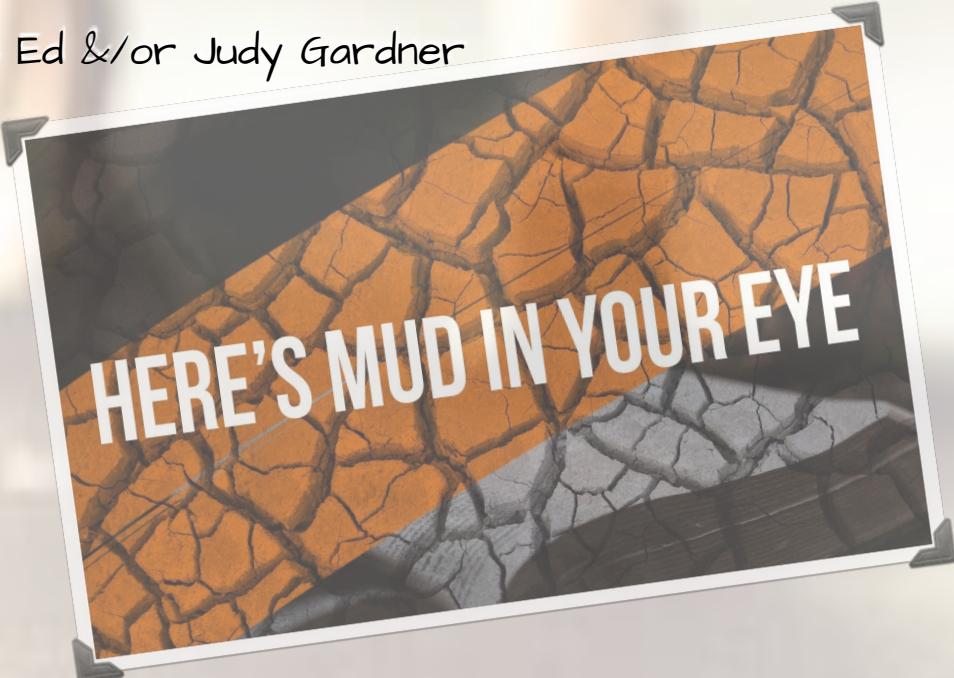


June 2-6, 2025 Edition

Following  
The Year(s) Of Jesus Part 178  
Here's Mud In Your Eye(s)

By: Ed &/or Judy Gardner



May 31/June 1, 2025

When you read the Bible ask yourself if there's anything you're reading where God is speaking to you personally... anything that you need to start applying in your own life. Then try to reflect on what you read... what you heard from God throughout the day and we know you'll be blessed.

\*\*\* These are EXTREMELY rough drafts so if you see typos... well you knew the rest ;0) These are essentially the ramblings of thoughts running through Ed or Judy's mind the week before Ed teaches a lesson on these concepts. They are pretty much how Ed gets ready for the weekends. They are not necessarily coherent so if they don't make much sense... sorry about that.

\*\*\*\* Also these devotionals are the product of both Judy & Ed's experiences and education. Figuring out which are from Judy and which are from Ed (sometimes both are contained in a single day) is half the fun.

You can also get these devotionals on Riverside's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside](https://www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside)). You don't have to have a FB account to read them but if you do have an account if you "like" the Riverside page and click the box to get updates the devos will show up on your wall every weekday (along with other news and event updates).

**Monday Reflection:** This week we are talking about Jesus' encounter with a man who was born blind. This story takes up the entirety of John chapter 9 and is a fascinating insight into how Jesus feels about suffering and how we humans feel about suffering and what causes it. But it's also a snapshot of our own relationship with sight (both physical and spiritual) and how our willingness (or lack thereof) to "see" things from Jesus' perspective will determine whether we truly see or are truly blind. This is one more case of a story in which we never find out the name of the person Jesus is dealing with- maybe because as with so many of Jesus' stories, the person could be any one of us.

This story is one where someone who REALLY wishes they could "see" is miraculously given the gift of sight. Whether we think about it in the same terms or not all of us can identify with this guy. All of us have things we've prayed to God about- things we'd love to be able to "see" in our own lives. Maybe what you'd like to "see" God do in your life revolves around a relationship, or maybe a health issue. Maybe you'd like to "see" God do something in your financial life, your professional life or some other area that's just not going the way you imagined it would.

