

Blind-sided, I remember. The driver of the car I was in either took eyes off the way ahead or the other driver didn't have us in sight: probably both were true. But the next thing I knew, we were spinning around in that intersection like a Tilt-A-Whirl car at Chain of Rocks Amusement Park. Luckily, no one was hurt. What I do remember was the disorientation in the moment, as if everything was 180 degrees off from where we started. Because it literally was.

Blind-sighted, the Gospel of John remembers, in a story that ends with most everyone 180 degrees off from where they started. The story begins in the disciples' disorientation borne of misunderstanding: "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*" After Jesus answers with a theological equivalent of "duh!" he proceeds to heal the man born blind. His life is turned around. But things continue to spin. The neighbors get blind-sighted when they see this now-changed individual. *Yeah, that's him . . . Nah, couldn't be.* Those neighbors are like me in the middle of that intersection, spinning around. Nothing is clear.

When things get confusing, who do you turn to? Pharisees! They can settle this confusion. But even the likes of Pharisees get blind-sighted. *This healer can't be a man of God if he gets muddied up on the Sabbath . . . but how can a sinner heal someone?* The thought then occurred, maybe he wasn't born blind. *Let's haul in the parents for questioning.* But the parents escape potentially losing their seats at synagogue by giving the wrong answer as they employ the tried and true "empty nester" ploy: *we don't know. He's all grown up. Talk to him, not us!*

If you are thinking that the twists and turns in this story are getting twistier and turnier – much like my Tilt-A-Whirl spin in the intersection – you would be right. The man born blind proves more than capable with words and theology, as he ends up teaching the teachers. Fittingly, the story concludes with an O'Henry-style twist. The one born blind, whose blindness was presumed by others to be the result of sin, is now sighted – and the ones once sighted are declared by Jesus to be blinded by their sin of claiming to see. Blind-sighted.

For Reflection and Action:

*What does this story reveal: about God; about the world; about our selves?
Which character(s) do you most identify with as this story unfolds; why?
What would be the details involved in order to retell this story set in our time;
characters; misunderstandings; reversals of blindness and sightedness?*