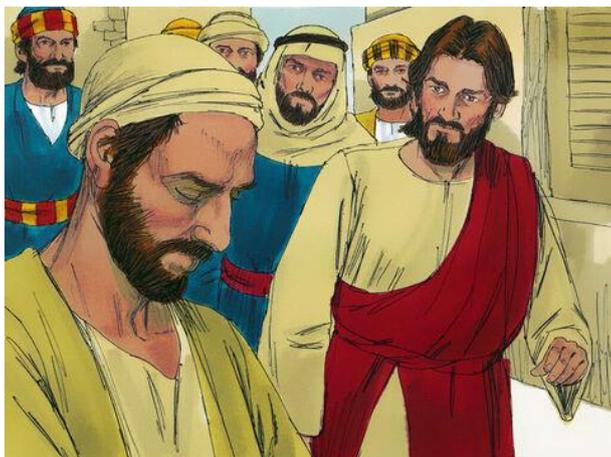


Life had not seemed fair.
Born blind. Stayed blind.
Led wherever I had to go or wanted to go.
No freedom, no light,
A life full of imaginings,
Empty of hope.

The nagging questions “Why? ...Who to blame?
Who can be sinless? Why then should we suffer for the sins of our parents?”
Endlessly debated and always unanswerable.
What had they done?
Had I somehow done wrong while in my mother’s womb?
What chance had I for repentance before thought or conscience even sparked my will?
The fact is I was born blind. I am blind now. I will always be blind.
And in those repeated low moments of jaundiced bitterness and self-pity I again condemned the sin of the world and those who laid blame upon my heritage and knew everything and nothing.

That's how it was. And one day, one special glorious day, it changed.

Sitting by the wayside, stick in hand, quietly listening to the sounds of passing feet and distant birds, I heard as if talking directly to me, the sound of a stranger’s voice, talking about me as if I was an old acquaintance. I focused hard on the conversation taking place. I felt like reaching out and asking who was there, but heard yet once more voices querying that deep question that had so occupied my thoughts all my life, and had just been thinking:



“Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?”

They were clearly talking about me, but who was this “Master” they addressed? It must have been him I first heard. My whole being focused on a picture I could not see but felt, and how felt! A sense of warmth and love brushed across me, as though my past had been erased and a new painting was being drawn. I yearned with all I had for his answer.

“Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

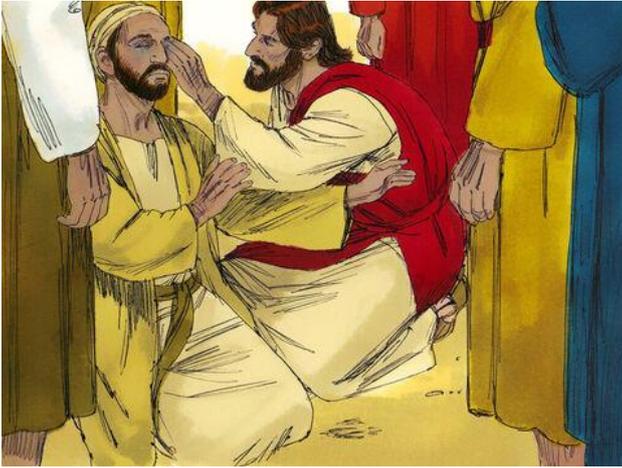
A lifetime of belief denied in one simple statement of what to this man was evidently true. The love that radiated round me was more tangible than the stick in my hand. I stood up. I dropped the stick. I began, with both hands outstretched, sensing, feeling, knowing I was in the security of that love, gently moving towards the direction of that voice as it spoke on.

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”

I didn’t understand, - my thoughts were still repeating and repeating I had not sinned, I had not sinned. His love was still drawing me closer; I could nearly reach and touch from where he spoke. My heart was hammering. I felt he was talking directly to me.

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Despite my blindness, for the first time I could sense true light, - much like I could feel the sun’s rays with their warmth, and knew it was there, but could not see it, so this new light was shining. It was the light of prophecy, for I somehow knew that this man, this Master, was indeed a prophet, and my life had already changed. As he was speaking I heard those with him move to one side as I continued to move slowly and steadily forward. I stopped. My lips moved in silent acquiescence, expectant of more but not knowing what more was or could be. Every sense was alive, yet somehow at a different, higher level of being. I heard him spit! Heard the spittle land on the ground, stretched every sense to imagine what he was doing. There was a deep silence. I didn’t know what was happening, but I had no fear. I felt a trust borne on his love. A hand touched the side of my face with great tenderness, and then a warm sensation as he anointed my left eye with clay, and then again over my right. He spoke once more with love.



