

To God Be the Glory



Theme: Glorifying God in every situation. 4th Sunday in Lent, Year A

Object: A hymnal

Scripture: As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. John 9:1-3 (NIV)

Music has always been an important part of my life. I love all kinds of music, but the music I love the most is the music that we sing about Jesus. I have a hymnal this morning and I have marked a few of the hymns that are among my favorites.

Here is one of my favorites, "To God Be the Glory." What a great hymn of praise to God. Here is another that has always been a favorite of mine, "All the Way My Savior Leads Me." It tells about how Jesus leads us through the difficult times in our life. Oh! This is one song that is definitely on my list of all-time favorites, "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine." Did you know that all of these favorites that I have named this morning have something in common? They were all written by the same person. In fact, there are many hymns in our hymnal written by that person. Her name was Fanny Crosby.

When Fanny was six weeks old, she had an eye infection. Her regular doctor was out of town, and a man posing as a doctor gave her the wrong treatment. Within a few days, she was blind. If that happened to me, I am afraid I would be very bitter and I would probably spend a lifetime feeling sorry for myself. Fanny was never bitter and she never felt sorry for herself. When she was only eight years old, she wrote this poem:

Oh, what a happy child I am,
Although I can not see.
I am resolved that in this world,
Contented I will be.
How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't.
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot and I won't!

Instead of being bitter and feeling sorry for herself, Fanny used the gifts that God had given her to write over 8,000 hymns and poems to praise and glorify God.

One day Jesus was walking with his disciples when they passed by a blind man. When they saw him, the disciples asked Jesus who was to blame for the man's blindness. Was it because of his sin or was it because of his parent's sins? Jesus answered them and told them that no one was to blame, he was blind so that God's works could be shown in him. Then Jesus healed the man

and the people praised and glorified God for his goodness.

What about Fanny Crosby? God didn't heal her blindness. Perhaps if God had healed her, she might never have written all of those beautiful hymns -- and the world would never have heard of Fanny Crosby. She used the tragedy of her blindness to glorify God. I pray that tragedy will never come into your life, but if it does, remember that everything that happens can be used to praise and glorify God!

Dear Lord, the difficulties in our life seem small when compared to what others may be facing. Help us not to grumble and complain, but to praise and glorify you in every situation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 9:1-13

Note: After each of these activities, discuss the blind man and what JESUS did. Also discuss that JESUS can help us with anything that we might be facing:

BLIND TESTIMONY: If the teacher or pastor knows of someone who is blind, this would be a great time to have that person come in to the class to share their testimony about being blind and answer some questions from the children, if desired.

BLIND WALK: Have children hold on to one another's waists and walk around a designated area with the teacher at the head of the BLIND WALK. To make the BLIND WALK a little more active and more fun, the teacher could skip, jump, run, hop, etc, and tell children if they let go of the person's waist in front of them, they will drop out and watch the fun as it continues and can be a helper in seeing who else will let go of someone's waist!

BLIND ART: Have children draw one BIG closed eye on the top of the paper and one BIG opened eye underneath. Draw or trace the words on the paper.... I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I CAN SEE and add our Bible verse today.

BLIND DRAWING: Blindfold two children at a time (unless chalkboard is larger), and have the children draw a picture of the teacher's choosing. This will be fun for the children to SEE later what they drew while blindfolded, and it'll also be fun for the class to watch them draw the picture. This could also be done individually on a piece of paper, as children close their eyes and draw a heart or cross or their own house or church, etc.

BLIND BAG: Let each child enjoy a "touch and feel bag" of goodies. With eyes closed, they can feel inside the bag and try to tell what the item is.

FINGERPAINTING FROLIC: Give each child a small amount of chocolate pudding (to represent the mud on the blind man's eyes) on a piece of paper and let them finger paint a picture of their choice, or a cross (for Jesus) or a heart (for God's love), etc.

