

Dirty-Handed Christians...A Muddy Face!

John 9:1-12

September 8, 2019

When I was growing up I didn't have the video games, internet and other video hand-held gadgets to entertain me and my friends. Instead, we took it outside. We played in the dirt. We did dirt good!

There was a nearby swamp that had muck! Muck is a combo of mud and water that comes in a black gooey consistency along with an aroma.

When we were done with a few hours of playing in the muck we came out looking like the monsters from the black lagoon. Oh it was a good look for a young boy.

Moms didn't agree. Muck on our face and clothes was not the look they liked to see. Tide detergent was put to the test!

Maybe you haven't had the joy of getting muck on your face; you lived such a sheltered childhood. How many of you have ever made mud pies!?! Or better yet what about mud balls? Same ingredients: water and dirt. The difference is you let the mud balls dry and then have a mud ball fight. I guess this is Florida's version of a snowball fight!

Dirt on your face was a mark of joy and fun as a young boy growing up. Mud on your face was a sign of a great day in your life. Then came the disgrace of having to take a bath to wipe the muck and mud off your face!

As we continue to journey on our path of a "Dirty-Handed Christian," we look at a muddy face and find the challenge and choice given to anyone with a muddy face.

Jesus had just finished up a big week of miracles and a celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. He was so messing up the religious folks by claiming He was the Messiah that they threatened to take him outside the city and stone him to death. (John 8:59)

Jesus slipped out of the temple and disappeared into the crowded streets of thousands who were there for the religious feast celebration. As he and his disciples were walking down the street they saw a blind man. Evidently, he was well-known in the community because one of the disciples wondered who sinned to cause his blindness from birth.

The disciples were looking at the mud on his face of disgrace... blindness and asked Jesus, "What sin of disgrace caused it...his or his parents?"

Jesus quickly looked at the man's face differently. He told them neither. He then told them they were not seeing the man's face as they should. He saw it not as a muddy face of disgrace, but one of an opportunity to see God's grace! Jesus saw a muddy face of grace!

Jesus shared how he was sent as the Light of the World. (John 1:4,5)

Jesus then walked up to the blind man. The blind man could only hear what Jesus was doing. He couldn't see that it was Jesus. He heard the sound of this man scraping together some dirt and then the sound of spitting. What is this man doing? The next thing the blind man felt was a warm mud pack being placed on both of his eyes!

Why the mud? I believe it could have been a reminder of what man was created from...dirt. As long as we focus on dirt we will be blinded to who Jesus is, even when He may be standing right in front of us.

The other reason for dirt may have been from the practice of applying soothing mud packs to the eyes. It was thought that this mud salve brought some healing.

After Jesus applied the mud on the man's face, Jesus told him to go to the pool of Siloam. This was a pool of water that King Hezekiah had developed hundreds of years earlier. Siloam means, "sent one." Jesus, being the Sent One, was offering the man with mud on his face a choice!

Jesus told him to go and wash your face at the popular watering pool. With mud on his face, the blind man had a choice to obey and trust this man or stay blind. To obey would be challenging and humbling.

Let's take a musical commercial break here and see if you can name that tune. I will not sing a word but simply stomp my feet and clap my hands and see if you can come up with the song. (Stomp feet twice then clap hands once...repeat!!!)

Who knows the song? The rock group Queen's song, "We will rock you." How many of you cranked that song up when it came on the radio? I want to lift up the lyrics of two verses and the chorus...as if you didn't know it!

Buddy, you're a boy, make a big noise
Playing in the street, gonna be a big man someday
You got MUD ON YOUR FACE, you big DISGRACE
Kicking your can all over the place, singing...
We will, we will rock you, sing it!
We will, we will rock you, yeah!

Buddy, you're an old man, poor man
Pleading with your EYES, gonna get you some peace someday
You got MUD ON YOUR FACE, big DISGRACE
Somebody better put you back into your place.
We will, we will rock you....We will, we will rock you!

---Brian Harold May

The blind man had mud on his face. It was a face of disgrace! Jesus told him to go with the mud on his face to the pool...a journey of humility.

Why?