“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”

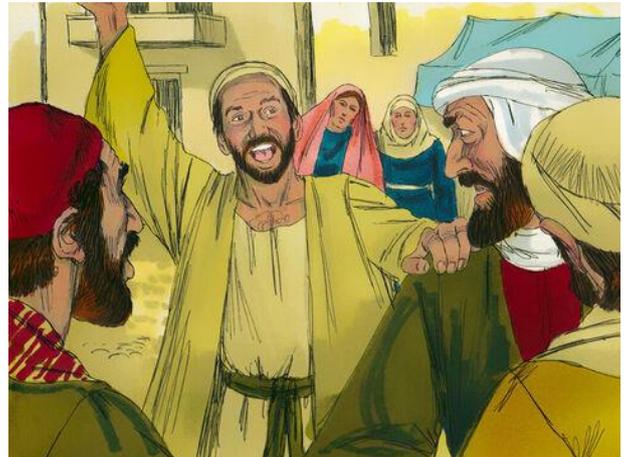
I knew I could get there, and knew that this man knew too. It wasn't far, but I had dropped my stick. Yet been given this instruction. I had to obey, not quite knowing how. He had told me what to do, and it must be possible. Turning round, a hand touched my arm, a voice said “Come, I'll take you”, and I was led. What had I to learn as I followed his command? For I was following his command! I hadn't questioned it. The pool was sufficiently far for plenty of doubts, stopping, thinking, asking why, was the whole thing real? The clay stuck to my eyes but I had to work at my balance and obedience, - why couldn't I just reach up with my hands and pull the clay away there and then?

Much easier! But no, - the pool must be and was significant. Knowing I was being obedient gave me strength and courage. Didn't Siloam signify the seat of David, the House of God? He was making me go back to my true heritage, each step requiring confirmation of that way I had to go, the way I had to be. Another negative thought sprang up at me. It was the Sabbath, - that would get me into trouble with the Pharisees, - but this prophet had spoken, given me an overriding authority because he spoke with true authority. Am I dreaming? The clay sat heavy on my eyes. Why dust and spittle? I am to wash it off. Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents. The Adam story of the dust of the ground! He had spat at that! I have to wash off the false belief of mortal heritage! I am the child of God! And it shall be made manifest! I felt born again.

My dear guide told me we were near, then by, the pool, ushered me to its edge. I pressed his hands in thanks, knelt, felt for the edge, for the water, cupped my hands and washed off what was the dirt of ages. I watched disbelieving as the drips dropped back in to the water, looked trembling at the next handful of water as it came up to wash my face again. Turned round and saw my guide, saw the walls of Jerusalem, sky, colours, people, birds, looked back down at my reflection! I could see!

I grabbed my guide's hand in joy, looked if not stared at his kindly face, touched his smile with my hand, revelling in the wonderful link of sense and sight. “I've got to find the prophet!” We went running off to find him. I didn't know where to go! We looked and ran and looked but could not find him.

I kept stumbling, looking at everything around me, new associations replacing old imaginations. We met with some people that looked aghast and I recognised the voice of neighbours. They did not believe it was me. To them my sight was impossible. I explained what had happened. How blind can they be! How can I not be me! Their fear of believing was greater than any joy they could have felt for me!



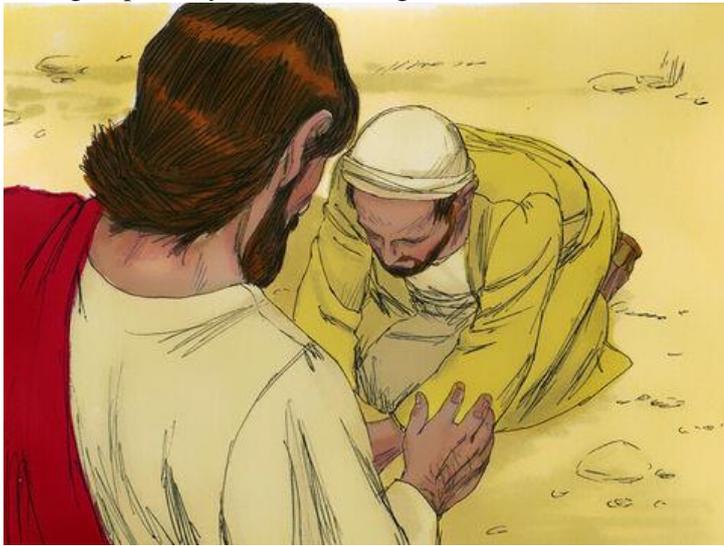
They grabbed at me and took me to the Pharisees. They all needed to prove me an imposter. I didn't fit in with their expectations, their superior knowledge; I had been healed by a sinner! He did not come from the God that spake with Moses. Argument after argument. Why could they not accept the simple truth? I could see! And this man had healed me because he was of God. Had that ever been done before? They could not share my joy and so tried to kill it.