Whatever it is, if you're like me you might miss the work of God in your life because you're missing what Jesus is attempting to do all around you even as you read these words. I know I often miss stuff that most other people notice immediately. For instance once when we were getting ready to go on a cruise many years ago I went to JC Penneys unaccompanied to find some swim trunks. The selection was limited in Alaska in January but I found some that claimed that when they got wet a secret pattern would emerge. I saw patterns of palm trees and geometric shapes and I was sold. I found a pair that would fit me and bought them. The next week we were on our Disney Cruise and it was finally warm enough to go swimming so I got out my new magic shorts and put them on. I had been telling everyone traveling with us about these shorts and they all wanted to know what shapes I had bought. I wasn't sure and had already thrown out the tags so I wouldn't know until I got them wet. Jonathan was the only one with me that day- we were going to go swimming in the goofy pool with his cousin Zale while Judy (my wife), Janet (her sister) and Jack & Jeanne (her mom and step dad) hung out with Ellie at the Mickey Pool.

After swimming around for a few minutes I went to get out of the pool and I knew something was different but it took a minute to realize the pattern had emerged. I looked down and to my horror it was not a pattern of palm trees or geometric patterns- it was naked ladies. You've probably seen them on mud flaps of 18 wheelers. Silhouettes of women in all kinds of very uncomfortable looking poses. Jonathan came running up to me right about then and I told him I had finally discovered what the secret shapes on my shorts were. He took one look and said, "mom isn't going to like that!". "No" I said, "let's go show her..." So we went to the Mickey pool (the pool for toddlers) and walked up to my family and told them I had discovered what the secret shapes on my shorts were. They thought it was hysterical but Judy jumped up and said, "maybe you and I should go to the adult pool so we don't scar any toddlers for life with your naked ladies, huh?"

Great advice (or so I thought at the time). We got to the adult pool and I jumped in so nobody would see my naughty shorts. Pretty soon I started talking to a guy who was from

Canada. He was in charge of a museum dedicated to indigenous native groups in Canada. When he found out I was from Alaska he got very excited. "What do you do in Alaska?" he asked me. I told him I was a pastor and he asked me lots of questions about my church and the people who attended. He asked especially if I knew any Alaska Natives. About that time my brother-in-law, Mark (who had not been at the unveiling of the shorts but had heard about them) came up and just started demanding I get out of the pool- he had to see these shorts. "Not now Mark... it's not a good time for this," I said but he wouldn't take no for an answer. My new friend from Canada was wondering what all of this was about so I told him the story and then he started demanding to see these shorts. So got out of the pool. I modeled my dirty shorts (a whole new meaning to the term "dirty shorts", isn't it?) and then quickly got back in the pool. After he had laughed for a couple of minutes he finally looked at me with a mystified look on his face and said, "you're not like any preacher I ever met before..."

Yeah, I get that a lot.

I miss some things. Things that many of you might not have missed. Sometimes it's hilarious. Other times not so much. But all of us do it in one area or another. Jesus says one of the reasons He came to this earth was to make sure that all of us would be able to "see":

I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind. John 9:39 (MES)

What is it that you would like to "see" God do in your life?

**Tuesday Reflection:** Ok so we know that the moral-of-the-story when it comes to Jesus healing the guy that had been born blind is found in the last part of this story:

I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind. John 9:39 (MES)

And if you read yesterday's reflection then you know that this story (as is true with so many of the stories of Jesus) is not only a historical description of how Jesus healed this one blind man but also a pattern that describes how He cures our spiritual blindness and gives us spiritual sight still today. If that's the case then watching how He heals this guy may give us some insight into how He will make us "see" ourselves. So how does Jesus go about giving this guy his sight? What can we learn from this story about our own spiritual blindness?

Well, first Jesus invites us to overcome "either/or" thinking. We humans have a bad habit of getting stuck in this pattern of thinking and the disciples of Jesus were no exception:

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?" John 9:1-2 (NLT)

Do you see the either/or thinking in the disciples question? There are only two possibilities that could explain what happened to this guy born blind- either he sinned or his parents did. This was a common world view in the ancient world- it still is although it's voiced differently.

