

SPIT AND DIRT

By Anna Gerhauser

Sunday 20 February @ Church on the Park, Milton

TEXT: John 9:1-7

*As Jesus passed by, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was **so that the works of God might be displayed in him.** 4 We must carry out the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." 6 When He had said this, **He spit on the ground, and made mud from the saliva**, and applied the mud to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he left and washed, and came back seeing.*

When I read this I saw something I had never seen before.

This was a prophetic act: I am dust. I know it and God knows it. But if just a little bit of Jesus' spit mixed with dirt can heal a blind man, God can use me in my weakness.

God partners with us in our weakness to show His power and light in the world.

HE KNOWS THAT WE ARE DUST

*Just as a father has compassion on his children,
So the Lord has compassion on those who fear (revere) Him.
For He Himself knows our form (what we are made of);
He is mindful that we are nothing but dust.
(Psalm 103:13,14)*

*Then **the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground**, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living person (soul). (Genesis 2:7)*

*But we have this **treasure in jars of clay**, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)*

What power does dust have? None! Without God's life, it is useless. As Glen shared a couple of weeks ago, we need to know that apart from Jesus we can do nothing. It sure wasn't the power of the dirt that healed the blind man.

I used to think that it was all up to bring in God's presence etc. That's like asking dust to be powerful by itself! All we need to do is be joined to Jesus. Just like Glen spoke about being yoked to Jesus a couple of weeks ago. We get to work with Him, but He's carrying all the weight!

God has spoken to me repeatedly: "Don't ever doubt that I'm with you."

God chooses to be one with us, to infuse us with His life - with Himself - to show His glory and power in the world.

Why would an all-powerful God want to partner with pitiful humans, so full of weakness? He wants us to share in His glory! (John 17)

If God's Kingdom was a shopfront, the sign would say:

"Father & sons & daughters"

Our Father has such a loving, generous and encouraging heart.

NO ONE LIKES TO BE SPIT ON

Being spit on is a humbling thing. But God's DNA is in that spit. To receive His life, to be one with Him, we need humility. We need to know we need Him.

Jesus didn't just spit on the ground and let it sit on top of the hard dirt. His saliva softened the dirt and He bent down and **mixed it together** with His hands. The dirt became infused with the saliva and they became one.

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6)

(For a more detailed description of what that grace looks like, read Matthew 5:3-11.)

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards;

not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:25-31)

The humility of Jesus

Jesus **bent down** to mix His saliva with the dirt and scooped it up with His hands.

Jesus bends down to pick us up - God humbles himself to use us.

The paradox: Just as Jesus lifted up the mud He'd made, **God lifts up the humble** - those who accept the dealings of God, His character worked in their life.

*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and **He will exalt you.***
(James 4:10)

The humility of the blind man

It was humbling to have saliva and dirt put on his eyes. But because he received it and listened to Jesus, the blind man received a miracle. If he was proud, he may have said, “WOAH! Can you please just lay your hands directly on my eyes and skip the dirt and saliva part?”

We also need **humility to receive** from God's servants, clearly made of dust but filled with the Holy Spirit (treasures in vessels of clay).

In fact, God purposely uses humble packages, so that only the humble will receive Him. Eg. Jesus born in a manger. Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey. Jesus crucified (the Lamb of God).

We would rather have God minister directly to us than do it through people. But that's not the way of the Kingdom. None of us has a full, complete

revelation of God by ourselves. We grow in the knowledge of God together (Ephesians 3:18) as we humbly receive God's life from one another.

DUST CAN'T STOP THE POWER OF GOD

Jesus was fully God and fully man. In His body He experienced everything we do - tiredness, disappointment, anguish, sorrow, pain - and yet He continued living to please the Father and obeying Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God's power is not limited by our physical and emotional weakness. (Note: in this message, weakness does not refer to deliberate sin)

Tiredness can't stop God's power.

After a long journey, Jesus sat at the well because He was tired, hungry, and thirsty. But even in His tiredness, He yielded to the Father's plan and spoke to the Samaritan woman. As a result, a whole village came to know Him.

Sorrow and grief cannot stop God using you.

Jesus was grieving the death of His cousin John the Baptist... but when He saw the crowds of people, He was filled with compassion and fed the 5000 with loaves and fishes.

When Jesus finally went to Bethany (after Martha and Mary had sent word that Lazarus was dying), he was met with grief, sorrow and bitter disappointment from his dear friends and it affected him deeply. But even in that atmosphere, Jesus yielded to the Father and raised Lazarus from the dead.

Sickness won't stop God from using you.

Timothy suffered frequent illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23), but kept preaching the Word "in season and out of season". We know people who battle illness (eg Diane, Glen, my Mum) and are still believing God for healing... but while they wait they continue to yield to Him every day, receive His grace and do what God has called them to do.

You don't need to have all the answers (to know everything) for God to use you.

*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, **even though he did not know where he was going.** (Hebrews 11:8)*

Obey the word God has given you, even though you don't have everything worked out or fully understand it. Obey one step, one day at a time - you don't need to have a five-year plan. You can fully trust the One who gave you the word, the One Who is leading you. His plans for you are good and His thoughts are WAY higher than our thoughts.

John the Baptist said:

***"I did not know Him** (Jesus); but He who sent me to baptise with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is He who baptises with the Holy Spirit." (John 1:33)*

And

***"I did not know Him;** but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptising with water." (John 1:31)*

John didn't have the whole picture, he didn't know everything (He didn't know who Jesus was), **but that didn't stop him from obeying** what he *did* know, what the Father had told him to do.

Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and David didn't fully comprehend what they were prophesying, but faithfully spoke God's word anyway.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears... For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:9,10,12)

The important thing to remember is that we follow a God who fully knows us. We will spend eternity knowing Him. He is so much deeper and more vast than the ocean. He is like the universe that is ever expanding.

The only things that will stop God from using you are pride and an unyielded heart.

YIELD, TRUST AND OBEY

God is looking for people who are **yielded (give up control, surrendered)** and trust Him... people who will allow Him to pick them up and infuse with His life. People who will live to obey Him.

Unyielded dust is useless and stays on the ground.

God uses us in our humanity, knowing that we are dust. But when that dust is joined to God, yielded in His hand, filled with His Spirit, willing to go where He sends - its form is changed and it displays the works of God.

How do we get there?

Give your weakness to God. Ask Him to fill you with His Spirit.

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13)

I've found myself praying, "Holy Spirit, permeate my mind, my emotions my body."

Obey: "Jesus, I'll do whatever you want."

Trust Him: "I know that You are with me." We are yoked with Jesus, but He is bearing all the weight.

Jesus is an amazing example of humility and confidence that the Father had sent Him and was with Him (John 13:3,4). If the Father sends you, He will be with You. (Mark 16:20)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9,10)

ENDNOTES

This “dust” is described as “fine powdery material such as dry earth that can be blown about in the air.” (Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible)

For dust to not be easily blown about, it needs to be wet.

I don't understand everything I read in the Bible - I ask for understanding.

[23](#)This is what the LORD says:

“Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,
nor the strong man in his strength,
nor the wealthy man in his riches.

[24](#)But let him who boasts boast in this,
that he understands and knows Me,
that I am the LORD,^d
who exercises loving devotion,^e
justice and righteousness on the earth—
for I delight in these things,”
declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23,24)

The Lord reveals His mysteries to those who fear Him- those who have an awe of God, that understand that He is God, far superior to us in every way.