



**Theme: Tell Me Something Good –
Good News in the Gospel of John
“Seeing Through the Wine and the Mud”**

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, March 14-15, 2026, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

¹¹ He told them, “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

VIDEO Sermon Intro

SLIDE “Seeing Through the Wine and the Mud”

I have been talking with several people over the past week about the state of the world and all the news which bombards us and overwhelms us. I am convinced that we humans were never meant to take in as much news and information as we seem to need to take in daily, or even moment by moment.

The first story in our Bible is about a couple that wanted to know everything and in some ways control everything in their lives when there was number way they could do that. As a result, they ate the apple in the garden which ironically is the symbol that many of you have on your devices which entice you to try to know everything. I

don't think it's a coincidence that Steve Jobs chose this image as a way of thinking that we could be in control of knowledge.

GRAPHIC Apple Logo Evolution

You may not be aware that the first apple logo was a depiction of Sir Isaac Newton under a tree as he discovers gravity or at least names it for the first time scientifically as the apple falls from the tree and lands on his head. But the next evolution has a bite out of the apple which I do believe was meant to remind us of that first story in the Bible where the first humans take a bite to experience the knowledge of good and evil.

SLIDE “In the beginning...” Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1

As we continue in our study of the gospel of John as a congregation, it's good to remember that both John and Genesis begin with these same words. John wants us to make this connection because everything in his gospel has layers and just like the beginning of our Bible starts with the story of paradise which is lost because those first humans wanted knowledge and power, the story is brought to an epic conclusion in John's gospel where Jesus is laid in a tomb in the garden and paradise is restored through his resurrection.

Today we continue our theme in the Gospel of John, longing for someone to **Tell Us Something Good** in a world full of difficult news. We are reading through the Gospel of John together in this season of Lent, the 40 Days and 7 Sundays before we get to Easter, using our Meditation Moments. If you do not have a Bible, we will be happy to give you one at our Welcome Center in the atrium. If you're watching at home or online, you can download the Meditation Moments right off our website.

Each week we're going to focus on some background information that will help us understand the rest of the Gospel. Primarily we will be doing three things each week. My hope is that this information will help the Gospel of John come alive as we read it together.

SLIDE What is the historical background of John's Gospel?

SLIDE What is the Gospel writer trying to tell us about Jesus?

SLIDE How does Jesus in John impact my life?

Who is this man and what does he mean for our lives? What does he demand from us? How does he invite us to live our lives if we follow him? John wants us to ask these questions and he writes in metaphor and layers to invite us deeper, like having Jesus be laid to rest and resurrected in a garden, and starting his Gospel not with the birth narrative like Matthew and Luke, or with the Baptism of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, but, "In the beginning..."

Let me give you another way to think about John's gospel. My wife and I went to a multi-media Vincent van Gogh exhibit several years ago. Some of van Gogh's work, when he painted it, was meant to capture a hidden message or an idea or thought that he wanted to convey, but you must look for that thought. I haven't studied all van Gogh's work, but I have this shirt I got at the exhibit of his most famous painting, "Starry Night," which I learned has a much deeper meaning than just the beautiful landscape.

GRAPHIC Starry Night

It's thought by many who have viewed this work that the light represents the light of Christ, the love of God or the presence of God. You see it swirling in the heavens and you also will notice that it's in the houses, down below. If we zoom in closer to the houses you will see that each one has light within them.

GRAPHIC Van Gogh Starry Night HOUSES UP CLOSE

The light was thought to be referencing the light and the presence of Christ. As we take down that photo, I want to tell you a bit about Vincent van Gogh. He had a deep faith and trust in God and as a young man he felt called to be a pastor. He went to seminary, but he flunked out. He went on to become a volunteer missionary, but he rubbed

people the wrong way. After a while, the church told him that he couldn't be a missionary either. This left a horrible taste in Vincent van Gogh's mouth towards the church. While he struggled with mental illness, he continued to have a deep faith but had an antipathy towards the church.

In "Starry Night", you see his deep faith reflected in the light in the heavens and the light in the houses and homes. Now let's zoom in on the church in the middle of the town.

