

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 22nd June 2008

Being Witnesses with Jesus – on the streets

John 9:1-9



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

This weeks, teaching sermon and notes are from Jeremy Ellis from the PBCI – The Pakistan Bible Correspondence Institute.

The blind man prompts a question from the disciples: whose sin caused this blindness? his or his parents? Jesus replies: It's not the result of sin. But it happened to display the work of God. Sometimes God allows trials and catastrophes, because at those times He has an opportunity to show His power and His glory.

Sin is not the only reason why trouble comes on people. Verses 4 & 5: "As long as it is day" – while there is the opportunity, we should do God's work. There's an urgency about God's work. "Night is coming" – once we die we can no longer work for God in this way. Therefore, let's not put off what God has given us to do.

Jesus said: "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5) Then there's a very clear demonstration of that truth, a clear sign that what he'd said was true. The man had been blind from birth (v.1), but suddenly he could see. His life had been changed dramatically. It was so amazing, so unbelievable, that some people questioned whether he really was the man who had been blind and used to beg! (v.8 & 9)

The passage goes on to show the confusion as the people and the Pharisees debated what had happened. Only God could open the eyes of someone born blind. But it was a Sabbath! Jesus had broken the rules. Jesus was upsetting the status quo. Who was he? God had intervened.

Primarily this incident is a healing, and a sign of who Jesus is, the Son of God. But I want to make some comments at a second level too. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4) People are spiritually blind. God needs to intervene and open their spiritual eyes so that they may see and believe. And more than ever I realise the importance of prayer. It's as though prayer is the 'key' to unlock situations.

"It is a mystery that our loving Father has somehow limited His omnipotence to teaming up with His redeemed people so that His actions in the world are inextricably linked with prayer." (Patrick Johnstone, Operation World) And that's why a number of people put together a 31-day Karachi Prayer Guide. We need to pray for God to go on intervening in people's lives. And to open spiritually blind eyes, bringing light and life – whether in Dorking or in Karachi.



Witness: questions to discuss

1. "Sometimes God allows trials and catastrophes, because at those times He has an opportunity to show His power and His glory." What's your reaction to this, in an age when many people make the seeking of comfort and pleasure a priority? (Consider also John 11:4 and Lazarus' sickness, and Romans 8:28)

2. "Let's not put off what God has given us to do." What is there that you or the church should be more urgent about?

3. "It is a mystery that our loving Father has somehow limited His omnipotence to teaming up with His redeemed people so that His actions in the world are inextricably linked with prayer." How does that make you feel about your own times of prayer? And what bearing does that have on what the church is doing in Dorking?