"HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE!"

BY DAVID JULEN, DMIN

"Here's mud in your eye" is a toast that is supposed to mean "Good luck!" According to a variety of sources, this line originates from the John 9 passage about a man born blind and healed by Jesus. It is a rare occasion when someone spits on the dirt, sticks it in your face, and you think it is good luck! But this was just such an occasion.

Are there lessons we can learn from this unusual miracle story of Jesus?

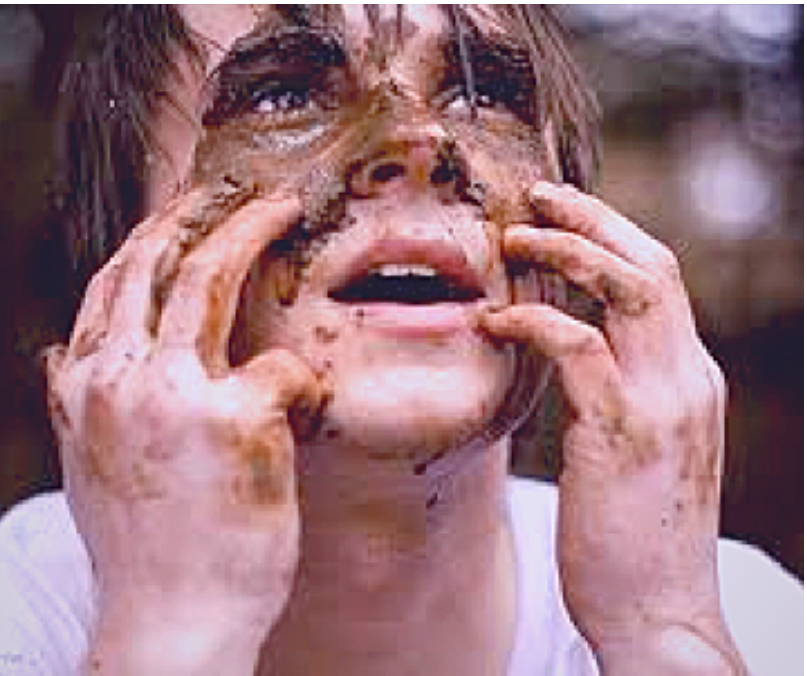
We can learn the path to our healing and spiritual growth may not look like we want it to appear.

Getting spit and dirt applied to the blind man's eyes must have been uncomfortable, but his discomfort was part of the healing process. We learn confronting any distressing aspect of our lives can bring discomfort.

This can happen in a wide variety of ways, such as: asking for forgiveness, admitting we were wrong, apologizing to someone we have harmed, or confronting a harmful habit or addiction. These acts, though healing, will, in the long run, require a difficult process most of us would seek to avoid…just as we would avoid spit- laced mud. While most healing and change involve pain and discomfort, we need to be reminded that difficult and trying circumstances can be used by God for His purposes (*Romans 5:3-5*).

Dealing with any form of addiction, whether it be pornography or heroin, requires submitting to discomfort, enduring hardship, and having the desire to do what it takes to get well. We can all identify with the man born blind, stumbling forward, as we blindly try to find our own Pool of Siloam and follow the path to healing to see what God has in store for us.

We can also learn from the blind man's obedience. He could easily have said, "Why go to the pool of Siloam? The water is just as good right here." Yet, it seems clear that his act of faith, completing the trek to the pool, was vital to his healing.



"While most healing and change involve pain and discomfort, we need to be reminded that difficult and trying circumstances can be used by God for His purposes."

How many times have we short circuited our growth and healing by not following through with the instructions we have been given? If we struggle with addiction, how many times have we started on a healing path to Siloam only to decide to stop, and use any convenient water source, because we think we know better? Instead of going to meetings or working the plan we have committed ourselves to, we decide we know better. Then we wonder why God has deserted us when we fall back into addiction.

How many times have we disliked our path and wanted to have the lives of others, because we think they have it better or easier than us?

What if the blind man in John 9 had said "Oh, mud, really? How about the guy whose son you said would live, simple as that, he lives, but I get mud with spit in my eye? What about the paralyzed guy, Jesus, you simply told him to get up and walk ." (*John 4 and 5*) Jesus exhibits a wide variety of ways of healing people, and we must follow the path he gives us.

We also see how the disciples seem to look at the man born blind as an object of detached speculation, one they discuss in the third person. It's as if they were saying, "Let's debate, was this man born blind because of his sin or his parents?" We see something like this debate in the church today regarding addiction. We speculate at great length where the blame lies. We can argue at what point personal responsibility starts and inherited tendencies begin. We ask, is it a disease or a moral failing? Is it a medical or moral problem?

However, if we are not careful, we can be more like the disciples and less like Jesus. "The disciples approached tragedy in search of someone to blame, whereas Jesus was concerned with what he could change" (*p.298, Stagg, Frank Gospel of John, Broadman Commentary*).

We can take a powerful lesson from Jesus in how we view those struggling with addictions. We can see them as people in need of compassion and the healing that Christ can bring… or we can speculate and talk over the person at our feet. Jesus heals in many ways!

While we always need to be discerning, we don't want to be like the pharisees that attributed Jesus' healing power to Satan (*Matt. 12:22-24*).

God can heal in many ways and we need to be open to how God is working.