

## SERMON - Pastor Jim Cavanah

### *Why Was this Man Born Blind? Or, Why is the Corvin-19 Among Us?*

Our text centers around a very specific question. The question is found in verse 2. As Jesus and His disciples walked by a man that had been born blind, the disciples asked Jesus, *“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

The first important truth we learn from this text is this – sin is a serious and powerful force in our daily lives. Too often, we limit our thoughts about sin to the spiritual realm. We confess our souls are lost and separated from God. We look to Jesus as our Saviour, the one who died for our sins and transgressions; the one who gives us new life and we tend to think of this new life in spiritual terms. There is nothing wrong with our manner of thought for these things are indeed true. BUT, when we limit our consideration of sin to a merely spiritual issue, we fail to see the reality of God’s curse upon the physical and the spiritual aspects of His creation and us, His people who are both physical and spiritual in nature. When Adam and Eve transgressed God’s command and sinned against the LORD their God, sin entered the world and with sin came God’s judgment. We know about God’s curse on Eve and Adam but what about the “whole” of creation? We easily forget the fact that God has cursed the world (the earth) for the sin of Adam and Eve.

In Genesis 3:17ff we read, *“...cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

The second truth we learn from our text is this are always those who like to tie suffering and sin together. They like to say, if a person is suffering it must be due to some sin. This was the question asked to Job and it is the question asked by the disciples and the Jews of the first century connected suffering to sin. They worked on the assumption that wherever there was suffering, somewhere there was sin. The disciples asked Jesus, *“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* In days of Jesus certain Jewish Rabbis and theologians believed and taught that a man's affliction, even if it be from birth, could have been the result of some sin. This sin could have been some transgression the Lord knew the man committed or would commit. Or, this could have been because of God’s judgment upon the sin of one or more of his parents. The idea that children inherit the consequences of their parents’ sin is woven into the thought of the Old Testament. *“I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation”* (Exodus 20:5 : compare Exodus 34:7, Numbers 14:18).

Note that in the Gospel, Jesus does not try to follow up or to explain the connection of sin and suffering. Jesus plainly answered the question of His followers in verse 3 Jesus answered, *“It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”* In other words, Jesus was teaching His disciples, and He is teaching us in our day, that this man’s affliction – his blindness from birth – was not and is not the result of a particular sin. The man’s blindness was not God’s personal punishment or judgment upon this man for his own sin or upon his parents because of their sin. Jesus makes it very clear that because of this man’s sin, Jesus answered, *“...the works of God might be displayed in him.”*

The third truth we learn from our Gospel reading is this, the world and mankind have not changed much since the first century! As I write, our world and our community are asking questions about the Corvid-

19 virus. Some are asking: What is the purpose of the virus? Why has it come here? Did God send this virus to punish us for our sins, rebellion, or our morality?

Now, if you want some interesting reading how about this? Corvin-19 is a man-made biological weapon developed by the Chinese government that got out among their own people by accident and is now so contagious it is infecting the face of the earth. The point, we hear all kinds of things. People say all kinds of things and can come up with a lot of answers as to “Why was this man born blind?” or “Why is the Corvid-19 among us?”

The Corvin-19 virus, just like all diseases, is the product of a fallen, evil, wicked world that is under the curse of God. Is the virus God's judgement on the world for immorality, rebellion, and sin, maybe. God certainly used the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians to secure His people's attention. This virus is just like any other virus of pestilence like the Black Death, the plague or even cancer. All of these things are the result of life in a fallen sinful world.

So, where is the “good news” or the Gospel for us in our day? As we look at John 9, we find the good news in the words of Jesus who said, *“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”* (John 9:4-5). Jesus is our hope, our light in the darkness, our assurance in the midst of doubt, fear, tribulation, pestilence, suffering, trails, etc.

Now blindness, like every other type of suffering, infirmity, or disease is one of the fruits of sin. If Adam had never fallen, we cannot doubt that people would never have been blind, or deaf, or mute, or lame, or sick, and disease would not be in the world. *“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin”* (Romans 5:12.)

God is still on the throne. He is still in control. He is in the same place He was when His Son died for our sins. He has called us to Himself and He has promised He will never let us go! He will never leave us nor forsake us!

The Psalmist encourages us in our day with his words: *“In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! 0Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! 3For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me”* (Psalm 31:1-3). This is the “good news” of the Gospel of our LORD!” – Thanks be to God!!!