GRAPHIC Van Gogh Starry Night CHURCH UP CLOSE

You will notice there is no light inside the church. Some have argued that this was Vincent van Gogh's way of saying that the light of Christ is no longer found in the church but is found in individual believer's homes in the world around us. The church has become a cold place which has forgotten its Lord. Did he mean to say that? I can't be certain, but that appears to be part of the message in this painting. I looked at that painting many times in my life and I never saw that until this I was reading about Vincent van Gogh.

How did I miss that? I wasn't necessarily looking for it. I wasn't paying attention to that kind of detail in this painting.

This is an important idea, because John writes his gospel at two levels. First, there is the surface level. We read it we will find that Jesus changes water into wine as his first miracle which is an interesting story. Jesus heals a paralyzed man on a mat at the pool of Siloam, and it is stunning. Jesus heals the sight of a man who was born blind, which is fascinating. We can read these miracle stories at face value and are moved by them. We get something out these stories on the surface, but John's Gospel begs to be read at a deeper level. John's Gospel is the only one of the four Gospels which begs to be read allegorically, so that every detail probably means something else and is meant to point to something deeper. John's Gospel is telling a story but it's also calling us to look and see and pay attention to what is underneath because there

is something more than meets the eye in each of his stories and teachings.

We are going to do that today with two of the miracle stories in John's Gospel. There are details in each story that are meant to take us deeper. In John's Gospel, there are seven miraculous signs which occur between the 1st chapter and 12th chapters. The other Gospels talk about Jesus performing a wide variety of miracles with a differing number in different places in different Gospels. In John's Gospel, they are not called "miracles," but they are called instead, "miraculous signs."

SLIDE John calls them "miraculous signs"

What does a sign do? A sign points us towards something else. It is pointing us in a direction. In this case, the miraculous signs of Jesus are all pointing us towards three things.

SLIDE Miraculous signs point us to... (have fly in one at a time)

- 1. ...the identity of Jesus.**
- 2. ...what he does in our lives.**
- 3. ...what he asks and demands of us.**

All these miraculous signs are done for some greater purpose with a deeper meaning. There are 7 signs and in ancient times, the number 7 represented completeness. The number 7 frequently symbolizes divine perfection and wholeness. Originating from the creation narrative where God rests on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-4), it signifies the completion of a divine work. It represents the totality of God's plan and spiritual perfection. You have 7 orifices in your head—2 ears, two nostrils, two eyes and a mouth. 7 is used over 560 times in the Bible (including derivatives), often indicating a total, finished, or maximum state. Joshua's army marched around Jericho seven times; Naaman bathed seven times for full healing. The Book of Revelation heavily utilizes the number, including seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven spirits, representing the comprehensive nature of

God's judgment and finality. In short, 7 denotes that a process is finished, the goal is reached, and the result is perfect

The 7 miraculous signs in the Gospel of John are meant to point us towards a completeness in Jesus Christ that can happen in our lives. We are going to do a little bit of Bible study today that will take us deeper into this text and I hope will help us see the Gospel of John a bit differently as we read it between now and Easter.

If you have your Bible with you, I invite you to turn to John 2:1–12. If you don't have your Bible, you can pull one of the pew Bibles in front of you. Jesus is at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. This is the only wedding Jesus appears at in the Gospels, and he is there with his disciples. There are several details in the story which are meant to be important.

First, when does this story take place? In the New Living Translation that we are using, it says, "The next day." The original Greek translation however for those words is, "The third day."

SLIDE The third day...

What else happens in the Gospels on the third day? The resurrection of Christ happens on the third day. Why would John tell us that something occurs on the third day? That seems like a strange way to tell the story. It's possible that John is trying to tell us about what life in Christ will be like after his resurrection, even though the story is happening before the resurrection.

SLIDE The wedding banquet...

The place is another important part of the story. This miraculous sign happens at a wedding banquet. There is only one time the Bible depicts heaven as a place with pearly gates and golden streets. The dominant image in the Bible of what heaven is like, or the kingdom of God, is a wedding banquet. At the end of the book of Revelation, we find Jesus preparing the wedding supper of the Lamb. Twice in his

parables Jesus uses a wedding banquet as a sign of the messianic kingdom to come. In the Old Testament, we find this wedding image as a picture of life after death.

