

Sunday, May 5, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「For God's Work to Be Manifested」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue
Ezekiel 18:1~4, 19~20, John 9:1~12

❶ 【Sin is not inherited】

Jesus saw a man who was born blind as he passed by. Perhaps it was because Jesus was staring at Him so much, the disciples asked Him. "Is this man born blind because of a sin, or is it him or his parents?" In Judea, disability was considered the result of sin. It is the same in Japan. Some new religions teach that illness and disability are due to the sins of our ancestors. In the past and now, human beings try to find the cause of their unhappiness, saying, "Who made me sick, who made me unhappy?" This blame-shifting bad thinking was a symptom of mankind's first sin. Adam said, "A woman... I gave it to him, so I ate it." Eve said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate it." (Genesis 1:12, 13) However, Christianity does not have the concept of cause and effect. The prophet Ezekiel proclaimed the word of God: "The sin of the child dies, and the son does not bear the sins of the father, nor the father bears the sins of the son" (18:20). There is no sin in our genes or in our blood. There is no idea in the teachings of original sin that sin is biologically inherited. That's what cults say. We are all pure when we are born, but the fact that all of us will inevitably sin is called original sin. If sin is inherited, then all the blame lies with Adam, and that is the shifting of blame. Also, God becomes the creator of sin.

❷ 【Sickness and disability are there because God's work is manifested】

In response, Jesus said, "Not because he has sinned, nor because his parents have sinned, but because the work of God may be manifested to him." (verse 3). I did not say that this person or his parents were innocent. He said that sin and disability have nothing to do with each other. I think the blind man was glad to hear this. I think there are many people who have been saved by reading this passage. It is God's plan and meaning to be born with a severe disability, and it is that God created it that way. Here, Jesus said, "For the work of God to appear." So what is "God's work"? When the Jews asked, "What should we do to do God's work" (John 6:28), Jesus said, "Believing in the one whom God has sent (Jesus) is God's work." In other words, it is God's work for people to come to believe in Jesus. Because of this, they became ill and disabled.

In fact, Mr. Y suffered a stroke, and his mother, Mr./Ms., who lives far away, intuitively thought that something had happened, rushed to him, saving his life, but he became disabled. But that brought him back to church. If a hole is made in the shoji, the light from the other side will come in. In the same way, illness, disability, disaster, or accident can leave a hole in your life. But God's light can

come into a person's life from that broken place. Is there a better act of God than the awakening of believers? It is a miracle that is greater than any miracle. I want to see more of God's work.

③ [Through God's work, man comes to know God]

Jesus spat on the ground, kneaded the soil, and smeared it on the man's eyes. Jesus can be healed by words alone, but here He smeared mud on us. God kneaded the mud to create the first man, and the fact that His same hand kneaded the mud and smeared it on his eyes signifies a new creation by God. He said, "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash it" (v. 7). Siloam means "the one who was sent" and refers to Jesus. In other words, it means going to the baptismal font and being baptized. He went and washed, and came back to see. I think that when a person who was blind at birth saw this world, he was tremendously moved.

This healing of a man who was born blind is not just a story of a blind person being healed. This born blind person symbolizes all of humanity. This is because all people are born blind to God. Man cannot know God on his own. Paul speaks clearly. "The world could not know God by its own wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:21). Both Moses and Paul were able to know God because God appeared and spoke to them.

In the ancient church, baptismal candidates were called "illuminators." It means "one who is illuminated by the light." My countryside is Nagano. At night, it's pitch black in the mountains and you can't see anything. No matter how good our eyesight is, without the sun's rays, we can't see anything. Just as we can see the things of this world in the light of this world, the light from God allows us to see the things of the divine. The light from God is the Holy Spirit.

To come to worship is to come to be illuminated by God. When God's light comes in, we can see the kingdom of God, God Himself, Jesus, sin, salvation, this world, and the future. When you see it, your fear disappears and your conviction comes out. Fear comes from where you can't see it. We feel anxious because Christ seems small. This blind man accepted Jesus as the Messiah, saying, "I believe in the Lord" (John 9:38). The Jews, on the other hand, were blind to Christ, even though they could see with their physical eyes. We are happy to be able to see the flesh's eyes, but we also see things that we don't need to see. Can we be happy if we can see the things of this world? We look at the world every day, but we don't feel so happy and happy that we jump up.

●A long time ago, I saw a video on YouTube of a visually impaired baby wearing special glasses and capturing the emotional moment when he saw his mother's

face for the first time Mr./Ms.. At first, the child was wearing glasses and could not make out well, but when the mother called the child's name and made eye contact with the voice, she could see her clearly. Then he smiled with a very happy face. I thought it was a very nice thing to be able to see it.

●The other day, after Sharon Chisato's service, I talked with the daughter Mr./Ms. of the resident Mr./Ms. for about an hour. Her mother's Mr./Ms. was an ardent follower of an emerging religion for more than 50 years, Mr./Ms.. However, I went to a service at a foreign church in Okinawa with my daughter Mr./Ms., and within that day, I changed into a believer in Christ. As soon as I got home, I threw the sutra book I was reading avidly into the trash can, and I also threw away the Buddhist altar. A friend of mine from a new religion called me and told me to go home, but he said, "I'm not going home because I've found something better." This is the work of the Holy Spirit, the work of God.

Some of the people here are like that. I found something better. Mr./Ms. is the one who opened his eyes to God Christ. God's work was done on Mr./Ms.. In the past, I used to complain all the time because I couldn't see God's love, but when I experienced being touched by Jesus in prayer, I saw God's grace. It was so rich that it swallowed up my frustrations. It is wonderful to be able to see God's grace so much. Mr./Ms., let us pray, "Lord, open the eyes of my soul to see your overflowing grace."