The ancients believed (and Israel was no different) that a person born with a disability was either being punished for the sins of its parents or for its own sin committed in the womb. Even the Rabbis taught that this was the case. Why? Because what else does one do with all the suffering in the world if it can't be attributed to something the sufferer (or someone else) had done wrong? This is especially confusing when you consider that the most ancient book in the Old Testament- the book of Job- deals with this very question. The Rabbis would have known the book of Job backwards and forwards. This book dealt with the question of suffering- why does it exist. Job's friends voice the prevailing world view which is that somebody must have done something wrong for all this to be happening- the most likely culprit being Job.

Job continually voices his objections to this way of thinking. If I was going to summarize and paraphrase what Job says over the course of 34 chapters defending himself against this prevailing world view I'd do it like this: Job: "I didn't do anything that would warrant all this suffering being unleashed in my life and the lives of those I love. I mean, it's not like I'm perfect but there's nothing glaring that happened between me having one of the most blessed lives that has ever been lived and this crazy suffering that is now being unleashed. There's got to be another answer to why suffering exists."

And Job is right. There is another reason suffering exists. His name is Satan. He was behind the lie that convinced Adam & Eve to bring "sin" into the world and thereby unleash the consequences of sin. Consequences that impact not just our spiritual reality but also our physical reality. Suddenly sickness, disease, accidents and natural disasters could hurt us (and they do). Job senses there's much more going on then meets the eye and God's response to him is that he's right- even if God never tells Job exactly what that is. The Rabbis knew this story and yet they believed and taught that babies could be born blind as punishment by God for the sin of their parents or their own sins committed before they were born. It was one a classic theological discussion that disciples would have with their Rabbis and with one another.

If you remember Jesus picked disciples that hadn't made the cut. They had been told from an early age that they were not disciple material. I'm thinking Jesus picked them for precisely this reason. Now here these disciples of Jesus' were engaging in a classic theological discussion and probably feeling pretty scholarly. Feeling pretty important and lofty. So what does Jesus do? Well we'll get to the "how" of the healing tomorrow but for today let's just focus in on what Jesus teaches them about this "either/or" thinking:

Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause- effect here. Look instead for what God can do. John 9:2 (MES)

I love the way The Message paraphrase put this- Jesus basically says, "there's nobody to blame in this situation but there is something glorious God can do in this situation." In other words, Jesus says we should break through this "either/or" thinking and look for a third option (or fourth or fifth or...). Either/or thinking causes some of the worst suffering on earth. It also can make us laugh. One of my favorite jokes from elementary school is about a boy named Jimmy who stops at the ice cream truck on his way to school one hot morning but he doesn't realize how late it is and the bell rings before he can finish his popsicle. Sitting

in geography class his teacher asks him to stand and answer the question, "what do you call people who live in Europe?" As Jimmy stands there sweating and not being able to recall the answer one of the kids in the front row points at his pants and says, "European, Jimmy! European!" What is it that makes that joke SO funny? It's either/or thinking (or at least something vaguely resembling it). In this case its that the word "European" sounds so much like the phrase "you're a peein". Either/or thinking can make us laugh sometimes and in cases like this one with the disciples it would be funny if it weren't so sad. Jesus obviously needs to do some more discipling with these disciples. They are still at a place where they can see someone in pain and rather than engaging the human suffering they engage in a theological discussion. But by the time He's done with them they will forget the debate and focus on the one who is suffering. They will be changed forever by the next few minutes with Jesus and this blind guy. A series of lessons Jesus will continue to teach them over the course of the rest of His life.

When we get caught up in either/or thinking ourselves and don't look for God's third option (or fourth or fifth or...) we limit the power of God in our lives. So maybe for today let's spend some time thinking about where we've gotten ourselves caught up in either/or thinking.

