

2020. 9.20.

John9:1-7,16,25,32,33,35-38

By Yoko Lee in Tokyo

The work of God in his life

I thought that I couldn't see you anymore after 2, 3 months, but it was somewhat lucky and thankful that I can see you and message to you because the delaying due to Covid19. And while I prepare the messages for you, thankfully I can put my thoughts and belief together.

When we come back home to our apartment at night, it is very dark so that we can see nothing. But as soon as we turn on the light, the darkness suddenly disappears. The same way, Gospel John says that Jesus is the light in the world which is in the darkness. We can say that it is the darkness that we experience all sufferings, illness, failure and nature disaster and so on. According to Rome 6:23, the wages of sin is death. We can understand that we all die because of our sin and all suffering comes from death. The Bible teaches that we can't save ourselves, but only Jesus Christ who has come as the light of the world can.

Especially today's text is an amazing encounter with the blind and Jesus. There are other stories of the blind who was healed by Jesus, but this of John is very long. It seems that John wanted to emphasize Jesus who is the light in the world of darkness. Recently we don't call the blind *Mojin* in Japanese as people who lose their sight and who is a visually challenged person because it is a discriminatory language. But I will simply saying the blind as *Mojin* according to the Bible in Japanese. I hope you all can understand.

Look at verse 1, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. He grew up as a beggar. As you know, there was a person who is shouting like this, "The son of David! Mercy on me!" in another gospel. But differently he didn't shout aloud even though the crowd made noise because of Jesus coming. It seems that he already lost hope to his life because of his long suffering. But Jesus has noticed him. Jesus understands without any questions how much he has suffered for his whole life.

At that moment, the disciples asked Jesus one thing that they wanted to know long before. Look at verse 2, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Wow, how mean that question was! Without any consideration to the blind man, they straightly asked the reason why he has been suffering in front of him. The blind must have been listening to their discussion in sadness. Because he has grew up to listen to this repeatedly, “how pity he is, is this caused by his parents sin? No, is that because of his own sin?” There are few who give him their compassion. This is why they believe that the blind is punished by God because of their parents and their own sin (from the Study Bible, new version). We realize that this issue is similar to the time that the law of old Eugenic Protection Act was applied until 1996. This was a bad law to force the disability not to have any children. It was changed to the new law in 1996.

In my case, when I was in trial, I remembered that I blamed my parents and myself. Many times, I also couldn't have received understanding from others. Now I know that nobody understands and finds the reason of human's suffering. We all puzzle when we meet to unreasonable trial.

But what was Jesus answer? Look at verse 3. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned.” All people surprised to Jesus' answer. It was a perfectly different thinking from their old traditional one. Especially Asians find the answer to solve their suffering, which is ‘ In ga oo ho ’ which means that they get what they deserved, karmatic retribution in Buddhism. But sometimes we Christian also think in a wrong way like that. Pastor Yasuro Enomoto, who is as famous as Chiiroba sensei of the United Church of Christ in Japan, said firmly ‘ in ga oo ho ’ is just our ideal thinking ,it is not real.

Let's see verse 3, how Jesus said. “ but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. Jesus teaches him how to live and for what he live. What is ‘ the work of God’? Look at verse 4. “ As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.” Day means that Jesus' mission publicly and night means Jesus' cross. Look at verse 5, Jesus also said that “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Jesus declares He is the light in the world. The light can expel the night in this sinful world. John 1:4, “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” Jesus solves the death which is result of sin and gives the eternal life to us. The work of God is that we tell this gospel to people to believe. Jesus wanted the blind to be appointed for the work of God.

Not too far from our memory, the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011, many of Christians went to volunteer in Fukushima. And they encouraged them with the Bible with this, 'Your suffering is for God's glory'. It was a correct answer but unfortunately it didn't work well. They made many complaints about what Christian has said. When I heard this, I thought that we human being can't solve the problem that people has suffered. Because the suffering we experience is very personal, special and meaningful.

C.S. Lewis demonstrated that human being can't solve their problem by themselves. Only the third party can solve the problem. That is God. When we solve our problem by God's way, we can be fully satisfied.

Now I want you to look at verse 4 once more. "the work of God might be displayed in his life, in the man who is blind from birth!" God's work is being displayed not to others, but to the blind man himself. It relates deeply to his own life personally. Jesus wanted to open his eyes and to meet Jesus personally and to receive eternal life. It is the most important thing for him to be saved more than anything else.

II Corinthians 8:6, " yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live." This is saying that we live for the Father God and the Lord Jesus. When we meet Jesus who is God creator and we can find the purpose of our life. Jesus wants to restore the life of a man blind from birth, so he can live his true life in the Father of God.

Look at verse 6 and 7. Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud with saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. And Jesus said "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam" So the man went and washed and came home seeing. He obeyed the word of Jesus and experienced the miracle. Rome 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." Sometimes it is hard to believe that Jesus is crucified for our sin and rose again from the death. But when we obey God's word, we come to believe the gospel and we can see the miracle and we will be saved.

He was really in full of joy. He saw the world for the first time. He felt how very bright this world was. On the contrary to his joy, the world was very mean. The religious leaders asked him to deny Jesus because they judged Jesus as a sinner.

But in verse 25, he replied like this, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” and look at verse 31, “We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.” He testified that Jesus is the right man who was sent by God, not a sinner. Not only he was healed his eyes, but also he came to open his spiritual eye sight. Look at verse 38, “Then the man said, Lord I believe,” and he worshiped him. He met Jesus as Lord savior. Look at verse 16, his powerful testimony made the religious leaders divided. As Jesus has declared that the work of God will be displayed in his life, it came true. When this blind man met Jesus, his life was totally changed and brought people to believe in Jesus.

Jeremiah 29:11-13, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

I thought I was harmed by someone and cursed my life during my suffering. Maybe the blind man was like me. But I found that God didn’t harm me, plan to give me hope and a future. When I understand this truth, I confessed that I blamed God and myself. Now I know what I need to do is to just worship Jesus and seek him every day. It is the real purpose and the image that God created in human being in the beginning.

At last, I would like to say about Mr. Shigeru Yokota who was a leader of the family association that rescues their family from North Korea. Including in Mr, Shigeru’s daughter Megumi, there are many people who were kidnapped by North Korea in Japan and even in South Korea. After he passed away 30thJan, 2020, many media broadcasted about him. Since his daughter was kidnapped by North Korea’s spies in 1977, he and his wife, Sakie had been looking for her for over 40 years. Thankfully his wife Sakie was baptized by a missionary in the following year in 1978. The reason of her baptism was that she was impressed about Job in the Old Testament. But it took a long time for Mr Shigeru to be baptized which was 3 years before he died. I think that Mr, Shigeru must have been struggling to find his trail’s meaning for long years. I imagined that he finally decided to be baptized after he had found God’s purpose and the meaning of his suffering in God and finally stand on his faith. Sadly he couldn’t see his beloved daughter while he had lived, but his movement could rescued several victims, Mrs Hitomi Soga and others from North Korea. Also his movement brought North Korea’s crime to light in the World.

I tried to see Mr. Shigeru's life on the life of the man who was blind from the birth. He lost any hope for over 40 years, but he met to Jesus and God's glory was displayed in his life to the world. And even his life gave an impression to me like one of a victim of crime. I learned that I have to keep hope until the end of my life in Lord Jesus.

Finally, let's read verse 3 together. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

Let's pray.