Why would the image of heaven be a wedding banquet? In a small village, the wedding banquet was the happiest and most joyful experience that most would have. This was a peak experience of your life, when you throw a wedding party for your children or friends. In first century, Palestine, the people were peasants and lived at subsistence level for most of their lives. They saved their entire lives not for college, but for the wedding and the wedding banquet. The wedding banquet in the first century would last around seven days and there was food for seven days. You would feed your family and your neighbors and your friends and there was wine and there was dancing. It was a joyous occasion that you never forgot, and you looked forward to with anticipation.

Many of us have thought about our wedding day celebration for years before it ever happens. I have done hundreds of weddings, and there is always such relief after the ceremony, when the couple and the families can really enjoy each other at the banquet or the reception. Even today, we still have this sense of anticipation and excitement for that day for our children or even as family or friends to join in with others and celebrate their wedding. John is trying to get us to think about what happens at that wedding banquet and how they are ultimately about what will happen when the Messiah comes.

SLIDE The wine...

The wine is another important detail in the story. During the wedding, they run out of wine, which is a horrible thing to have happened in the middle of your wedding banquet. Remember that the drinking water wasn't always clean and people drank wine at every meal because it was safe and you wouldn't get sick. In the Bible, wine is mentioned 273 times. There are times when there are warnings that

come with wine because it can get us into trouble. There are warnings against drunkenness and drinking too much wine, but the rest of the references are about wine being a gift from God. Wine offerings were made to God. They were called, “drink offerings.”

Wine was an image of life and joy. When the Old Testament Hebrew prophets would talk about the Messiah coming, they would also talk about wine that would be flowing. This is meant to give us a picture of life and goodness because wine stood for this rich life that was full and blessed.

The wine runs out at the wedding banquet and Mary the mother of Jesus came to Jesus with his disciples and says, “Son, they ran out of wine.” When I first read the story in high school, I remember thinking, “Well, what does she expect him to do about it? Is he supposed to run down to the liquor store and be the errand boy?” I suspect she did expect him and his friends to go down to the Wagon Wheel liquor store and bring some wine back to the party.

Instead, Jesus will do something profoundly different, and he gives his mother a cryptic response to her question, “Woman, that’s not our problem. My time has not yet come.” That’s a rich phrase with lots of meaning and we will come back to it in several weeks as we continue to look at John’s Gospel. It’s as if Jesus is saying, “I’m not yet ready to reveal who I am.” You might remember that the first-person Jesus reveals himself to as Messiah is the woman at the well 2 chapters later. Mary seems to ignore Jesus when she goes to the servants and gives them some interesting instructions. Remember that every phrase has meaning in John’s Gospel. Let’s read together what she says in verse 5.

BIBLE

5 But his mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Let’s look at this phrase more closely. Who are the servants of Jesus today? We are, so let’s read that again. John is not just giving us a

conversation that Mary had with the servants. John, through Mary, is saying something to us as followers of Jesus, “Do whatever he tells you. Trust him and do whatever he tells you to do.” Here’s what happens next in verse six.

BIBLE

6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.

John doesn’t just tell us about there being several jars, but we read that there are six of them and how much each of them can hold and that they are used for Jewish ceremonial washing. John doesn’t need to tell us these details. So, why does he give us these details? John is trying to tell us something about ritual Judaism in the first century, which John sees as empty and devoid of life. This can happen in modern day Christianity, where we go through the motions and it doesn’t really mean anything.

The jars are empty but notice they also are made of stone. This is unusual because normally the jars would be made of clay. Why does John tell us they are **made of stone**? What’s the significance? We are meant to ask if these jars represent our hearts. Not only are the hearts empty, but they are made of stone. That would take you back to the Hebrew Bible where God says to the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 36, these words.

BIBLE

25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

Notice three images from this text in Ezekiel that most people who grew up in Judaism would know. There is the image of **water**, and we will see Jesus have the jars filled with water. There is an image of **stone**, and the jars are made of stone. The wine will be consumed and put inside of you, like the Spirit we put inside of you. And then we will **follow and obey**, like Mary encourages us to do when she tells us to do whatever Jesus tells us. Can you see how all the metaphors line up in this passage with this text from the Hebrew Bible?

John is talking about religion in his day which has become empty and devoid of meaning and simply ritualistic, that **creates hearts of stone**. Jesus is going to change that and fill them with wine that represents life and joy and peace and hope and meaning and purpose. That's what's really going on behind the scenes of the story at a deeper level. We continue in verse 7.