**Wednesday Reflection:** The second thing we can learn from this story of Jesus' interaction with a blind man in John chapter 9 is to make a decision that we will do things Jesus' "way"- even when that way doesn't seem to make much sense to us. The Jesus "way" will always lead us more deeply into the person we were created to become but it rarely makes a lot of sense to us. And I'm guessing the way Jesus chose to heal this guy didn't make much sense to the guy or the people who were watching:

"But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world." Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. John 9:5-6 (NLT)

I told you yesterday that today we'd get to the "how" of the healing and now here we are. How Jesus healed this guy was more than a little strange. Why? Well, there were probably a couple of reasons. Number one is to bring His disciples back down to earth a bit. These guys were passed over and told they would never be "disciple" material. That no Rabbi would have them. Now here they are following the most famous Rabbi in Israel and maybe they're letting that get into their heads a bit? The debate of "what caused this man to be born blind" was one of the most talked about in ancient Israel. It was a classic theological discussion and I'm guessing Jesus' disciples were feeling pretty lofty as they engaged in this intellectual and academic debate. So what does Jesus do? He hawks a loogey (did I spell that right? I'm not sure how you spell that word and spell check is no help at all. If I could I would have instead used a sound effect but how do you write out the sound someone makes when they're working up to a good spit?).

Can you imagine Jesus' disciples. Maybe they had even hidden their rustic Galilean accent to sound more like the fancy pants southerners that mainly made up the intellectual elite in ancient Israel. And now Jesus is getting all gross and spitting. "Come on Jesus! Surely you can do something more elegant or impressive than spitting? That's just nasty..." Maybe that's why Jesus does it. To bring them back down to earth. In essence telling them that if He

wanted typical disciples He wouldn't have picked them. By the time Jesus is done with these guys they will never see someone suffering and consider it an academic issue. They will forever more be drawn to the sufferer and not the root cause of the suffering.

But it's likely that the other reason He chooses this method of healing is because He's spitting in the face of the religious leaders whose oral traditions claimed that spitting on the Sabbath was against-the-law. See, if you spit your loogey might land on a rock in which case nothing happens but there's a chance it will hit dirt and if that happens then mud is made and guess what? The oral traditions of the religious elite considered that to be "work" and therefore you shouldn't spit on the Sabbath. And John makes sure to tell us what day this happened on:

Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. John 9:13-14 (NLT)

Sometimes Jesus is very secretive about His healings and tries to accomplish His good deeds in anonymity and sometimes He seems to seek a lot of publicity. Why? Only He knows for sure but in this case it seems He is looking for a fight with the Pharisees over their "oral traditions". What are the oral traditions? They are commentaries that were meant to interpret God's commands. The Sabbath law is the one we see Jesus get into it with the Pharisees over. The fourth commandment in God's top 10 list reads:

Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. Exodus 20:8-9 (NLT)

Do you see the problem? What is work? How can I make sure I'm not breaking the fourth commandment? Somewhere along the way some pious person decided to write down what they considered to be work to make sure they would be very careful to obey all the commands given by God. Nothing wrong with that. Jesus often will cite the oral traditions and not condemn the Pharisees for going a bit overboard. He'll just call them out for binding their interpretations on others- especially when often the Pharisees would find loopholes in the oral traditions that allowed them to do things on the Sabbath that ordinary folk didn't know they could do:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. Matthew 23:23 (NIV)

I've gotten a bit off track from where I had intended to go with this reflection but I hope you see the problem (not with my writing style but with the oral traditions of the Pharisees). It is good to follow God's commands. It is bad to tell others that your interpretations of what that looks like have the same weight as the command itself. That's what the Pharisees did- if you broke their interpretation of what constitutes work (don't spit on the Sabbath) then you had broken God's command. Jesus wasn't having any of it.

So He spit. On the Sabbath. To heal this guy.

It's all the Pharisees can focus on. They don't seem to care that a miracle occurred- they just want to talk about HOW it happened. Go back and read John chapter 9 and look for all the times the Pharisees ask HOW Jesus healed the guy. And then ask yourself this: Do I do that? Do I get wrapped up in HOW Jesus is unleashing the glory of God in my life (whether it is according to my idea of how and when and what that looks like or doesn't look like) and miss what Jesus is trying to do (or is actually accomplishing) in my life? Am I like the disciples? Have I gotten so caught up in the modern Christian culture's idea of what God's blessing and work in the life of His children that if it doesn't fit my idea then I ignore the blessings He's trying to pour into my life? Is Jesus having to teach me a lesson about His glory and His promises and what they mean (and don't mean) because I've lost sight of what life with Jesus really means?

He'll do it, you know. Not because He doesn't care but because He does. He's not looking for disciples that fit into a faulty pattern of religiosity. He's looking for people who will walk the path He lays out before them with faith and courage no matter where that path leads. Maybe we should all spend some time today reflecting on if we've gotten ourselves to a place in our walk with Jesus where He might need to do something surprising to snap us out of it.

