Over the last couple of weeks, we’ve been reading about a number of individuals who had undergone major faith transformation and spiritual healing. We saw how Nicodemus overcame his personal faith struggle that warrants him to only come to meet Jesus in the middle of the night, when no one else was watching. Eventually he became someone who stood tall as an advocate for Jesus, even though he was out voiced by the majority. Last week, we read about the Samaritan woman-at-the-well, who overcame a barrage of social stereotypes and barriers by offering Jesus a cold drink of water from the well. In return, Jesus offered the woman something that was much more desirable – a spiritual drink that would satisfy her thirst for a lifetime. Like many of us, both Nicodemus and the woman at the well had their shares of personal challenges and obstacles to overcome both physically and spiritually.

 Today we’ve come upon another character whose life had also undergone major transformation through Jesus. Like the “woman-at-the-well”, this young blind man was never identified by name, for whatever reason. Perhaps it was the gospel writer’s intention for us to focus on what God was actually doing in one’s life and NOT the individual alone.

 Jesus and His disciples came upon this young man who was blind since child birth. Perhaps he was begging alongside the street because that was probably all one could do when one has a disability. As the disciples came across this blind man, they stopped and asked Jesus,***“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*** Then Jesus replied, ***“neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s work might be revealed in him.”***  Jesus then spat on the ground and made some mud with his saliva. He put the mud on the blind man’s eyes and instructed him to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash himself, so this way he would see again. The blind man did exactly what Jesus had instructed him to do because he had faith in Jesus. Even though he was blind physically, he saw something in Jesus that many others did not.

 Upon his return, everyone was amazed that this blind man was able to see for the very first time in his life. But instead of rejoicing and celebrating with him for his newfound sight, they deflected and shifted the focus onto Jesus. “*What happened? By what authority is he doing all of this? How could this all be done on a Sabbath day?”*

 As you could imagine, the scene caused quite a bit of chaos and attracted a large crowd. Nobody seemed to know what was going on. So they came to the blind man’s parents inquiring about their son’s past. Fearing of being excommunicated from the synagogue, the parents simply responded, *“Ask him, he is of age. He will speak for himself.”[[1]](#footnote-1)*

Almost everybody wanted to distance themselves from this blind man, including his own parents. Everybody seemed to be missing the whole point of what was actually happening. **They only saw what we humanly see and failed to see the greater plan that God had in place.**

 From this story, we can see that once again, Jesus revealed His true identity to those who are least anticipated, the least charming or the least imaginable to be witnesses of God’s Kingdom. As Jesus 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.”***

Jesus was more concerned about the spiritual blindness of our hearts than the physical blindness of our eyes. Too often, we too have been blind sighted and failed to realize what God is actively doing all around us. We’ve wandered aimlessly through the wilderness for too long searching for our own identity and our calling. We’ve failed to acknowledge the presence and the leading of the Holy Spirit that is already among us at work in our lives. **Even thought our physical blindness may not be a sin but our spiritual blindness IS!**

As the LORD spoke to the prophet Samuel when he was sent by the LORD to anoint the young boy David as the next king over Israel, *“****The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”[[2]](#footnote-2)*** God looks upon our inner spiritual well-being whereas we look upon our outward physical appearance.

 Furthermore, we notice that it wasn’t the blind man who was going around “searching” for Jesus, but instead it was Jesus who came and met him right where he was, addressing his needs not only physically but spiritually as well. The blind man took a huge step of faith by following through with what he was told in order to be healed.  **Through this miracle of healing, the blind man received a greater miracle of faith that bolster his courage to proclaim the Good News of God’s grace and mercy.**  This story also challenges us to set our priorities straight. Are we more concerned about the logistics and the “hows” over the purpose and meaning of the “whys”? Now, don’t get me wrong, this does not mean that we should forget about obeying the laws that God has placed upon us and that we are free to do whatever we want. Are we more interested in straightly observing the law when God’s grace and mercy are called upon for healing and reconciliation? **Isn’t our God more willing to forgive and be merciful than we are sometimes to ourselves?**

 Our God is in the business of forgiveness and renewal. God is always ready to give us a 2nd chance in life. Ultimately all of us must stand before God and be ready to testify for our belief, what we’ve done and also for what we’ve failed or neglected to do. We must be ready to proclaim what God has done for us in our lives as a living testimony of our faith.

 **The blind-man had faith and a vision of the heart in God. He demonstrated the cunning ability by overcoming his physical challenges as God’s blessings to him.** He had faith that the Light of the World will shine before him and show him the way that he must go and be healed. Even though he was not able to see physically, he saw able to see God spiritually in his heart.

 Like the woman-at-the-well, the blind man’s transformation moment didn’t come overnight, but rather through a gradual process. He went from seeing “**the man they call Jesus**” (v.11), to calling Jesus as a **prophet** (v.17), to recognizing that **he must be from God** (v.33), and then eventually addressing Jesus as “**LORD**” and bowing down to worship him. These were the sequential stages of faith of the blind man….all this from a man who has no ability to see physically but not spiritually. He was blind but now he sees.

 What about our sequences of faith? How has God led us up until now that shapes our faith and defines who we are as sons and daughters of Abraham and fulfillment of God’s promises?

 A few years ago, I met a pastor at a conference. His name is Brian and he was an Associate Pastor in a church out in California. Brian was the keynote speaker at that conference. I’ve never met or heard Brian speak before. I’ve only heard some positive recommendations about his messages and some of the books that he has written. He has also done a lot of public speaking engagements, seminars for various age groups and in all over the country.

 But what impressed me the most about Brian was not so much of his personal achievement or giftedness in ministry. I was impressed by Brian’s personal testimony of how he got to where he is today – the miracle of transformation that took place in Brian’s life up until now. You see, Brian was born with a rare disease that affected his eyesight. Since childbirth his vision has slowly been deteriorating. About 15 years ago, he was diagnosed to be clinically blind. However, that did not discourage him one single bit. As a matter of fact, his faith grew stronger because of his physical challenges. It motivated him even more to fulfill his life-long ambition and passion to serve God in ministry.

**Despite his physical challenges, Brian accepted his limitations as God’s blessings to him, in order that God’s miracles may be worked through him.** Brian could basically do whatever he wants, including cooking, typing, reading, surfing on the Internet/e-mails…etc. Wherever he went, he was always accompanied by his guide-dog, Lansing.

 Each morning Brian counted God’s blessings. He has dedicated his life for God and pursued his life-long ambition in full-time ministry. All along, Brian knew that God has a special purpose set aside for him in God’s ministry and in his life. Despite his visual impairment, Brian lives his life with great joy and contentment knowing that God is using him for God’s glory, and using his disability as a “bridge” in connecting with others.

 Through the personal testimonies that we’ve seen in Brian, Nicodemus, the woman-at-the-well, and the young blind man whom we read today, we know that God works in a mysterious and miraculous way. We may not necessarily need to know every detail about our future, but we do know that we can always trust and count on God being there with us, in spite of whatever challenges, trials and circumstances.

 Friends, during this season of Lent, may we sustain our faith journey through the wilderness of life by fixing our eyes and our hopes upon the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly our faith will be shaken and tested, but trust that God will stand by us and guide us through the Light of Christ. Ultimately we shall stand to bear witness to God’s work of healing and miracles in our lives.

As the Apostle Peter reminded us that we must, “*always be ready to make our defense to anyone who demands from us an accounting for the hope that is in us; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.[[3]](#footnote-3)* In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *John 9:21* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *I Samuel 16:7* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *1 Peter 3:15-16* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)