

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (May 5, 2024)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Every Christian has a story to tell. If you are a Christian ... do you know your faith story? Do you know how to share your story in a way that doesn't sound preachy, or judgmental? Is your faith story easy, natural, genuine, inviting, compelling?

Some faith stories are dramatic, like in the passage below. We reach a point of desperation, self-destruction, our decisions causing harm to others, and then the next moment we're face to face with God and our new story begins. For others, it is a quiet, slow, process. One day they wake up and realize they believe in Jesus and He has been there all along. However it happens your story is a beautiful story.

This morning we have the privilege of hearing how God revealed Himself to one of our dear friends, Kathy Ziegler. I've known her for many years. I appreciate her compassion, her gifts, her faith. And now, because she is willing to take a risk, we will all know her God-given story. He is our good Father! Are you ready to tell your story?

The Holy Spirit Gives Us a New Story (John 9, select verses) ESV

^{26:1} As He (Jesus) passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' ³ Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶ 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 ⁷ and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹ Some said, 'It is he.' Others said, 'No, but he is like him.' **He kept saying,** 'I am the man.' ¹⁰ So they said to him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' ¹¹ He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." So I went and washed and received my sight.'

(The religious leaders did not believe this man's story. They called him, then his parents, to try to find a way to discredit his story, and Jesus. Then they called him a second time.) verses 12-24 omitted.

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, 'Give glory to God. We know that this man (*they meant Jesus*) is a sinner.' ²⁵ He answered, 'Whether He is a sinner I do not

know. **One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.**' ²⁶ They said to him, 'What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?' ²⁷ He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?' ²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, 'You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He comes from.' ³⁰ The man answered, 'Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.' ³⁴ They answered him, 'You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?' And they cast him out."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What did the disciples believe caused this man's blindness?
2. How did the religious leaders respond to this healed man?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. Why did Jesus spit on the ground and anoint the man's eyes?
4. What does "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him" mean?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. What stories do you regularly tell about yourself? Why?
6. Take 15 – 60 minutes and write the basics of your faith story. Write no more than 1 page, preferably only a half-page. Where did God first find you? How did that encounter change your life? Is your story natural, genuine, inviting, compelling?
7. Is sharing your faith story easy for you? Practice telling your story. Listen for the Holy Spirit's direction before you speak.
8. Who is God prompting you to tell your story to? Do you trust that the Holy Spirit is already at work in the lives of those He will direct you to share your faith story with?

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you share your faith story in natural, easy ways. Pray for those who still do not know Jesus. Trust God to give you the right words, at the right time, with the right heart. He will help you because He loves you.