BIBLE

7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled,

That word "filled" is literally, "**filled to overflowing.**" John could've used several other words which simply meant water was put into them, but he uses a word that says they were filled until they overflow. They were filled to the brim, because Jesus wants to fill us up completely. **Jesus wants us to be overflowing**, as in our, "**cup overflows.**" John tells us that there are six jars with 20 to 30 gallons each, which tells us that Jesus is going to create an abundance of life. This is a **ridiculous amount of wine, 150 gallons**, which is more than they needed surely. Any ideas that Jesus will create this new wine which is more than we can ever need and will fill our lives to overflowing.

After the jars of been filled, Jesus doesn't touch it or see any magic words. Jesus simply stands there and then says this in verse 8.

BIBLE

8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So, the servants followed his instructions. 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

This tells us something about the strategy of wedding banquets in those years, that you get them drunk first on the good wine and then serve in the cheap wine! The master of ceremonies, noting that this wine was the best wine he'd ever tasted, tells us something about Jesus. Jesus is providing wine which is better than anything they had ever had to drink before.

When we choose to come to Christ, we find a life that fills us up with meaning and hope and joy and purpose.

SLIDE We find true life, and it's better than what we had before.

How do we access this wine? We symbolically do it every time we have communion together. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus took the bread and the cup and blessed them and shared them with his disciples. John doesn't tell us this. At the Last Supper in John's Gospel, we will learn in a few weeks, that Jesus washes the disciples' feet. John tells us the story of a cup of communion here in chapter 2 where Jesus turned water into wine. He offers new life to our hearts which can be made of stone. Notice that in John's Gospel, this offer is made at a wedding banquet where everyone is invited and it's not just the disciples. John reminds us that whenever we drink the cup at communion, we receive the gift of life and light into our own hearts.

In John, chapter 6, we find the miraculous sign of Jesus feeding the 5000 and then immediately following Jesus talks about being the bread of life. Jesus says in John 6:35.

BIBLE

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

In the story of Jesus turning water into wine, John is not only contrasting ritual Judaism with what Jesus offers. John has another layer, because he is also contrasting what Jesus offers with what the world offers. The god of wine in the first century of the Greco-Roman world was **Dionysius or Bacchus**. He was the God of mirth and wine and good food and parties. He was also a God who became very angry when he drank and he somehow had access to **the realm of the dead**.

GRAPHIC

The Jewish people knew that story of the Greco-Roman God and they knew it so well they sometimes decorated their dining halls with images of Dionysius from Greco-Roman mythology. In the town of Sepphoris, which was the large city near Nazareth where Jesus grew up, there are the remains of a luxury villa from the first century. There is a tile, mosaic floor in the dining hall which has scenes from the life of the god Dionysus or Bacchus.

GRAPHIC Sepphoris - Ornament

GRAPHIC Tile Mosaic Scenes

GRAPHIC Mosaic of Bacchus Party

We also know that John would've been familiar with the story, especially because of his time in Ephesus. I showed you last week a picture I took of the chapel on top of the remains of the house it is believed that John lived in during his later years with Mary, the mother of Jesus. If you go into the ruins of Ephesus, which are marvelous, you will find mosaics like the ones in Sepphoris.

GRAPHIC Ephesus Main Road

GRAPHIC Ephesus Street with Mosaics

GRAPHIC **Ephesus Ruins Interior**

GRAPHIC **Ephesus Dionysus Mosaic**

In the first photo, you see the main road through Ephesus. That big building to the left is an interior archaeological dig of the main ruins of the interior of homes. In the second photo, you can see the inside of that building and the walls of the homes in the village. In this final photo, you see Mosaic tiles on the wall of a home in the image on the left is that of Dionysius or Bacchus because his hair is made of grapes. John lived in this city, and he is making sure in his gospel that the Greeks and the Romans also knew that Jesus was greater than Bacchus or Dionysius. Jesus is the one who will bring true life and light.

When you pursue the pleasure of Dionysus as a way of life, then you eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow you might die. You want to experience as much sensual pleasure as possible because life is short. But in the end, we find we become slaves to that way of life. We might talk about that today as alcoholism or sexual addiction, or many other kinds of addictions which draw us in and become a form of self-medication, which prevents us from experiencing true life.

