

Small Group Notes.26.3.17

Reading: *John: Chapter 9*

Welcome: *How easily do you accept change or do you find it difficult to come to terms with?*

Sermon Outline.

- Often we see what we want to see and miss what is going on right under our noses. As Christians we often try to change ourselves to what we think God or the church wants us to be. If we do we are missing the point and will be making Christ within us harder for others to see and will find ourselves working against the current of Gods transforming Grace.
- The man born blind did as he was asked, went to the pool and his eyes were opened. That's where the miracle happened, he was sent and he went. Imagine how difficult a journey this must have been for him.
- Sometimes trusting God is a very difficult journey for us too.
- As soon as the man gets his miracle, others try to take it away with negative comments. Maybe he was never blind in the first place, it can't be God's work, as it was done on the Sabbath etc. etc.
- The man himself appears to be the only one to have his sight and sanity restored on that day, all he knows is he was blind and now he can see.
- Barbara Brown-Taylor points out its not "what if it's not God and I think it is, but rather what if it *is* God and I believe it *isn't*" That's the question the Pharisees forgot to ask. They were so sure they knew that God didn't work on the Sabbath or that God didn't work through sinners, in essence, no one could teach *them* anything.
- The Pharisees were probably very good and devout and devoted to their faith BUT when Jesus offered a new picture of how God works in the world, they closed their eyes. If we are honest we can be just the same. We try to do the right things but sometimes we convince ourselves that we know the mind of God so we aren't open to the possibility that something completely different may also be from God. (e.g. The vision of the diocese in the light of the non-appointment of a Bishop of Sheffield, the way of working in All Saints Totley) We need to be wary of seeing only what we want or expect to see.
- What if a new innovative scenario IS from God? Who is blind now?
- We must be careful that our own ideas and perceptions don't stop others from seeing.
- If something is not from God it will not ultimately succeed in spreading the Gospel.
- We depend on God working through us and so we should remain open minded and recognise that our own interests, weaknesses and fallibilities can stop us seeing the true path. We need the spiritual equivalent of a trip to the opticians
- Pray that we will be given fresh sight to have 20/20 vision for the way ahead for All Saints the Diocese of Sheffield and the Church of England. Ask God to enlarge our vision to show us how much more he has for us beyond what we have ever seen, felt or known.

Questions of Application

1. Do you find it easy or hard to accept something as a miracle? Are you in awe, sceptical, or dismissive?
2. Are there new innovations/ ways of being church / or new thinking that you find hard to accept are from God?
3. How can we guard against closing our eyes to what God may be showing us?
4. Is there something that you are struggling with that you feel may be from God but as yet you can't see it. (You don't have to share this if it is too personal). As a group pray for fresh sight to see what God wants you to do.