**Thursday Reflection:** Another lesson we can learn from this story is not to let what others won't see trip us up. When Jesus healed this blind guy nobody knew what to do with it:

His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!" John 9:8-9 (NCV)

Who can blame them? Nothing in their experience prepared them for this. But nothing would sway the blind beggar from His testimony- I used to be blind and now I'm not. When Jesus walked this earth He was a complete surprise to everybody. Nobody knew what to do with Him. You couldn't control Him and nobody could pigeon hole Him into a category they were comfortable with. When people started getting too comfortable or thinking they knew exactly Who He Was or what He was about He'd do something completely shocking and leave everyone shaking their heads asking themselves Who-Is-this-Guy?

In 21st century America everybody thinks they know Who Jesus Is and what He wants from us. From the faithful church goers to the atheist to the agnostic to the person who just doesn't give Him a second thought. We all think we've got Jesus figured out. But even among the faithful church goers there are so many conflicting views of Who He Is and what He wants and what He offers that it'll make your head spin. And yet we all think we have Him figured out.

Until He does something that stops us in our tracks or doesn't do something that we can't understand. In the case of the blind beggar the people who were trying to knock him off track were the Pharisees and even his neighbors. In our case we often are presented with views meant to knock us off track by others but often the most powerful source of doubt in our lives comes from within us. The outside voices just fan the flames of doubts that are already planted deep within us. How could Jesus let this happen? I thought if I followed Him

He'd keep bad stuff from happening to me? Why didn't He do something? How hard would it have been to fix my situation? Why? Why? Why? Why?

I've asked myself these questions more times than I'd care to admit. Our first miscarriage was really tough. I was working for God- He'd never let something like that happen to me, right? And then we were devastated by a miscarriage. I can remember the quake in my faith that one event caused. What does this mean? How do I handle this? I did what I've done throughout my life when I've had a crisis of faith- I went to the Bible. We all have ideas about what it means to be a follower of Jesus but I've noticed an awful lot of what I thought had very little to do with what the Bible actually says. I started reading through the Bible trying to figure out what it had to say about suffering and heartache in the lives of Jesus' followers. And do you know what I learned? In the unforgettable words of Lynn Anderson, I never promised you a rose garden. In fact, the testimony of the New Testament is that God offered us a rose garden and it wasn't good enough for us. We chose the thorns- thorns Jesus would eventually choose Himself so that eventually we would get the rose garden we all long for and feel like is our birth right. And do you know what? It is our birthright. Right now we live among the thorns and it feels so wrong, doesn't it? Do you know why? Because this is NOT the way it was supposed to be. We were created for the rose garden and now there seem to be more thorns than flowers.

But stories like these are a foreshadow of what is to come. Jesus came into this world filled with thorns so that one day we could live in a garden without thorns. Until that day the message of the New Testament is, be strong. Be courageous. Be faithful. Trust. Follow. You are not alone in your suffering. And one day all this will seem like a foggy dream as we live the life we were designed to live. And until we get there? As we struggle with the doubts that are thrown at us from others- doubts that if we're not careful will fan the flames of the doubts already planted deep within our heart- how can/should we handle it? Take a lesson from the blind beggar. There was so much he didn't know. So many questions he didn't have the answers to and so this was his response:

"I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!" John 9:25 (NLT)

That I can do. I don't know a lot (and just let me say that this is NOT the appropriate time to say "AMEN!") but I know this much- I was blind and now I can see (kind of- at least I can see more/better than I used to be able to). I was dead and now I'm alive. I was lost and now I'm found. There is SO much I still don't know. So much I still don't understand. But I know one thing without question- I would be lost without Jesus. In so many ways. Maybe we should spend today thinking about the many ways we struggle with following Jesus and the doubts that threaten to knock us off track as we deal with the thorns that we have chosen as we look forward to a life in a garden without thorns.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these

things are gone forever." And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. Revelation 21:1-7 (NLT)

**Friday Reflection:** The final lesson I want to look at from this story is that ultimately (like every story about Jesus) the main point is to trust Jesus. Trust Jesus. Not a certain church. Not a certain preacher. Not a certain author. Trust Jesus.