John is making it clear that Jesus offers us something different. While wine and sexuality have their place in our lives in moderation, they cannot become our gods or we will destroy ourselves. Jesus offers us a different kind of life if we will receive the wine and the bread that he offers to us.

As we move to our next story in John 9, I found myself remembering a fundraiser for the youth ministry I was leading where people pay money to put a pie in your face. What they don't tell you is how much it stings if you open your eyes at the wrong time and before you have a chance to get rid of the dairy product and sugar that is in every can of whipping cream. It seems like a very innocent sort of fundraiser but the first time I participated in one of these it took me hours to get my eyesight back to normal and so now I wear goggles

when I'm forced to do such a thing. In case you feel the need to put a pie in my face sometimes I thought I would show you frame by frame the first time this happened to me when a parent who bid the most was able to give me a pie in the face. I don't recommend the experience unless you can raise LOTS Of money for a worthwhile mission.

GRAPHICS Jeff Pie 1 to 4

The truth is that there are many things in life which can blind us. The sixth of the miraculous signs fills an entire chapter, which means it's an important story to help us understand what Jesus means in the Gospel of John. Jesus and his disciples are walking in Jerusalem, and they see a man who was a blind beggar. He was born blind, which means he had never been able to see for his entire life.

The disciples say to Jesus, "Why was this man born blind? Was it because of his sins or his parents' sins?" This gives us an idea of how the Jewish people thought about sin and physical illness. Some people still think this way today, that when something bad happens, it must be a punishment from God. Some even believe that fetuses could sin in the womb and be born blind because of their own sin, or because their parents might have done something and now the child was paying the price for that action. We find this idea very prevalent in the Old Testament.

I have heard many of you, when you come into my office and you are struggling with something bad that has happened in your life, reflect the same understanding. "What must I have done that is so bad that God would do this to me?" We tend to think that when bad things happen, it's God's punishment upon us. This makes it all more interesting how Jesus responds in verse three.

BIBLE

3 "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.

Most of the time, the bad things that happen in our lives happen because of the consequences of our actions, or the actions of someone else. It is not because God seeking to punish us. We believe that Christ bore the punishment for us, for anything we or someone else might've done. So, when bad things happen to us and we experience suffering, it's not about something that we did, or our parents, or someone else. We know that we are mortal, fragile, frail human beings and sometimes life is not fair. What we do recognize is that when bad things happen, God can redeem them. The suffering we experience can be an opportunity for God's work to be revealed. We can allow God to use those moments to make us better and not be overcome with bitterness.

Whenever I read this story in John 9, I think about the number of times I have met with church members, friends and even family who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Before I pray with them or do anything else, I remind them that God does not inject his children with cancer cells or some other terminal disease. That's not how God works. We wouldn't do that to our own children and God doesn't do that to his children. God doesn't give us cancer. It's not a punishment for something that we've done wrong or some way that God is trying to teach us something.

We understand the physiology of cancer. A cell mutates and that mutated cell is usually destroyed. But sometimes that mutated cell begins to replicate. The replication of those mutated cells can cause healthy cells to be destroyed and when that happens, we call that cancer. When we pray together, we pray that God will give them strength to get through treatments. We pray that God will give that person peace and hope. We pray for God to use the doctors and nurses and medicine. We also pray for a grand slam, out of the ballpark, home run kind of miracle. We also recognize that those kinds of miracles don't happen very often. That's why we call them miracles. If they happen all the time, then we wouldn't need doctors or researchers or

medicine or hospitals. While that's not how things normally work, we still pray for it and pray boldly.

Then we are going to remember that no matter what happens, the worst thing is never the last thing. We belong to God before we belong to this world and God has a hold of us and will not let us go.

In one of the cancer devotional books that we use for families going through cancer treatments, there is the story of a man who was reading John 9 shortly after he got his terminal diagnosis of cancer. He reflects on reading this part of the story in verse 3, where Jesus says that the man is not blind because he sinned or because of his parents' sin, but that was an opportunity for the glory of God and the power of God and the work of God to be revealed. He began praying, ***“Dear Jesus, even if I’m not physically healed, would you please use this so that your work might be revealed through me.”***

He found meaning and purpose in his suffering. It was not that God gave him that suffering for this to happen, but instead he turned it over to God and said, “God, please use this somehow.” He came to his last Easter service in his life, even though he was in great pain, and he heard the Scriptures and the story of the resurrection and sang as loudly as his voice would carry. His pastor was astonished to see him in his weakened state and told him, “I can’t believe you’re here today.”

