



theme: Mission – Open Your Eyes (John 9:1-41)

materials: Bibles, Bowl of Water, Cloths

What social justice/action issues should matter most to us? How is social action and salvation linked? Should we only serve people in order to see them become Christians? What should we think about partnerships between government and religion? What social needs do you see around you? To what form of social action might God be calling you?

welcome

Ask the question: “Why are people poor / homeless”? Ask people to be as honest as they can. What have they been taught about this?

read

Read out John 9:1-41 together.

Why did the disciples ask who had sinned? What had they been taught?

How do you think the blind man would have felt on hearing this question (probably repeatedly)?

Do people still think that poverty is always a direct result of sin?

When we try to help people, do we ever make these kinds of assumptions about them? In other words, do we often rush to judge the poor?

Why was the man blind, according to Jesus? Why did Jesus heal him?

Why were the Pharisees angry with the healed man?

Have you ever noticed people being angry about poor people being helped? Where would this anger come from?

Why did Jesus call the Pharisees blind? What were they guilty of?

interact

Take the cloths and dip them in the water, then pray for each other’s eyes, that we would not be blind like the Pharisees, but would receive sight like the blind man. We want to be in the position of knowing we need Jesus’ help, not assuming that our eye sight is fine. So pray for humility as well for each other, and thank God that He can give us “Kingdom eyes” for the world.

think

Go for an “open-eyes” prayer walk around your neighbourhood. Ask God specifically for the ability to see things properly, especially to see people properly, and not to rush to judge. Come back and share what you have seen.

live & pray

Take some time this week to speak and listen to someone whom you otherwise might have judged or made assumptions about.



useful resources

Book: *And You Call Yourself A Christian*, by Robert Lupton

Book: *The End Of Poverty*, by Jeffrey Sachs

Movie: *Millions*

leader's guide

The disciples had been taught, like many of their contemporaries, that misfortune and poverty were most likely the result of sin, either the sin of the person or the sin of the person's parents. Likewise good fortune was thought to be the result of right living. This idea certainly exists in the OT, but Jesus is pointing out that this is not a hard and fast rule by any means, and some things are simply out of our control. The man was not blind because of any specific sins. If sinners all went blind then all people would be blind, because all are sinners.

The idea still exists today that people are poor or unfortunate simply because of bad decisions they made. There is some truth to this with many people, of course, but there are also much larger forces at work that cause poverty and oppression. Jesus actually points out here that the man is blind in order that the work of God could be displayed in his life. Did God make him blind and make him suffer just so that this story could be told? Or is Jesus just refuting the notion that sin caused it, and pointing out that the work of God can overcome even physical disability and misfortune? Jesus is clearly showing throughout that it is better to be in the position of one who is blind and receives sight, than one who thinks they can see but is actually blind, like the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were angry because they did not believe that Jesus was the right person to be doing these miraculous signs, as He didn't live as they wanted Him to. They were blind to the reality of God's Kingdom coming to earth.