

Worship Material
Sunday 19th March 2023
Gradual Insights
Materials from Roots Bible Study

Begin with an opening prayer

We come together,
that we may see God's glory.
We come to find Jesus in Scripture,
that we may know God's glory.
We come to ask for ask faith and understanding,
that we may proclaim God's glory.
Amen.

Read John 9.1-41

Bible notes

This extended narrative is the fruit of discussion and reflection on an incident of healing. It has been applied to the situation of Christians towards the end of the first century, when Jewish-Christians began to be expelled from the synagogues (see verse 22). As the drama unfolds, we are aware of contrasts between the characters. The man starts out as blind but gains not only physical sight but also spiritual sight. Some of the religious authorities insist that they have spiritual sight and dismiss Jesus, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.' They refuse to learn anything from either Jesus or the man he heals, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' Refusing to see God's work among them, they remain in sin, preferring darkness to light (see 1.9-11). The man is also contrasted with his parents. As parents of a disabled child, they were profoundly aware that something wonderful had happened, but fearing the consequences of upsetting the authorities they will say only, 'He is of age: ask him.' This exchange suggests that the man was very young, which makes his courage all the more remarkable. He insists throughout, with a God-given confidence, 'I am the man.' Noticing that the authorities are divided about Jesus he audaciously asks, 'Do you also want to become his disciples?' Holding fast to the truth, 'I was blind, now I see', his understanding of Jesus progresses. The man who put mud on his eyes is a prophet, is from God, is Lord. 'And he worshipped him.'

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

Jesus' reaction to the blind man differed from the attitude of others. Jesus gave him dignity, and involved him in the healing process. Elsewhere (Mark 10.46-52), Jesus asks a blind man what he wants, rather than making assumptions. Does this inform our behaviour towards those who are differently-abled? Do we value all equally and acknowledge their contribution? Do we listen to what people want, or make assumptions that may be inappropriate? Jesus gave the blind man courage and confidence to flip from being passive into becoming an active witness and a teacher. Do we enable others to use and develop

their gifts? How inclusive are we as a Church? How can we promote and extend true inclusion?

A prayer of thanksgiving

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well. (CF Alexander, 1848).

The week ahead is a blank canvas.
There will be many familiar places and faces.
But, Lord, thank you that we have met with you today,
and you have opened our eyes anew.
Let us not take our preconceptions with us,
but give thanks for all the new opportunities ahead.
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Open my mouth to speak about you.
Guide my thoughts and increase my understanding.
Stir my heart to love as you loved us.
Move my hands and feet to serve you in others.
In the name of Jesus Christ, my example and friend.
Amen.