His response, ***“Pastor, where else would I be? This is my hope.”***

A few months later, after he had passed away, friends and coworkers shared at his funeral that when they went to see him, he gave them a Bible, or he shared about his relationship with Jesus and how he had hope in the face of death. Many people came to faith through his faith as he asked God to use his cancer and bring something good from it.

Our suffering is always an opportunity for the work of God to be revealed. That gives meaning to our lives when we place our suffering in God's hands. I can't tell you the number of church members I have

seen bless their doctors and nurses by praying for them and encouraging them in their time of need. I think of the man who was in hospice and when the nurse came in and asked him, **“How are you feeling today?”**

His response was, **“With my fingers mostly!”**

Do you realize that you can reveal the work of God even during those hard times? Sometimes it is just a little bit of humor. God is not only revealed and how we experience suffering and move through that, but when we are willing to stop and be with others during their suffering. There is a wonderful line in William Barclay’s commentary on the Gospel of John.

SLIDE ***“To help a fellow man in need is to manifest the glory of God, for it is to show what God is like.”***

We are meant to manifest the glory of God, just like Jesus did, as we stop and help those who are in need and suffering. This precisely what Jesus says in Matthew 5:16 (Common English Bible).

BIBLE

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.

Just like in the earlier miraculous sign, John gives us some details in this story which are very important. Jesus turned the water into wine without even touching the water, but in this case, he does something bizarre to heal the man. He scoops up dirt and spits into it and makes some mud paste. He puts it on the man’s eyes and tells him to go wash it off. Why does he do all that work? Clearly, he could’ve just waved his hand and healed the man.

Let me answer that question with a question for you. **Who else in the Bible scoops up dirt** and does something good with it? Do you remember where that happened? In Genesis, God scoops up the dust

of the earth, and he forms and shapes it into human being. He then breathes into it the breath of life.

Again, the Gospel of John and the book of Genesis begin with the same three words, “In the beginning.” Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus is the one who has come to fix the brokenness in the world because of paradise being lost. Jesus has come to restore paradise. Jesus has come to restore creation. Jesus scoops up the dust of the earth and spits into it and makes a paste and brings about healing. Jesus is healing the brokenness from when humanity turned away from God, and that is the deeper level of the story.

Not only does Jesus put the mud and spit paste on the man’s eyes, but then he tells them to go down to the pool of Siloam and wash it off. This is no small task, getting down into the pool when you are blind. Jesus asked the servants to go fill up six jugs of water in an area where it was no small task to get the water. Do you trust Jesus will do what he says, even when it seems crazy?

The pool of Siloam was discovered in 2004 when they were digging a sewer line. There are stairs which lead down to the pool of Siloam. Much of the water for the city of Jerusalem came from the Gihon Spring which flows into the pool of Siloam.

GRAPHIC Pool of Siloam

In this gospel story in John, the blind beggar is meant to represent each one of us. We all are born blind as beggars until we come to faith in Christ. We are walking in the dark until we have seen the light and Christ comes in and changes us. Until we trust Christ and follow him, we can find ourselves walking in the darkness. It doesn’t mean that we are terrible people, but it means we haven’t seen the light yet. According to the Gospel of John, we put our trust in Christ, now our eyes are opened and we can see. We understand who we are and whose we are and who God is and what God’s will is for our lives.

Even today, Jesus is opening the eyes of the blind. We trust in

Jesus and then we go wash so that we can see again. What do you suppose represents that washing for us as followers of Jesus?

SLIDE **Baptism is about being washed clean so we can see**

I met this last week with a new woman in our congregation who is excited about being baptized for the first time in a few weeks here and worship. She is so excited and I want to invite you, if you have never been baptized, please let us know at our Welcome Center, or using the QR code, or by talking to our office because we would love to be a part of that with you. If you have decided that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, the next step is to go to the pool and to wash, so your eyes are opened. We baptize during worship and every year in the river as part of our River baptism service in August. You will find that you meet Christ in the moment of baptism.

We are all blind beggars, until we have seen the light. We trust in Christ, just as the servants trusted in his direction. We do what he tells us to do as followers of Jesus in our daily lives.

