

Comedy and Horror

In the Bible

It is what it is: John 9 (The trial of the blind man)

He honestly thought they wanted what he got

The **s**tory **P**art **o**ne:

I love the saying “I see said the blind man.” I guess it’s an oxymoron. This story of Jesus confronting a blind man, and the blind man confronting the religious authorities is very interesting. The blind man could not see but after meeting Jesus he could. The religious authorities believed they could see God but when a Godly act appeared they could not see it: they were blind. This is a very funny story on so many levels, but of course there is a sad truth in here as well.

I believe we all have spiritual blindness. There are those who say they are in good standing with God. There are those who say they have what is called spiritual discernment. I witnessed a story some years ago of a spiritual woman attending a Bible based church. Those in the church loved to follow the Bible to the letter so they said. One day this woman stood up in the service and said she speaks for God. She told the church that they were blind and cold to the community surrounding them. Were they spiritually blind?

This church leadership gathered after the “Incident” and decided she did not speak for God because she did not follow procedure. Yet, she was bang on in her description of them. To this day they are a very cold church. My point is that this story in John 9 is played out still in this present century. Discernment about what is from God is a very touchy subject. Who is right and who is wrong? It’s possible that we have different denominations all over this globe because each of us is just a little spiritually blind. We don’t see the whole truth.

This story of the blind man is so funny. Jesus appears to him and uses mud to give him sight. I find this interesting because generally Jesus just healed the person with his word or thought. However, this time, Jesus used props. Why did he do this? When I was in Jordan we went to the Dead Sea. At the beach there was mud on the shore that was considered special. People had this mud spread all over their bodies because of its healing and cleansing powers.

There were also is a pool of Siloam. Certain pools in Jerusalem and surrounding areas are considered healing pools. John 5 has the story about the pool of Bethesda. The point of these stories is that each person is supposed to make an effort to get in these waters by faith. There is mud or silt in these waters that were supposed to be healing. In the John 5 story the legend was of angels stirring the water. The fact that Jesus healed this man by the way of tradition or legend is interesting. Why do this here?

I think overall it was similar to God in Egypt. In the Moses story God used plagues that represented the Egyptian Gods. God wanted to prove he was Lord over all. Possibly in this story and the one in John 5 there was a grain of deception on the part of the people. There are healing pools and wishing wells, yet it's not often they look to God for answers. Jesus might just simply be showing dominance over healing gimmicks.

I find this whole section of scripture to be full of meaning. We have the pools, mud, and religious traditions. There is Jesus, the blind man, religious rulers, and the man's parents. Throughout this story there is a lack of knowledge. The man does not know Jesus. Friends of the man questioned this miracle. The spiritual leaders questioned the miracle. Who helped this man. Was this man really blind from birth? The parents were leery of their son because of fear from the authorities. They accuse this man of sinning yet he was clearly helped by a spiritual event.

Of course there is back story. Every one of these comedy and horror events has history. Does the man have history? Do the parents? What is being taught to us by this event? Do healing pools and mud work? The religious leaders are curious but curious for the wrong reasons. I feel we think we know things but many times the opposite is true. Our pride blinds us. Our traditions guide us but they can also derail us if we put more stock in them than was intended. Check back next week for the funny story of the trial of the blind man.

The story Part two:

If you look at the Other Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke they are similar. Much of Matthew is common in the other two. The book of John is rouge. It stands alone for the most part. One of the strangest and controversial topics on the Bible is intent. Why was it written and what book has authority? Are they merely human stories or directions from God? Clearly Some books in the Bible were written a certain way. There are distinct themes or messages to learn. Does that mean the books are scripted or slanted a certain way?

Recently I read Posts about Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton. These posts give a side or picture of who these two are. Does it tell the whole story? The writers are only giving a glimpse into who these two presidential candidates really are. That does not make Donald and Hilary fake. It does not equally give the whole story. We read a point of view or a glimpse in time. The four gospels do tell the Jesus story. Yet each one tells a different slant on Jesus. It's not that they are all wrong or that one is more right than the other. John gives us just one type of post on the life of Jesus.

This story of the blind man is cool, sad, and very funny. Jesus for several chapters has met people on a road. In chapter 4 he meets a Samaritan woman. The disciples are astounded that

he is talking to her. Chapter 5 Jesus meets a sick man who wants to be healed in a pool. Chapter 6 and 7 reflects on who Jesus is and the authorities are desperately searching for him. Hold that thought. In chapter 8 again we find Jesus coming upon a woman in adultery. He writes in the dirt with his finger. Then we come to chapter 9 and find Jesus once again talking to someone who is an outcast.

A blind man is talking to this guy he meets on the road (Jesus). The authorities obviously are there questioning the validity of this blind man's sins. Picking on a blind man was no concern to the religious authorities. Jesus then does something crazy. He again spits on the ground and stirs the dust into mud. He spreads it over the eyes of the blind man and asks him to wash it off in a healing pool. Coming out of the water he could see for the very first time in his life. This is an amazing story.