BLIND BALLOON HUGS: Blindfold all children at once and tell them to "find" one of the balloons that are floating around in a designated area. When they get a balloon, give it a big HUG until it pops. This could be like a "blind relay race" to see who can hug and POP their balloon the quickest! There could be a small piece of candy inside each balloon so that as soon as the child hugs and pops the balloon, they can take off their blindfold and find their piece of candy (after picking up the pieces of the balloon and throwing those little pieces away!)

BLIND WANDERINGS: Teacher can have a designated area with 3 or 4 main "attractions" that can be shown to the children before they become blindfolded. (This could be done with the whole class at once or with less children at a time). After being blindfolded (or tell children to close their eyes), the teacher will tell them to "wander" to one of the areas, such as ... to the piano... or to the coloring table... or to the big stuffed bear.... or to the fish tank, etc. Have the child or children "wander" back and forth from place to place, first as BLIND and then play the wandering game

much faster with their 'sight'!

BLIND SHOE RELAY: Have children take off their shoes and put them in a pile at the end of the playing area. Then blindfold one child at a time (or more if there are 2 teams) and have them run to the shoe pile and try to find their own shoes. For younger ages, in order to make a smaller pile of shoes, children could just remove ONE shoe instead of both shoes. That would also help them to feel of their own shoe to know which shoe to choose as their own.

Here's Mud in Your Eye!



Theme: Jesus heals a blind man. 4th Sunday in Lent, Year A

Object: A mixing bowl, dirt, measuring cup, water, and a small pie pan.

Scripture: Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. John 9:6-7 (NIV)

When I was a child, we didn't have TV or video games. Most of my days were spent playing outside with my friends. We built houses out of cardboard boxes, played baseball in a vacant lot, and climbed trees. When the day was over, I must admit that I was covered with dirt from head to toe, but I sure had a lot of fun.

A company in England which makes laundry detergent was concerned that many children today are missing out on the simple pleasures of childhood because their mothers don't want them to get dirty. They began a campaign called "Dirt is good!" and they came up with a list of "The 33 things you must do before you are 10." Some of the things that made their list might surprise you. Number one on the list was to roll on your side down a grassy bank. Number two on the list was to make a mud pie!

Have you ever made a mud pie? All you need is some dirt, water, and a pie pan. I have all of those things right here. Why don't we make a mud pie? First, I will add some water to the dirt in this mixing bowl. Then I'll stir it up until it is smooth and creamy -- just like a chocolate pie. Now I will pour it into this pie pan and smooth it out. If you like, you can add some small rocks, leaves, and dried flowers for decoration. When you have finished, the mud pie is put out in the hot sun to bake. One thing I should tell you is that you never eat your mud pie. They are just fun to make!

Making mud pies is one great thing you can do with mud, but in our Bible story today, Jesus does something even more wonderful with a little mud. Listen, and I think you will agree.

Jesus was walking with his disciples when they saw a man who had been blind since birth. The disciples thought that man was blind because he or his parents had sinned, but Jesus told them, "It is not because of his sins or his parents' sins. This happened so that the power of God could be seen in his life." Then Jesus knelt down, spit on the ground, and stirred up some mud. He took the mud and put it on the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Now, go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam." The man went and washed the mud from his eyes and when he came back, he could see!

Now, you would think that everyone would think that it was wonderful that the blind man could

see, but the Pharisees weren't. Do you know why? It was because Jesus healed the blind man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees thought that was a sin to do anything on the Sabbath -- even if it was to help someone in need. You see, they were more concerned with keeping their religious laws than they were with helping people. When the pharisees asked the man how he had been healed, he told them that Jesus had healed him. They became angry and said to him, "God should get the glory for this -- we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

"I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I do know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

I don't know what problems you may be facing in your life, but I know that if Jesus can heal a blind man with a little bit of mud, he can help you with anything you might be facing.

Heavenly Father, we are here today in need of the touch of Jesus. We pray that lives will be changed so that your name will be glorified. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.