

God's work is revealed in the fate of the blind man. God's work is this, to give grace and mercy in time of need. You may have noticed the blind man was not looking for Jesus. Yet when Jesus came upon him, he found his need and swiftly redeemed him.

The blind man was not totally alone since we hear from his neighbors and parents in the story. But his life was likely not that great, either, as he is called one of the beggars in his own community. As we move through the story, we see a progression of faith building in him until it reaches the high point of worship of Jesus. As we watch this occur, I think of how much the man lacked vision while he was blind. He had a deficit of insight. He wasn't even aware of what he did not see of God. With the healing he gained not only physical sight but understanding that led him to see Jesus for who Jesus is.

And who is Jesus? Jesus is the one in whom there is life! In the gospel of John, Jesus was in the beginning, Jesus was with God and Jesus was God. All things came into being through Jesus, and without Jesus, not one thing came into being. What came into being in Jesus was life! When the man born blind was healed he got his life back!

Meanwhile, the Pharisees, the religious authorities move in the opposite direction. When they first appear we might think they have respectable knowledge of God, but in Jesus' presence we come to see they are blind to what God is doing in the new day. They claim to have the correct knowledge, but in their arrogance they miss the one who is life.

Six months ago we could freely talk about going viral as something to encourage. We talked about going viral as breaking through boundaries. Today the novel coronavirus presses in on us. We read of how the virus transgresses boundaries and attaches itself to a host cell and penetrates deep into the cell, with the intent to kill the cell.

The novel coronavirus knows no boundaries and no countries. The rural areas are not any safer than the city. It respects no race, gender, or economic class of people. It penetrates deep within with the sole purpose to destroy.

There are other things which go deep within but have a vastly different effect on us. Take music, for example. One of the rising projects of these last days is #songsofcomfort begun by Yo Yo Ma. When he describes this project he begins by talking about the value of music. In times like these, music can speak to those most in need.

When YoYo Ma was 19, a teacher of his said to him, “Yo Yo, you haven’t found your voice.” That comment became a challenge for Yo Yo ever since. Since he was 19, everywhere he goes he has kept looking for his voice, seeking to find the needs of others through what they are thinking and feeling. Then he represents the people with their needs in his performance of music.

YoYo Ma said, “Music looks to what is in the insides. When it does this it knows no borders, no boundaries. If we can actually express what is in our insides and show that, then it is a beginning of a deeper understanding of one another.”

#songsofcomfort has become a project collecting what is personal, what is true, what is trustworthy, what is community.

This made me think of Jesus who knew no boundaries and so when he came upon the man blind from birth, he transgressed the boundary of his ignorance, and gave him what was needed so that he would have not just greater freedom, but a life that has its source from Jesus. Everywhere Jesus went he was ready to reach out and redeem. At the end of the story, the former blind man bows to Jesus in worship.

Jesus knew no boundaries and so he transgressed the boundaries of the arrogant, in their need, and pleaded with them to see him for who he is. He is the God of all, willing to give life for all. When you read farther into John chapter 10 you can get a sense that Jesus was not sternly warning the religious authorities here, but rather patiently pleading with them, trying to let them know, that he would be ready to receive them, and be their good shepherd, and enfold them in his arms, and give them life.

The grace and mercy of Jesus is like that. Time and again Jesus offers us life. He patiently waits as faith takes hold. Then it goes deep within, seeking to enter into the depths of our hearts and minds and transform us into ones like Jesus.

Jesus love knows no boundaries. To be like Jesus is to have an eye open for all and a heart ready to serve everyone. Jesus love reaches towards the poor, the ignorant, the rich, the haughty, the proud, the faithful, the hopeless, the grieving, the trusting and the doubting.

In these days when we change our whole lives to combat the virus, help us to hold on to the gracious word of Jesus, that it may go deep within us, and free us from the power of fear, the power of death, the power of evil, and help us to see that in Jesus we have life. Because we see this and know this, we can freely live as ones

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.