The city was crawling with people, packed with worshipers for the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the big Jewish celebrations. Add to this fact that the journey of humility was over a half a mile to the pool of Siloam through Main St. Imagine a blind man bumping his way through the crowd. "Excuse me! Sorry!" Imagine the children seeing him and saying, "Look mommy, that man has mud on his face!" Can you hear the mom saying to her little boy, "Don't look at him, he's such a disgrace with that mud on his face."

The blind man would then have to make his way down a steep hill to the pool. I imagine the man would have tripped and fallen a few times along this journey of humility with a face of mud, a face of disgrace. What a site his muddy face must have been with beads of sweat staining his face with stains of mud streams. But the blind man chose to take the risk.

He walked to the "one sent" pool without an escort. Hmmm. Why didn't Jesus walk with him? Some journeys of humility or disgrace we have to take the risk and go on our own.

Upon arriving at the waters, he falls to his knees and plunges his muddy face into the waters. I would imagine, after the journey of humility and ridicule, he immediately started washing the mud of disgrace off of his eyes and face. After knowing he had thoroughly washed the mud off he raised his face up out of the water and opened his eyes. Reality set in! He could see! He saw the light of day for the very first time in his life!

The mud on his face of disgrace in that moment changed! The mud on his face became **mud of grace!** He could see for the very first time. I don't imagine it took him long to get back to the temple to find the one they called Jesus who healed him.

His face of disgrace had now become a billboard of grace!
His face of disgrace became the opportunity for God's grace to be displayed!

Because so many people would have witnessed the muddy face of disgrace become the muddy face of grace, word immediately got back to the religious leaders called Pharisees. They were dumbfounded by the man's healing. They reserved this kind of healing for the Messiah. David, the psalmist, shared this hope hundreds of years earlier with these words:

"The Lord sets the prisoner free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous."

(Psalm 146:7-8)

The Pharisees knew this but refused to believe Jesus was the Messiah. (vss. 13-16) They were furious that Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. This was a direct violation of the Mishna of the Talmud that stated, "To heal a blind man on the Sabbath...it is...prohibited to make mud with spittle and smear it on his eyes." (Shabbat 108.2)

This set up the interrogations of the Pharisees with the man who was healed and his parents. The parents, believed but were cautious to publicly proclaim Jesus as the Messiah for fear of being excommunicated from the temple. They told the Pharisees to ask their son, he was an adult and could answer for himself. (vss. 18-23)

The healed man with mud of grace on his face believed and stayed consistent in his blindness becoming sight. His face of disgrace now a face of God's amazing grace. (vss. 24-41)

Jesus found the man who had been kicked out of the temple. Jesus asked him did he believe in the Son of Man...the Messiah.

The man asked Jesus to tell him who he was and he would believe in him. Jesus then spoke such words of healing grace... "You're looking right at him. Don't you recognize my voice?" The man who had the mud of disgrace on his face now had the mud of the Messiah's grace smiling all over his face. He saw Jesus, he recognized his voice.

The blind man with the mud of disgrace on his face, risked a journey of humility and became a man who could see...a face of grace!
He trusted and obeyed.

We are given a choice.
We are born blinded to the Light of the world.
Jesus comes to us and puts mud on our face of disgrace.
He gives us the choice to trust and obey and take that first step of humility to the pool of the sent one. He desires to wash away the mud of disgrace and give us our first sight of the light of His grace!

Do you believe him? Will you trust him to muddy your face?
Will you go and wash that mud of disgrace off your face?
Will you be his billboard of a muddy face of His grace?
You have a choice to make each new day!

A muddy face of disgrace or a muddy face of His grace?

Can we rewrite the Queen lyrics to reflect the King of King's touch?

Buddy you were an old poor blind man
Pleading with your eyes looking for peace.
You got a muddy face, a face-full of disgrace!
Jesus put mud on your face the mud of grace
And the Light of the world put you back into your place
Singing His praises all over the place!
Singing Jesus, Jesus, touched you.
Singing Jesus, Jesus, healed you.

A Dirty-Handed Christian life happens when we are willing to have a muddy face of disgrace. We take the risk and humble ourselves to be washed by the Sent One. We stumble and fall to make our way to the place where the mud of disgrace is washed away and we see for the first time the light of Jesus and His amazing grace.

A Dirty-Handed Christian has a muddy face! A muddy face of grace because we trusted and obeyed the Messiah.