

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

22 Re-Think of Gospel

INTRODUCTION | God's Works

In today's passage, the question about sufferings and problems is raised: why do these happen if there is a loving god, almighty and full of grace? Jesus heals a man blind from birth so that "God's works might be displayed..." and declares boldly "I am the light of the world". We often tend to make a connection between our bad deeds and our sufferings. But if we accept the Gospel of Jesus, it becomes the antidote to our fundamental illness and we can live a new life.

SCRIPTURE | John 9:1-12

9.1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10 So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

QUESTIONS |

- 1: (Verses 1-2) Think about the disciples' question. What do they mean? What is their perception of illness and sufferings?
- 2: How do we react when we are confronted to unexpected illness or problems what cannot do anything about? Why do we react this way?
- 3: (Verses 3-5) In Jesus' declaration, what new point of view does he bring about connection between sin and difficult situations? Why was Jesus able to say such things?
- 4: When we Joseph or Job's stories in the Old Testament, our lives are not simply ruled by the retribution principle. Our sufferings and problems are in the hand of a holy and loving God. Do we believe this? (Reference: Genesis 45.4-5)
- 5: (Verses 6-7) What did Jesus do to the blind man? It was a wonderful miracle, but for many people nowadays, it is easy to think that believing that Jesus' death on the cross is related God's love and forgiveness does not make sense. How do you answer to such objections? (reference: 2 Kings 5.10-12)
- 6: Through Jesus's sufferings and death on the cross, we can access God's love and forgiveness. He resurrected and protects and gives us hope today. According to Jesus, what is the meaning of our sufferings? (reference: Hebrews 4.15-16)

REFERENCES |

Genesis 45.4-5

45.4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

2 Kings 5.10-12

5.10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." 11 But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

Hebrews 4.15-16

4.15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

PRAYER |

- Jesus says that our sufferings and problems are not a punishment for our sins, but an opportunity to see God's works. Let's be thankful to God who shows us his love and grace this way. With Jesus' sufferings on the cross and his resurrection on the 3rd day, our sufferings have a meaning and we can experience God's grace as he made us his children.
- Because of our sufferings and problems, we sometimes get angry at God or people around us, or start to hate ourselves. But this can mean that we are relying on our own ideal or something other than God. Let's examine our current situation, come to Jesus' feet and find peace and satisfaction in his forgiveness and love.

UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

Change of time for Worship service on 21st June → Starts from 2pm @ Hamarikyuu Asahi Hall (small)

Lunchtime meetings

(24@Marunouchi, 25@Otemachi, 30@Jinbocho, 1st July Kasumigaseki, 2nd Otemachi)

Obento Project 4th July