The final thing to note in this story is that after the man was healed, there was a great fuss made about him and his healing. You can imagine how this would happen, because the man has been blind for his whole life, and now he can see. The people who are most concerned about this are the Pharisees, who oversee the religious ritual of the day in Judaism. Here's what they are thinking. This man was healed, but he was healed on the Sabbath. Per the Jewish ritual law, there were not to be healings on the Sabbath unless someone was in danger of dying. Sabbath was on Saturday and unless someone was going to die, you had to wait until Sunday for healing.

Remember that Jesus said in Mark 2:27 these words.

BIBLE

27 Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the

Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!

If someone can be healed, even on the Sabbath, then why wait another day? Jesus didn't care much for the ritualistic rules when they got in the way of a life that is full and rich and people's eyes are being opened.

But the Pharisees didn't see it this way. They brought the man into the synagogue and begin to try him and his parents asking, "Who did this?!" The man tells them that Jesus did it and the Pharisees then call Jesus a sinner for breaking the rules and healing on the Sabbath. This is what we read in verse 25.

BIBLE

25 "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

That line is meant to be a testimony for us as followers of Jesus.

SLIDE I once was blind, but now I see!

This is our story, and it was the story of John Newton, who wrote one of the most well-known songs in human history, "Amazing Grace." He was a sailor and a slave trader in the 1750s. The captain of his ship called him out because he was more foul-mouthed and profane than all the other sailors on the ship. Now, that's saying something! His values were all twisted and he acted horribly toward not only the slaves but his fellow sailors.

They were traveling from Africa back to England and they were afraid the ship would go down and they would all perish. John Newton cried out to God for help and said, "God, if you will just save us, then I will follow you." Miraculously, somehow, they were saved.

When he returned to England, he fulfilled his pledge and began to try to follow Christ. He stopped speaking in such a vulgar language. He invited God to change his values and his heart. Several years later, he decided that being a slave trader was inconsistent with being a follower

of Jesus and he stopped mistreating slaves. He went to seminary and became a pastor of a local church. Then he began to work against the slave trade along with William Wilberforce and John Wesley. He was a powerful voice advocating for the end of the human slave trade in the UK. He lived until 1807, when he had the chance to see Parliament pass the abolition of the slave trade.

In 1779, he was preaching a sermon about the change that Jesus works in our lives. When we trust Christ with our lives and we are willing to follow and obey, Jesus changes us. As he was writing his sermon, he wrote a prayer as a chance for people to say. It was a poem for them to repeat at the end of his sermon. It wasn't set to music, but just something that everyone would say together. They made copies and everyone said the same words together at the end of the sermon. Later, it was set to music and most of you know at least one or two verses. I would like to invite you to say these words together which describes the work of Christ within us as followers of Jesus.

**SLIDE Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I'm found,
Was blind but now I see.**

**'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**

**Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**

I want to give you an invitation today. There are two clear

messages from these miraculous signs that we looked at today. The first is to trust in Jesus, because he will provide us the life that we have always wanted and never really have until we find him. Trust in Jesus and we will be able to see what we could not see before when we were walking in darkness, because we now will be in the light. Trust in Jesus and do what he tells us to do, and we will find life in his name.

I invite you to put your hands on your lap, palms up, and invite us together to trust in Jesus and to invite him to lead us that we might do whatever he says and go wherever he calls us to go. I invite you to whisper each phrase after me.

SLIDE **Prayer**

God, thank you for sending Jesus.

Jesus, I trust you with my life.

I believe that you are the Messiah.

I wish to follow you as my Lord.

Help me to hear your voice.

And have the courage to do whatever you tell me to do.

Lead me I pray.

Use my suffering for good.

Help me to alleviate the suffering of others.

In your holy name, Amen.

March 14-15 Order

1. Ryan welcomes people.
2. Song – “Good News”
3. Song – “Firm Foundation (He Won’t)”
4. Jeff welcomes and shares:
 - A. QR Code
 - B. Invites people to greet each other.
5. Sermon Video Intro
6. Sermon
7. Med Moments
8. Offering (Guatemala)
9. Song – “It is Well”
10. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
11. Care Ministers
12. The Bridge
13. Guatemala Team Commissioning
14. Closing Prayer