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Christ and Brokenness: *John 9*



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Christ and Brokenness: *John 9*

"I am the Light of the World"
John 9

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." John 9:1-3

This broken world manifests itself very acutely when it leaves its mark on our children. A unique pain results when parents discover their child has a special need. Physical handicaps, autism, disorders and/or mental and emotional disabilities are a few of the many possible wounds that can manifest. The intersection of the fallen world on the most precious among us, our children, is indeed painful.

For some, knowledge of the special need is known early. For others, it emerges over time. For all however, the reality settles in over a lifetime and can take on new and different hues as time passes. When one season of grief closes, another season begins. The loss is not just a phase, a stage or in an interim.

Wonderfully, the Bible does not turn a blind eye to this injustice. Jesus did not airbrush this reality out of His life. He engaged and spoke into it. The first lesson we learn in *John 9* is that Jesus saw a blind man. We can be sure that a blind man is not all He saw. Jesus saw the hurts that incurred when high expectations were dashed by raw realities. He saw the embarrassment endured because of the ignorance of a society. He saw the worry that is ever present when hopes are hung on the compassion of a community.

This apparent injustice runs so counter to what we know is right that it spawns the renowned one word question – why? There must be a reason. If we cannot right this wrong by some means of operation then at least tell us why. Are we being punished? Did I do something wrong in pregnancy? Have I been a bad parent? The vacuum this question creates can be so strong, that it demands an answer to fill it. Even if that answer is incorrect.

The disciples knew the answer, or at least they thought they knew. It was sin. Either the sin of the parents or that of the child. Compassionately, Jesus did not leave them in their erroneous thinking. Nor does He leave us in ours. He corrects it. *"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." John 9:3*

But doesn't the Bible link the world's brokenness to sin? Indeed it does. (*Genesis 3*) However, specific brokenness does not imply specific sins. God, instead, is mindful of every manifestation of brokenness in this world and permits its course. In His permitting, He is in fact saying I can bless this. I can use this. I can redeem this. I can save this.

At the surface, *John 9* does not provide all the solace which those with special need children actually have. After all, Jesus heals the blind man. He did for that man exactly what we've been praying for – but to no avail. A closer reading reveals the true healing that the blind need. Verse 5 says, *"I am the light of the world."* The blind are blind to light. Jesus was saying that He is the answer to blindness. The healing of this man substantiated this claim. In fact, all of Christ's healing in the Bible was to substantiate His claim that He is the solution for our brokenness.

When Paul asked for his brokenness to be taken away (*2 Cor. 12:8*) the Lord replied *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* (vs. 9) Here again Jesus is saying, "I am your solution".

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Some brokenness in our lives are healed and managed through circumstances. Our “crutches” are rendered needless as a result of medical operations, social restructure, therapy intensives. Sometimes however, there are other broken areas whose remedy is of a special nature and in these areas, Christ is and will forever be, our crutch.

Lessons we learn from special needs:

- Circumstances are not the ultimate remedy we need – Christ is. (*1 Peter 5:10*)
- Love “*beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*” Love never fails. (*1 Cor. 13:7*)
- One’s worth is not based on performance, cultural norms, or social expectations. Grace is apart from works. (*Eph. 2:8,9*)

Ways to support families of those with special needs:

- Appreciate the difficulties.
- In love, engage with those of special needs.
- Uphold them in prayer.
- Welcome them into the church community.
- Patiently forbear any inconveniences.