

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 19

CONVERSATION STARTER

Of the five senses, taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing, which is your favorite and why? Which do you believe would be the most difficult for you to be without?

THE SIXTH SIGN OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

The healing of the blind man is the sixth sign that Jesus performs in John's Gospel. And like the ones before, this sign is designed to point to the fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel. And while Jesus heals a man's physical sight, the story itself also points to the greater restoration of sight in regard to the people's spiritual blindness.

In the Old Testament, God is the one who gives people their sight (Ex. 4:11), and it's the promised Messiah that will one day restore sight to God's people who are living in darkness. Isaiah 29:18 says, "and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see." Jesus spits in the mud and then rubs it in the man's eyes—a callback to when God first created humans in Genesis 2. Like God, Jesus engages in an act of creation to bring life where there once was spiritual death. Jesus tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam. Siloam means "sent." John uses this location to draw on the fact that Jesus regularly refers to himself as the one sent from God. In other words, the one sent from God is the only one who can bring sight to those living in spiritual blindness.

In the previous chapters, and in this one, Jesus refers to himself as the Light of the World. By healing the blind man, Jesus shows his ability to bring light, both in a physical sense and in a spiritual sense, to those living in darkness. The story acts as an invitation to the reader: will you continue to live in darkness or will you allow Jesus to be the light for you, too?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?

2. Discuss with your group. What is the relationship between sin and suffering? Is there a correlation, and if so, to what extent?
3. In as much as you feel comfortable, share some of the ways Jesus has brought light to your life and helped you see more clearly.
4. In what ways do you see evidence that our world is still living in a state of spiritual darkness today?
5. Jesus says “we” must do the works of God. What are the works of God that Jesus invites us to partner with him in accomplishing today?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

After Jesus rubs the mud in the blind man’s eyes, he tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The following prayer is about 30 seconds long, which is just over the recommended time needed to wash your hands. So, this week, anytime you wash your hands, repeat this prayer, or one like it using your own words, asking God to help you see more clearly.

God,

Thank you that you see me; You don't pass me by. Give me eyes to see clearly the darkness in me and around me. And help me embrace the light of Christ, so I can reflect the light of Christ to a dark world.

Amen.