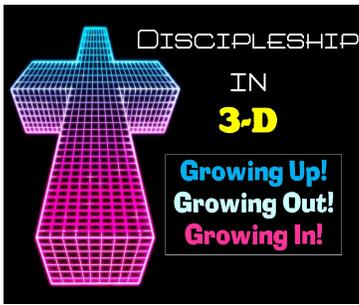


The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Growing into more fully-devoted followers of Christ, may this time help all: **Grow Upward** into a more mature personal relationship and commitment to Christ Jesus faithful to God's Word!

Grow Outward to neighbor and world around, learning how to love well and to lead in what matters to God - guided by God's Word, by Jesus Himself, and by the Holy Spirit!

And, **Grow Inward** to discover a more contemplative faith, enhanced by both silence and prayer!

The Scripture for Sunday, February 27, 2022

[STUDY LESSON 25]

THE GOOD NEWS READING:

John 9:1-41

{1} As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. {2} His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" {3} Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. {4} We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. {5} As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." {6} When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, {7} saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. {8} The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" {9} Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." {10} But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" {11} He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." {12} They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

{13} They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. {14} Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. {15} Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." {16} Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. {17} So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

{18} The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight {19} and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" {20} His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; {21} but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." {22} His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. {23} Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

{24} 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." {26} They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" {27} He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" {28} Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. {29} We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." {30} The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. {31} We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. {32} Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. {33} If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." {34} They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

{35} Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" {36} He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." {37} Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." {38} He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. {39} Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." {40} Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" {41} Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).
3. What words or phrases caught your attention as you heard this passage read? Put another way, were you to choose to memorize a verse and cherish it from this text, what verse might that be and why? Take note within yourself, what sort of feelings arise in that word, phrase, or verse?
4. BACKGROUND NOTES: This is the sixth of the seven signs in John. Much “connective tissue” exists with themes and other previous portions (*and the Good Shepherd discourse to follow*) of John in this lengthy story. Notice the brevity of the miracle itself (*John 9:6-7*) and how much dialogue happens. Another man with a lengthy malady (blind from birth). The presence of water (washing in pool of Siloam). Blindness and sight (darkness and light) - representative of unbelief and believing. Responding to Jesus’ instructions. Another matter of the observance of the Sabbath. The question of where Jesus comes from. The progression of believing in the man born blind. What is discipleship. Witness and testimony to others. “I am” expressed by the man himself. (*See John 9:9*) Sin, not as moral category, but representing unbelief and outside of a relationship with Jesus.
5. Comparing this to the earlier man ill for 38 years, this man was blind from birth. Now able to see for the first time, imagine what such an experience would have been like...
6. Unable to see, it’s obvious the man relies upon hearing the voice of Jesus. Consider how it happens for you that you hear the voice of Jesus and respond as a disciple, especially in light of the passages to follow where Jesus will highlight how His sheep/flock “hear his voice.”
7. Notice how the identity of man changes over the course of the narrative. He begins as a blind beggar, then to a witness for and a disciple of Jesus, making even a confession of faith (see John 9:38). Where do you resonate with such a progression in your own life?
8. Consider how Jesus is variably described or titled throughout the narrative: Rabbi, light of the world, the man called Jesus, a prophet, the Messiah, from God, the Son of Man. As signs reveal to us who Jesus is, what are we being asked to discover or believe about Him given these identifying marks?
9. Presumably Jesus’ disciples have heard these dialogues. The question of the man, now able to see, directed at the Jewish leaders becomes even more poignant: “Do you also want to become his disciples?” He is also recognized as a disciple of Jesus (*see John 9:28*). What are we witnessing about discipleship here? What are the disciples of Jesus witnessing, perhaps?
10. We take note of the fear of the parents (*to be put out of the synagogue*) and the reality of the man being driven out as a result of his believing (*see John 9:34b*). Are there any ways you can identify with being “cast out” by others as a result of your believing and being in a relationship with Jesus?
11. Fast forward to John 20:31, and the intent of the writer for us to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in His name. What is believing looking like at this point for you? What is being found (*see John 9:35*) feeling like for you? A relationship with Jesus like?
12. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
13. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following might be inspired to change in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
14. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.