I grew up being told a lot of things about Jesus, God, the Bible, the church, heaven, hell and every other possible concept relating to religion. The information I was given gave me a picture of a God who was mean, narrow, frightening and condemning (whether that was the goal of the teaching I can't say— all I can say is what I got from it). God was not attractive to me. Jesus did not seem awesome to me (at least not in the way I see Him as being awesome now). He was scary and I believed I had to obey Him flawlessly or else be tossed into the fiery pits of hell where I'd burn for all eternity). That view of God sent me running from Him rather than toward Him. But then a day came when I needed something/someone to save my life. I remembered all the talk about Jesus. I remembered hearing the phrase "Jesus saves" over and over again and I wondered if maybe the preachers were right and I had missed something. I decided to go directly to the source to see what "Jesus saves" means and what it would look like in my messed up life.

So I started reading the Bible. I focused on the book of James and the gospels. I started to see a Jesus I had never dreamed of or heard of before. Sure, I had grown up in church and the stories were familiar but I started to wonder where we go the moral-of-the-story from? The gospels presented me with a Jesus that I could see as totally awesome. Totally amazing. The most loving, accepting and forgiving person Who had ever walked this earth. Yes, I saw some pretty scary and confusing stories too. Jesus said some things that are sobering when you read them but over all the picture I saw was of a God Who would go to any lengths to save me. To forgive me. To accept me right were I was and the just the way I was. A God of love and truth and grace. I am still a LONG ways off from understanding Jesus completely but the better I know Him the more of His grace and forgiveness and love I experience— even though I remain imperfect at following His path for my life. For me the path to faith went from skeptical hope (even if He exists would He want someone like me and could he save someone like me?) to hopeful doubt to hopeful faith.

Let's watch the blind beggars journey into faith. When first asked about Jesus He says this:

*The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see! John 9:11 (NLT)*

Then the more he thinks about it his view of Jesus starts to morph into something else:

Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?" The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet." John 9:17 (NLT)

As he watches the Pharisees stumble over themselves trying to discredit Jesus because of the methods He chose to use (making mud on the Sabbath) the man finds himself at a crossroads. How could this guy have healed me if God weren't with him?

"Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it." John 9:30-32 (NLT)

And then finally his journey of faith is made complete in the presence of Jesus (the very place my faith and your faith must be made complete as well):

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and went and found him. He asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The man said, "Point him out to me, sir, so that I can believe in him." Jesus said, "You're looking right at him. Don't you recognize my voice?" "Master, I believe," the man said, and worshiped him. John 9:35-38 (NLT)

He worshiped Him. I can relate. I mean, I may never have been physically blind and then given my eyes back like this guy did but I have seen things and gone places I never would have dreamed were possible simply because of the love, grace and forgiveness of Jesus. Every day I try to remember to live my life based on my trust in Him and not on any pattern or formula of belief presented to me by any attempts of human beings to figure out and describe what Jesus wants from me (even if that pattern or description is my own). Jesus never ceases to amaze and surprise me. He constantly keeps me on my toes. He constantly presents me with situations and relationships that make me rethink what I believe to be truths that are set-in-stone. One thing I've learned is if I'm not open to rethinking the truths I think are set-in-stone then my heart is in danger of becoming stone.

Trust in Jesus. That's the point of this whole story. Not trust-in-Ed. Not trust-in-your-church. Not trust-in-anyone-whose-name-isn't-Jesus (this includes you by the way and that'll make your head spin if you think about it too much- how do I trust in Jesus without trusting in my own interpretations of what I think He's asking of me? I guess I hold on loosely to what I think knowing I could be wrong. I have been wrong before. I have switched back and forth between issues several times so I was wrong and then right and then wrong and then right but I'm still not sure when I was wrong and when I was right- I just know I was). So what do I do?

Trust in Jesus. That's what saves us. That's what opens our eyes. That's what sets us free. Don't let anyone else separate you from Jesus. Don't take anyone's word for Who He Is and what He wants from you (not even mine ;o). Go to the source. And so we've come full circle to where we started earlier this week- with Jesus' statement about what this whole story was about:

I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind. John 9:39 (MES)

What's the lesson. Don't make a big pretense of being able to see. Recognize we are just stumbling around in varying degrees of darkness without Jesus. And even with Him we will find ourselves wrestling with our path.

Just trust Jesus.

That is all.