They cast me out to wallow in the sins in which I had been born. A doubt crossed into my thinking, - is this just a fantastic dream after all? Will I wake up and be once more a blind sinner? Was this healing somehow a lie? But then so clearly came the thought that there could be no reversion to what that man, that Master, had uttered with such surety and conviction. He had spoken of a deep Truth, and I was now the standing, moving, the living proof of what he said!

A white-robed man came up to me and spoke in a familiar voice, kindness once more radiating, but now visible as well as felt. I knew immediately it was he. He offered out both his hands in love and friendship:

“Dost thou believe in the Son of God”

I had glimpsed myself in a new light, and knew that God must be the underlying reality that sourced my healing. But who can His Son be? I asked who it might be, that I could believe on him, understand more what had happened.



Jesus answered: *“Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”*

The full realisation of who he was and who I was brought me to my knees in reverent acknowledgement and praise. He had restored not just my sight but my true being and sinless sonship.

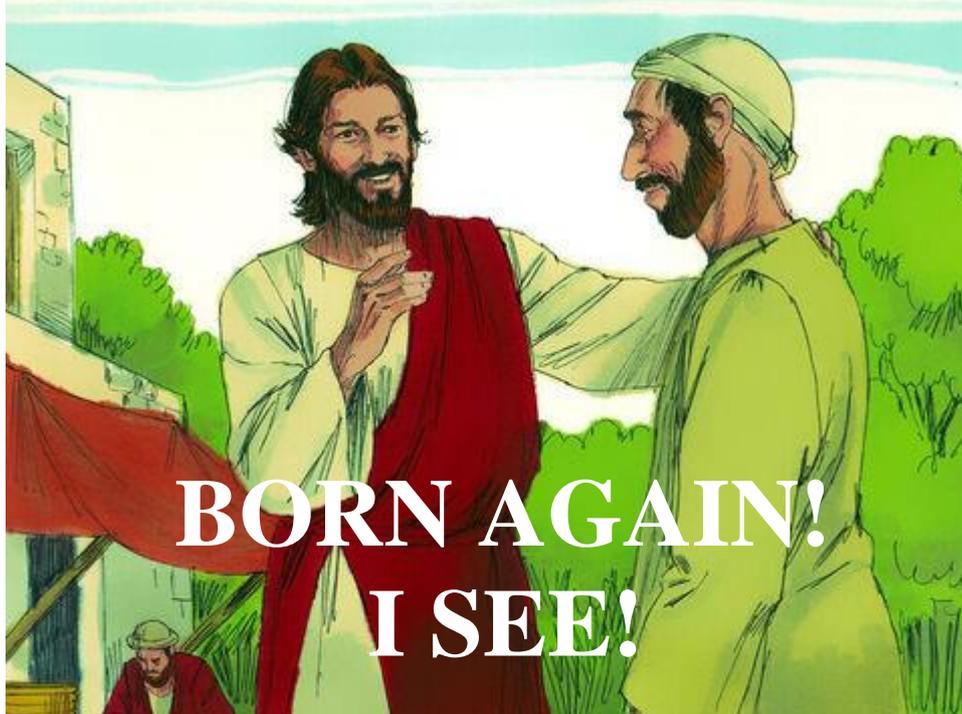
“I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind.”

My eyes had been blind but now I see. Oh may all our eyes so blinded by dust and clay that we see not, be

washed clean that all may see the true light that is now come to the world! Not born blind, but born again, that the works of God are made manifest in me, in us, so that we all can see!

My life has fundamentally changed, from blind acceptance, literally, to light, to the glorious feeling of standing in God's ever-present Love, being part of a marvellous creation that is all around me. Jesus opened my eyes! God is our perfect Father and there is only His perfect creation. That's where I stand.

I see!



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