry to excitedly, but find only sand? Do we keep digging at endless sand hoping for water? John shows us again how Jesus uses water to talk about something greater, something deeper. Jesus is going to set up an interaction and situation using water to open the eyes of a man and in doing so will also open the eyes of his followers to see through the mirages we allow to be something, and see him, the Light, the Living Water, and Savior instead!

"As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth (very important to set the basis for the disciples' mirage type assumption) ² His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'" Thinking, "Naturally. Right, Jesus? Exodus. Third and fourth generation type stuff!" They forgot about Ezekiel 18, "The soul who sins is the one who will die." Jumping to the more important way to think, a deeper and better way to think, Jesus said, *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."* This is the greater thing to think of, the work of God and Jesus came to do it, to do it right now, in fact, he explained to his disciples while it's day! And then Jesus said a profound thing, a stamp of divinity over what he was saying and going to do, *"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* Then he, the Light of the world, Lord Jesus, spat on the dirt to make mud. He put the mud and put it on the man's eyes telling him to go wash it off in the pool of Siloam. The man did. The man returned seeing.

Why all these steps? The spit, the mud, the putting on the eyes, the washing in the pool? After walking through town with mud on eyes and, he was splashing water in his face with some mud still on his cheeks, when he opened eyes after washing and was actually seeing! "I can see!!!!" he had to have shouted out! Him seeing would have caused a scene! He was looking around frantically at all the colors, highlights, shadows, taking it all in.

Word of the healing spread quickly, people were shocked, especially those who knew that this man was blind from birth. And, as things do, wound up before the Pharisees who liked to get to the bottom of things, especially when things occurred on the Sabbath and who is or who isn't observing it! The healing occurred on the Sabbath. Jesus made mud, masonry work, on the day for no work. Jesus had done wrong by doing good and honoring the Sabbath and this man and his parents were put on trial for it. He and his parents said the same thing, *"He put mud on my eyes, and I washed and now I see."* (John 9:15) They discussed it and were split about whether or not the man who healed him was a sinner because he, on the one hand dishonored the Sabbath, but on the other, he gave sight! They asked the formerly blind man to settle their dispute. *"The man replied, 'He is a prophet.'"* (John 9:17b) What else did they expect him to say? In his scripturally based thinking, who else could make him see? Couldn't they see that?? They reacted in rage, *"You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" and they threw him out.*" (John 9:34) The Pharisees had an answer for the disciples' question!

Ouch. Joy turned sour. In blindness, they lost sight of the truth that all are alike under sin forgetting they were born in it also. Why this rage and not guidance? They were offended, shocked by the impact of his few but consistently potent words. In acclaiming his healer a prophet, he becomes God's

prophet and like so many before him experienced the lashing out of people's sinful natures for saying truth. They expelled him. He knew the truth, but that still had to have hurt. Then he heard a familiar voice, the man who told him to wash, cutting right to the chase, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" (John 9:35) "What do you believe? Son of Man. You believe him? "Who is he so I can believe?" "*You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.*" (John 9:37) You have seen. "Brother, you saw me already. You believed. Now, you because of your faith in me, you look at me and talk with the Savior for whom you hoped." Do you think this man saw the glory of the Lord right then? Did the disciples?

What about us? What's Paul say? "If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you'll be saved." This man did that as the response the Holy Spirit gives to God's children when they know that the Almighty God has indeed kept his promises which mean that sins are gone and sinners saved. This man saw that and worshiped Jesus. You see that and do too! Don't let the glory of what your faith sees fade so you don't cherish it as you once did, but always view it a treasure to the level that you can't not be constantly praising your Lord Jesus for it because even though you have not seen him, you believe in him and love him and are filled with inexpressible joy because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

Jesus accomplished this salvation and gives it to you. God worked it in him for you on the cross when he made you his own, that's God's judgment over you. You are his forgiven and holy person who is saved and will live forever in eternity. This judgment based on redemption from Jesus' cross and empty grave is how God made you to be in and to see the world. No matter the situation, no matter the people in the situation, an infinite number of potential scenarios, your eyes have been opened by the powerful and merciful God to see them as opportunities to witness his good, gracious, and merciful work. Even if the situation is dire, tough, sad, whatever, you can hope, sincerely, because you see Jesus and know that for his sake, God's work will be revealed in it and you will find yourself so pleasantly surprised in whom, from where, and how God chooses to reveal his gracious work. Pray all the more that God would use you to work his gracious will for others. Jesus answers that prayer, even if it's for you to be a display of what his forgiving love overcomes. Shine that light, forgiven people of God. Amen.