

## Daily Devotional, July 21, 2021 Praying for the Good Fortune of my Neighbors

***After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" John 9:6-8 (NIV)***

John tells the story of Jesus healing a man who was blind from birth. This is a most powerful story in which Jesus shows that he truly has power to bring healing and life to the world. However, the healing is not the main point of the story. It is the conversation that surrounds the healing that John wants us to focus on.

I can't even begin to imagine what it would be like to receive such a miracle. This had to have been the greatest day of his life. It was a moment worthy of celebration and rejoicing. However, the people around him were not able to celebrate, because they were only focused on themselves, and their questions and concerns about Jesus. Jesus had disrupted their lives by showing great compassion, mercy and power to a person who some assumed was blind because of his sin or because of his parents' sin. After the healing took place, John reports that the Pharisees decide to launch an investigation. They said, "This man (Jesus) is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." In the midst of a true miracle, we find these men bickering and arguing and grasping at straws in order to defame Jesus. Meanwhile, a man who was blind now can see.

John calls the people who begin the questioning, "Neighbors." This is hardly what you would call the proper response of a neighbor. A neighbor celebrates when healing occurs. A community rejoices when someone is restored to their full faculties. As much as this story is about the ability of Jesus to heal, it is also an example to us on how to truly be a restorative community.

How often do good things happen to those around us and we don't even think to celebrate? How do you respond to the joy of your neighbors when something great happens for them? Do you express joy?

We all have opinions about how things should be, but our faith teaches us that we should rejoice when good happens to those around us. We should cry when difficult times come to our neighbors. We should join in our neighbor's lives with compassion and empathy. This is what God does for us, and this is how we love our neighbors, *no exceptions!*

***Prayer: Father, please show me how I can demonstrate and communicate my faith in You and Your love to the people I live, work and play alongside every day. Help me to notice those people who are on the fringes of my community and world, and give me the courage to reach out to, learn from and love them in tangible ways. May I rejoice in their victories and lend them continued support. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.***