Then comes the comedy part. The friends and relatives of the former blind guy question who he is. He is stunned and says "it's me you guys." They are uneasy and unsure. The name of Jesus swirls in this chapter. They all want to know how and by who this happened as if it's a terrible crime. Then it gets interesting. The authorities are arguing. If Jesus is a sinner and not from God, then how could he do this miracle? As if they had ever seen miracles like this before. They again ask the blind man for answers. This is brilliant writing. The blind man tells them that Jesus is a prophet. You see in chapter 8 Jesus accused them of killing the prophets. Now the blind man tells them Jesus is a prophet that they want to kill too.

The authorities have the blind man on trial for receiving his sight. I have seen this type of behavior before. Today we believe all authorities are corrupt just as miracles in Jesus day are satanic. The parents are called in to testify against or for their son. They agree it's him but are not sure how he could see. It says they were afraid of the religious leaders. Then in comes the

star witness. The former blind man. These men have no compassion for his sight. There is no happiness for the former blind man. They question him deeper.

Verses 24 and 25 are so cool. **So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”** **25 He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”** Yes, he does not know who Jesus is but the fact that he can see is amazing. This blind man can see but the authorities realize in many ways they are blind to God.

This is so funny. They ask him to repeat the story. The former blind man asks them a question instead. Why are you so dang curious? Do you want to be his disciples also? This is the best part. The authorities try and school the blind man. They say they are from God and disciples of Moses. The blind man says that is so funny. If Jesus is from the devil, then why did he only do things that the God of Moses could do. He retorts why are you blind to all this. That statement drove them nuts and they threw him out of the temple.

The authorities called Jesus at times a teacher or Rabi. Were they serious or just mocking him. In this story, they accuse the blind man of following a sinner who is not of God. They were really saying the Blind was following the blind. Yet, as the former blind man said: “Now I see.” By the end of this story the blind man became the teacher and the students (the religious schooled authorities) were in school. Next week lets figure out what we can learn from a blind man who now sees more than most.

What we can learn:

I go to church and the pastor tries to teach me something from God. I go to work and the manager has a meeting to teach me something he or she knows. On Facebook, I have been

corrected by a person as they tell me the correct answer. Have you ever been confronted by the spell checker police on social media? We all live lives that need correction. We also try and correct others all the time. Is life about learning or being corrected?

The first Nine chapters of John tell a theme. People are running around trying to portray the truth. Within all this mess we find this man named Jesus. He says in John 14:6 **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.”** That is an arrogantly bold statement. How dare him say such a thing. Yet, for all the chapters before we see this theme of truth hiding and truth telling. Who is right and who is wrong. Jesus claims to be the only way.

The Blind man can now see clearly. His parents see their son beyond his blindness for the first time. The religious authorities see God in a different light. The people around the former blind man see a miracle but don't understand. Within this story is Jesus. He uses tradition to heal. He uses religion to teach. He uses all the things that we expect from a spiritual person, yet he does it in a way we don't expect. To see is to see what we never thought possible.

The lessons are that having traditions are fine. They are what comes from the truth. We create laws, rules, and traditions to honor what we've learned. The problem always is motive. What happens when the laws, rules, and traditions become greater than the truth? Recently the authorities have tried to legalize things that were forbidden in the past like prostitution and drugs. Recently also there have been warnings that these such vices are on the rise. Incidents have happened. In the name of freedom and what we believe might not always be the best answer.

The religious authorities believed in God. They saw the religious life a certain way. The blind man being able to see was not as important than the way things are done. The parents did

not defend their child because of fear of religious laws and rules. They should have been happy, yet they feared. The religious are not the only ones with blindness. People of all types hinder their sight by the things they hold dear. Right before our eyes might be a miracle or the truth, yet we see what we want to see.

The blind man's sight is obvious. Why put a miracle on trial? We have corrupt governments these days because our desires are corrupt. We vote in those who will give us the most. Do we vote people in because they will do what is right? We say we do but the actions of the authorities tell us a different picture. Blindness begins in the heart. Our truth is never the real truth. That truth is harsh, reality, and unfair at times. Who wants that. What do you hold dear when it comes to truth? How does that shape the way you are going and the life you are living?

This story was funny. It really was a satirical look at what people believe. The blind man wanted to rejoice but everyone was annoyed. Jesus talked plainly but everyone wanted a different truth. Why do I hold on to vows or traditions that make me look holy, but those very things are drowning me in blindness? I thought it was good, I honestly did. We all say and do things to create an image. I suppose we blind ourselves. Unfortunately, we might lead others to blindness too. Then we have where we are today: the blind leading the blind. Always perceiving but never seeing things as they truly are.