

Faith in the Muddy Moves

1. Introduction: The Power of the Unnamed

This study constitutes the third installment of the "More Than A Name" series, a curriculum designed to explore the profound theological impact of individuals whose identities remain anonymous in the biblical canon, yet whose encounters with Christ redirected the course of history. As a theological educator, I invite you to consider that in the economy of God, anonymity is often the strategic staging ground for the miraculous. By examining the man born blind in John 9, we observe how God utilizes the ordinary and the overlooked to serve as a canvas for His extraordinary sovereignty.

Central to our analysis is a challenging distinction: the difference between "holy waiting"—a disciplined reliance on the Lord—and "disobedience disguised as waiting." We often cloak our fear of movement in the language of "waiting on a word," even when the Word has already spoken. This study will move us from the comfort of being seen by God to the active, often messy, responsibility of responding to Him while the outcome remains obscured.

2. The Scriptural Foundation: John 9:1-12

The encounter in John 9 serves as a definitive catalyst for shifting our spiritual focus from speculative theology to transformative display. It challenges the believer to move beyond the paralysis of human "debate"—where we attempt to categorize and blame—and toward the reality of God's "display," where suffering is repurposed for divine glory.

1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. 11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." 12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

Theology of the Text: Display vs. Debate

In this narrative, the disciples approach the man's condition as a theological problem to be solved, asking "Why?" and seeking a target for blame. Jesus, however, rejects the premise of their debate. He views the man not as a victim of historical sin, but as a vessel for a present display of God's power. This represents a foundational shift in Practical Ecclesiology: the church must stop debating the "why" of human brokenness and start facilitating the "how" of divine intervention. When we pivot from the "debate" of our circumstances to the "display" of God's character within them, our "unnamed" seasons of struggle are revealed as opportunities for the works of God to be made manifest.

Reflection Questions

1. **The Ego of the Debate:** Why is it often more comfortable for us to debate the "why" of our suffering than to move toward God's "display"? In what way does focusing on the "why" allow you to stay stationary and avoid the responsibility of obedience?
2. **The Sight of the Savior:** Jesus saw the man when the man could not see Him. In your current "blind" season, how does the reality of God's prior awareness of your situation challenge your feelings of isolation or insignificance?

Acknowledging that Jesus sees us in our mess is the theological starting point; the next step is the physical commitment to a "Muddy Move."

3. The "Muddy Move": From Waiting to Washing

A "Muddy Move" is the strategic act of obeying a divine instruction in the absolute thick of a mess, before the healing is realized or the resolution is visible. It is the bridge between the reception of the Word and the experience of redemption.

Holy Waiting vs. Delayed Obedience

While scripture honors the renewal found in waiting (Isaiah 40:31), we must differentiate between spiritual discipline and spiritual procrastination.

Holy Waiting	Delayed Obedience
Renewing strength through trust (Psalm 40).	Ignoring a clear command while waiting for a "feeling."
Being still until God provides a directive.	Stalling when God has already told you to "Go."
Patiently anticipating God's timing.	Disobedience disguised as "spiritual patience."
Active preparation for the next step.	Total paralysis that prevents healing.

The Significance of Siloam: Identity in the Reflection

Jesus did not heal the man instantly. Instead, He applied mud and sent him to the Pool of Siloam ("Sent"). This was a purposeful, uncomfortable instruction. Why make a blind man walk through the city with mud on his face?

The "So What?" Layer: By sending him to a pool, Jesus ensured the man's first visual experience of the world was his own reflection in the water. Before the man could see the neighbors who labeled him a "beggar" or the disciples who labeled him a "sinner," he had to see himself. The "Water of the Word" washes away the mud of human opinion, allowing the man to see his true identity: a blood-bought, redeemed child of God.

To reach this pool of true identity, we must first break through the specific psychological and spiritual barriers that keep us anchored in the mud.

4. Breaking the Barriers to Obedience

Obedience frequently stalls due to internal and external "traps" that demand perfect conditions before we are willing to take the next step.

I. Stop Waiting on Perfect

The church and our homes are often "beautiful messes." Many delay service or restoration because the environment isn't "spotless." However, we must embrace a Theology of the Dirt: How can you wait for perfection when you serve a God who started with dirt to create humanity?

- **The Progress Mandate:** We must stop waiting for a "perfect" marriage or "perfect" church and start praising God for progress and proximity. According to Ephesians 5:25-27, it is not our job to make ourselves spotless; only Jesus can cleanse the Bride.

- **Application Action:** Identify one "messy" area (e.g., your marriage or your ministry involvement) where you have been waiting for perfection. Commit to one act of "progress" this week, regardless of the surrounding mess.

II. Stop Waiting on People

Seeking human confirmation for a divine mandate often leads to continued blindness and isolation. Jesus used the mud to make the man uncomfortable, essentially pushing him away from the people who only knew him as a beggar and toward his "sent" destination.

- **The Trap of Approval:** If you wait for the people around you to validate your move, you will stay broken. The mud is often God's way of making your current "broken" state so uncomfortable that you finally stop seeking the approval of those who only see your past.
- **Application Action:** Identify a "muddy move" you've delayed because you are waiting for someone's "okay." Take one step toward your "Siloam" today without seeking human confirmation.

III. Stop Waiting on Pain-Free

We often fall into the trap of believing that healing only happens in comfort. However, the context of John 8:58-59 reveals that Jesus had just narrowly escaped being stoned to death before He encountered the blind man. Jesus moved directly from a life-threatening, painful situation into a ministry moment.

- **The Sufficient Grace:** In 2 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul learns that God's power is "made perfect in weakness." We must reject the idea that we can only move when the "thorn" is gone.
- **The "Enough" Mantra:** We must internalize that God's grace is not just a concept, but a rhythmic sufficiency. It's gonna be enough. It's enough for next Tuesday; it's enough for the loneliness of tonight; it's enough for the battle you see looming.
- **Application Action:** Identify a lingering "pain" (financial, emotional, or physical). Repeat the confession: *"God's grace is enough for this battle,"* and take one move of obedience despite the pain.

5. Final Application: Your Move in the Mud

The strategic necessity of "Muddy Moves" is the hallmark of spiritual maturity. Real-world faith looks like tithing in the middle of a job loss, seeking counseling in the middle of a divorce, or coming to the altar in the middle of shame and regret. These are the moves where we don't see the outcome, but we move because we have heard the Word.

Your Personal Action Plan

1. **Identify the Word:** What has God already told you to do that you are currently "waiting" on?

2. **Identify the Mud:** What mess (unperfect marriage, job loss, or anxiety) is currently making you hesitant to move?
3. **Identify the Pool:** What is the specific "wash"—the act of obedience—required of you right now to wash away human opinion and reveal your identity in Christ?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You see us in our most unnamed and unseen moments. We repent for the times we have used "waiting" as a mask for our disobedience. Give us the courage to make "muddy moves" today. We thank You that Your grace is sufficient—enough for the loneliness, enough for the storm, and enough for next Tuesday. Wash us in the water of Your Word, that we might stop seeing ourselves through the eyes of the world and start seeing ourselves as Your redeemed, blood-bought children. In the name of the Light of the World, Amen.