

Sunday Morning Message

November 11, 2018

Who Did Sin?

Topics – suffering; sin; the man born blind

Text – John 9

Congregational Reading – John 9:1 - 3

Introduction

Read through all of chapter nine:

- I The Cause of the Man's Condition Considered (vs. 1 – 5)
- II The Cure for the Man's Condition Carried Out (vs. 6 – 7)
- III The Conversations Regarding the Man's Cure (vs. 8 – 23)
 - A The Curiosity of the People (vs. 8 – 13)
 - B The Cross-examination of the Pharisees (vs. 14 – 17)
 - C The Careful Answer of His Parents (vs. 18 – 23)
- IV The Casting Out of the Cured Man from the Church (Synagogue - vs. 24 – 34)

Notice in v. 34, the Pharisees reveal their feelings about why the man born blind. It was because of sin. However, these Pharisees did not realize that they too were born in sin, and had a worse case of blindness than this man who was cured. They were spiritually blind, and their pride was keeping them from having their eyes opened.

- V The Spiritual Conversion of the Cured Man (vs. 35 – 38)
- VI The Hardened Condition of the Critical Men (vs. 39 – 41)

Jesus stated that these men who claimed to be spiritually enlightened were really the ones who were blind.

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matthew 13:15)

Transition

The main thrust of this morning's message will be from the first part of this story, where the disciples were considering the cause for the man's blindness. (vs. 1 – 5) Remember also that the Pharisees believed that this blind man was "altogether born in sins." (v. 34)

Often in Bible times, human suffering was attributed to some type of sin. Jesus disciples must have reasoned that since the man was born with the condition, it must have been caused by the sin of his parents. It has to be somebody's fault, right? You may recall the Old Testament

story of Job. Job's friends thought the same thing about all of his problems. "It must be your fault Job! You must have done something to cause it." Jesus refutes this argument and states that in this case, the man's blindness was not caused by any particular sin committed by either the blind man or his parents, but rather that this blind man's condition and subsequent healing would be used to glorify God and "manifest" or reveal His works.

This story does bring up some interesting questions regarding human suffering. Did God create it? And, if He is a loving and powerful God, why would He allow it to continue? The disciples, and even the Pharisees in John 9, thought that this man's suffering was specifically caused as the result of a particular person's sin. Though Jesus corrects their logic regarding this particular case of blindness, He does not here address the subject of the root causes of human suffering in general. The fact is that human suffering is caused by sin. The Pharisees were actually right, sort of. The curse of sin upon the world is behind all of the pain and misery that we are experiencing. Had sin not come into the world, there would be no disease or death. *The wages of sin is death.* (Romans 6:23a) We live in a sin cursed world, and the evidences of the decay caused by sin are everywhere.

Sin started the process of decay, disease, and death in the world. Look around you. Everything is decaying, and every living thing will die. This is all the result of sin, and sin came because God gave man a free will. God did not choose sin for man, but God did give man a choice, and man unfortunately chose poorly. And, to complicate matters further, man continues to make more sinful choices that adds to problem and accelerates the decline. So, in answer to the question: who did sin? The answer is "Adam and Eve did," but the answer is also "I did." I didn't cause all of the problems with the sinful world around me, but unfortunately, I have at times, contributed to it because of my own sinful actions. However, even in the midst of a sin-cursed world, God can be greatly glorified, and his marvelous works will be manifested for the world to see.

For many years, we had a man who was born blind attending our church. He was a great guy, and though he was blind, he was also extremely gifted. He could play the piano and organ beautifully, and he also had literally hundreds of Bible passages committed to memory. When people saw this man, their attention may at first have been drawn to his blindness, but eventually they could not miss the fact that God was using him in an awesome way. This man's life glorified the Lord greatly. God's works were made manifest in his life.

You and I can do the same thing in this imperfect and sometimes painful world that we live in. Don't let the results of sin keep you from finding ways to manifest God's grace and glory. We can glorify God and show the world his amazing and supernatural grace even through our times of suffering.

Illustration – The Apostle Paul asked for his thorn (possibly eye trouble) to be removed.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

- 1 Look for ways to glorify God – make God look good – through your suffering. How? By continuing to love and praise Him, even when you are going through great difficulty. No matter how bad things may get in your life, you are doing better than you deserve. Keep an upward and outward focus, rather than an inward one.

Illustrate – Acts 16 - Paul and Silas are in jail, and they had been beaten with “many stripes.” Yet, *“at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”* (Acts 16:25) Not only did the prisoners hear it, but the jailor and his family heard it also, and later on that night they all were gloriously saved.

- 2 Find strength from the Word of God and the People of God when you are suffering.
- 3 Look for people who you can help when you are going through something yourself.

Illustration – Dr. Gray counselled a woman with depression to bake cookies for somebody else.

- 4 Stay as busy as you can. People who have too much time on their hands tend to dwell on their problems, which will make them seem worse.
- 5 Look for ways to relieve the suffering of others around you. Jesus healed the blind man. You and I will probably not be able to heal people, but there are many tangible ways that we can be a blessing to people who are suffering.

We can really pray for them.

We can be a help to them.

Illustration – Mrs. Hand used to head up a ministry here at the church that provided meals to families who were going through difficulties.

Maybe you could give a financial gift to someone who is struggling financially.

Maybe you could just visit with somebody and be a friend to them.

Sometimes just a phone call or a text message can be a blessing.

Life can be very tough at times, but God can use us to make life in this sin-cursed world a little bit easier for people who are hurting.

Conclusion

In answer to the disciples question, “who did sin?” The answer is your sin, my sin, Adam’s sin, just sin period. The fact is that the curse of sin on this world is a very painful reality for all of us. We are not going to get out of here without experiencing some pain and heartache. It’s the “new normal” for this world. But, we can help each other get through life’s difficulties, and we can also glorify God through them. The whole reason that we are here is to make God look good, and we often can shine more light on God through the dark times of life.

This earth is not Heaven. Heaven is coming soon for all of us who are saved. Only then will the effects of sin be gone forever. But while we are still here, let’s find way to manifest the works of God through life’s difficulties, and even through death.