

JOHN 9. SOME NOTES ON PRAYING FOR THOSE IN NEED

Imagine that one of your friends has been diagnosed with a serious illness. What will you say to them? How will you pray for them? The gospel reading today gives some “Do’s” and some “Don’ts” in how best to help people in need. We look at the man in need in John 9. *Jn 9:1 As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. Jn 9:2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

**(1). THE DISCIPLES' WRONG RESPONSE TO A NEEDY PERSON. Jn 9:2-3**

**i). They focussed on the problem and not on the man's need**

- They saw the blind man and asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Was it the man's fault or was it his parents fault? In those days many believed that if someone was sick, then there must have been some sin behind it. Because the man was born blind did he sin in the womb before birth? Or did his parents sin so that it affected the man's eyes before he was born?
- How would you have felt if you had been the blind man listening to the disciples. He could have felt that they weren't really concerned about him and his need for healing. They just wanted to know whose fault it was.

**ii). They focussed on the “cause” and not on the “cure”**

Jesus had healed other people before this but instead of looking to Jesus to heal the man they were only thinking about the cause of his blindness.

When you are faced with sick people don't spend all your time trying to work out the cause of their illness. God alone knows all the factors behind anything that happens in this life. We may think we see the cause of the person's illness but we could be terribly wrong. If we tell them what we think is the cause and we're wrong it could cause a lot of harm to that person.

- One wrong thing to say to people is this, "There must be some sin in your life for that to happen to you. Have you confessed all your sin to God? Are you hiding some secret sin?" That is cruel and judgemental. None of us is perfectly free from sin and we are in no position to judge another person.
- Another wrong thing to say is "If you had enough faith you wouldn't have got sick . OR if you had enough faith you would be better by now." That's called "playing God". It passing judgment on someone when you can't possibly know everything about the person or about their faith.
- Don't ever get so focussed on the problem so that you lose sight of the person in their need.

**2). JESUS' RIGHT RESPONSE TO A NEEDY PERSON. Jn 9:3**

**i). Jesus focussed on the man and not on the problem.** Notice what John wrote in verse 1. *Jn 9:1 As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.* The word for "saw" means to take notice of someone, to really look at them. He saw the man and noticed his need for healing.

But he also answered the question from His disciples, "Who sinned?" He told them they were wrong in trying to figure out the cause of the illness. *Jn 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. It wasn't a question of "Who sinned?" but rather a question of "What now?"*

- We used to say that at many of our Healing Ministry weekends. "Don't keep asking about your illness 'Why me, Lord?' That gets you nowhere. Rather say 'What now Lord? Where do I go from here with Your help?' "
- (Like the woman with cancer who came to the Healing Ministry Cancer day in Sydney recently with the question "Why me?" But she was prayed for and changed the question to "What now Lord? I look to you for help". She went to her doctors at RPA Hospital and just four days later they said, "We can find no trace of your cancer. It's gone. You're free to go home.")

**ii). Jesus focussed on the “cure” not on the “cause”**

Jesus told His disciples, *It's not about the past. It's about the present and the future. God wants to show His power and His love in healing this man. (" that the works of God might be displayed in him").*

Every healing is a demonstration of the power of God. It is God at work in a human body. It is also a demonstration of the love of God coming forth from the God of love. We need to see the need of the sick and to pray for the cure of the person in need and not spend unfruitful time wondering about the cause of the sickness.

**(3). THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN. Jn 9:6-7**

We read how the healing took place. *Jn 9:6 Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.*

**i). God works in human lives. The man's healing was a work of God through Jesus.** *the works of God might be displayed in him. God worked a miracle of healing.*

God has lost none of His love or of His power. We need to pray that the works of God might be displayed in human lives in Port Macquarie and throughout the world as He heals them and transforms them to be like Jesus.

**ii). Humans must cooperate with the work of God.** The man needed to act in faith on the word of Jesus by doing what He said, by going and washing in the Pool of Siloam. Here we see a blind man stepping out in faith, walking by faith not by sight to receive his healing.

Faith means stepping out and acting on the promises of God, trusting God to fulfil His promises and to bring His healing in His way and in His time.

#### **(4). HAVING EXPECTANCY AS WE PRAY. The people present**

The disciples should have been expectant that Jesus would heal the man. But they focussed on the problem.

The man heard what Jesus said to him and did what He said. *Jn 9:7 ... So he went and washed and came back seeing.* He might have been blind but he was expectant and his faith was rewarded as he was healed.

Many of the neighbours had no expectancy that the man could be healed. They found it hard to believe he had been healed even though they saw him with their own eyes. He had to insist, *"I am the man."*

When we pray for the needy amongst us do we really believe God can make a difference in their lives?

We need to take our eyes off the problem and put them on Jesus as the Healer. We need to take our eyes off the magnitude of the problem and put them on the magnificence of the love of God and of the power of God.

We can all become more expectant. In Mark 9 we read of the story of the story of a father whose son had an evil spirit. He said to Jesus *And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."* Jesus encouraged him with His reply, *Mar 9:23 And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes."* Ie., be expectant for all things are possible.

- I like the father's humble reply. *Mar 9:24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"* He wanted to get rid of any pockets of unbelief he may have had that he might trust God more.
- It's something we can say to the Lord as well, *I do believe but please help me get rid of any traces of unbelief you see in me. I want to trust you to do more in the lives of those needy people around me."*

We owe it to God to believe for His work to increase amongst us. We owe it to those in need to believe for their healing.

#### **(5). FAITH TO "HANG IN" FOR HEALING. Daniel 3**

The whole incident in John 9 took time. The blind man had to "hang in" for healing.

- He had to wait until Jesus had spat on the ground and made mud with his saliva.
- He had to wait until Jesus anointed his eyes with the mud.
- He had to wait until Jesus told him what he had to do.
- He had to wait as he walked in blindness to the Pool of Siloam.
- He had to wait until he found the pool and felt for the water in the pool.
- He had to wait until he washed in the water.

Then came the healing. He could see.

God's blessings and healings don't always come instantly. Sometimes we have to wait for the answer to our prayers.

We see in the story in Daniel 3, of 3 young men who exemplified faith and persistence. They refused to bow down to a statue the king had erected. So the king ordered them to be put to death by having them thrown into a fiery furnace. We see in their response to what the king said, a deep faith in God's love and power.

- Faith that God was able to intervene. *Dan 3:17 ... our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace*
- Faith that God would act on their behalf. *and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*
- But there was an even deeper dimension to their faith. They would keep on trusting God even if it seemed that He was doing nothing to help them. *Dan 3:18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."*
- We know the result as the men were saved in the very extremity of their situation (in the furnace itself) when it seemed to be too late.
- True faith hangs in even when it seems to be an impossible situation that we are facing.

What's the challenge that you or one of your loved ones is facing at the moment?

- Can God do something about it? Can He work through your prayers?
- Let me lead us in a prayer that God might be able to work through our prayers to meet our needs and the needs of those around us.

*Dear Lord, we affirm the words of Jesus that "All things are possible for one who believes." We affirm that nothing is beyond Your power. We affirm Lord that we do believe. But rid us of any pockets of unbelief that You see in us, that we might trust You more.*

*We want to see more of your power at work in our lives and in the lives of all those in need around us. We ask this in Jesus' name.*

AMEN