

- In John, sin is not a moral category, but more of a relationship one. To sin means NOT being in relationship with God, not believing that God is present in Jesus.³

In today's text, Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles and sees a man born blind, then heals him by making mud with spit, rubbing it on his eyes and sending him to the huge pool of Siloam – where those coming for the occasion stopped for cleansing and repentance before climbing up to the Temple. Siloam means “the sent one.”⁴

It was the Sabbath, so the Jewish leaders frowned upon even the simple act of making mud. It was work.

The leaders show their ancient mindset of the Law as they try to place blame for the blindness. Even the disciples assume sin of the previous generation results in an ailment – who is responsible for this man's blindness? His parents? The Man?

This same cause and effect kind of thinking is still with us. When something happens, don't we often look for someone or something to blame?

But, Jesus says neither the parents nor the man are responsible. The man was born blind so that God's works could be done to show who Jesus is. From the very beginning, the author of this gospel is showing us the origin and identity of Jesus – that Jesus is God among us.

Jesus works to heal the blind man and do God's works.

The blind man works through coming to believe in Jesus.

First, he hears Jesus, and then he begins to see, then he finally acknowledges Jesus identity and worships Jesus.

The disciples question, the Jewish leaders question the man, the man's parents, and then go back to questioning the man again

Can you sense his frustration in his response? *Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become disciples, too?*

A disciple is one who believes in Jesus and tries to live likewise.

³ John Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries by Karoline M. Lewis
Minneapolis: fortress Press, 2014.

⁴ Sacra pagina loc 8019.

Believing means having a relationship with God and acknowledging Jesus' identify as God in the flesh, which leads us to abundant life.

Interesting that the Jewish leadership asks, we aren't blind are we?
Good question. They are blind to who Jesus is.

What might be blinding to some of us right now?

- If we live as a disciple, as a Christian, then we acknowledge the needs of our neighbors, and don't hoard things.
- and people who aren't so afraid *still* need to keep practicing social distancing so they protect others.

Our behaviors show who we are. We may be finding new ways to gather, but we are still people who have hope and have faith.

This is a really stressful time. Are you

- having trouble sleeping
- feeling nervous
- finding it hard to focus
- maybe even having arguments or brief outbursts of anger with people you love
- or feelings of depression?

On Friday, I participated in a Zoom meeting about worship, led by Reverend Taylor Burton-Edwards, former Director of Worship Resources for The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. He has an interest in neuro-science and said this, **“we are being expected to do a whole lot with our prefrontal cortex, which is super slow, and will wear us out quickly, so it's *normal* if we feel tired. Take care of yourself!”**

Take care of yourself!

There are things we can do:

- We can take care of ourselves physically – eating healthy foods, exercising and getting sleep.

- We can take care of ourselves emotionally during this time of physical isolation by:
 - Staying connected in new online ways AND using older technology like the phone, letters, and TV
 - Setting up a routine
 - Finding some way to laugh several times a day

- At the heart of it all, it is important to take care of ourselves spiritually
And I encourage you to make this a routine part of every day:

Pray. Pray on your own. Pray at meals, pray with a friend on the phone, and pray with a group online.

Read scripture. Read the Bible. Go to our website and get the *Reading through the gospels during Lent* reading list, and read. It doesn't matter if you start at the beginning, or start with today's reading. Just do it. :)

Have some time with God: There are lots of daily devotionals online. One good one is the Upper Room.

Listen to praise songs or hymns – even sing along! Maybe even draw or color as you listen. Write in a journal.

Pray, read scripture, make some time in your life for God.

Help your children do this, too.

This will steady your life, help you cope, and bring you hope, while deepening your relationship with God. Be assured that even in the midst of all the uncertainty, the worry and suffering, God will work through us. There will be good that comes from this – so look for those little blessings.

God is with us, each and every one of us, always. We will get through this.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.