

Title: The Heart of Jesus

Passages: Mark 2:1-12; John 9

Introduction:

Question: What can we do with regards to people who are in long-term suffering?

- Suffering may be through disability, illness, accidents, old age, or other.
 - Roughly 20% of population have a disability.
- In response, consider the heart of Jesus - welcome and love

Here, consider Bible passages from perspectives of those who were healed

Passages:

Mark 2:1-12 (Jesus Heals a Paralytic)

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

John 9:1-7 (Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind)

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

John 9:6-7

Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Introduction

Questions may be raised with those who are affected by disability:

- What is the cause of disability that is affecting our family or someone we know?
- If God is good, why did He allow such a disability?
- Does God have a good design or purpose in my disability?

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IMPACTED BY DISABILITY.

Mark 2:1-4

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him

because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

Historical perspective

- In Rome, physical differences in race or disability were viewed as one of inferiority.
- Cruel and brutal treatment occurred too often that led to death or low quality of life
- Today, people with disabilities continue to be viewed of low value. Ex: High abortion rates of babies with Down's syndrome indicators (100% in Iceland)
- Reality: People with Down's syndrome have great joy and contentment with their lives. Likewise, parents and siblings report similar joy and pride with those with disabilities.

Jesus

- contrasted by showing great compassion to those with disabilities.

Implications

- If believe everyone is made in the image of God, you will find the value of any human being in the universe (including those with disabilities and the pre-born)
- As such, ALL should be treated with respect and dignity.

Perspective of families affected by disability

- Our days start with a choice: a good day (be patient and understanding when our autistic child cannot do things) or a bad day.
- Discernment is challenging to know difference between a tantrum or a trigger from an outside influence leading to regression.
- Autism is not a season but a lifestyle.
- The stress and heart-breaking perspective that child may struggle with things for the rest of their lives.
- Daughter immobile in wheelchair struggles daily with loneliness with no or few friends.

Response: be mindful and respectful of those with disabilities

Mark 2:3-4

And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. *And when they could not get near him because of the crowd,* they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

- Here, people didn't make room for someone with a disability.
- Implications: let's be mindful and consider those with disabilities of their presence and their needs (kindness/respect/sincerity in interactions, seat/parking availability)

HEART OF JESUS

Jesus acknowledges disability

John 9:1

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.

- Implications: be kind and natural in communicating with those

Jesus answers disability

John 9:2-3

And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

- Jesus looks to the purpose, not the cause of disability
- All suffering is because of sin (Genesis 3). But not all specific sins leads to specific sufferings. Therefore, cannot say all suffering is because of one’s sin.

God has a divine purpose in disability

- If God had no purpose, then Jesus had no reason to give an explanation for the blindness.
- God knows all things. In the event of a genetic abnormality, God is aware of it as He allows and permits; therefore, He has a purpose and reason.

Exodus 4:11

Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?”

Psalms 139:14

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

- Turn away from fixation of causality of disability but rather to the divine purposes and plan of any disability.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- Suffering can only have ultimate meaning in relation to God. To put the work of God on display.
- Things will make no sense unless God is your supreme value.

APPLICATIONS

If affected by disability and not a believer:

- Turn to God.
- He has a reason and purpose for your disability.

If affected by disability and a believer:

- Trust in God and lean on Him in your weaknesses.
- Continue to be faithful; love and serve Jesus.

If a primary caretaker of one with disability:

- Remind yourself of the Gospel and the Hope of glory on a daily basis.
- Rest in God’s promises and character (God is good, no shadow of evil)
- Keep Biblical truths in forefront of your life.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

- There is hope, God will redeem fully the bodies.
- In the meantime, God will never leave you nor forsake you.

If you are a church member and not impacted by disability in your vicinity:

- You are part of the body of Christ so serve others.

Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Romans 12:9-10

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

1 Corinthians 1:27-31

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Other Resources

<https://www.joniandfriends.org/event/wonder-valley-family-retreat/>