

Theme: Here's Mud in Your Eye

Object: A mixing bowl, dirt, measuring cup, water, and a small pie pan.

Scripture: **SLIDE** "When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back seeing*." (John 9:6-7 NASB)

When I was a child, we didn't have video games. Most of my days were spent playing outside with my friends. We built houses out of cardboard boxes, played baseball in a vacant lot, and climbed trees. When the day was over, I must admit that I was covered with dirt from head to toe, but I sure had a lot of fun.

Out of a growing concern that many children today are missing out on the simple pleasures of childhood because their mothers don't want them to get dirty a list was compiled of **SLIDE** "The 33 things you must do before you are 10." **SLIDE** Number one on the list was to roll on your side down a grassy bank. **SLIDE** Number two on the list was to make a mud pie! Have you ever made a mud pie? All you need is some dirt, water, and a pie pan. The first thing you do is add water to the dirt. Then you stir it up until it is smooth and creamy -- just like a chocolate pie. **SLIDE** If you like, you can add some small rocks, leaves, and dried flowers for decoration. When you have finished the mud pie is put out in the hot sun to bake. One thing I should tell you is that you never eat your mud pie. They are just fun to make!

Making mud pies is one great thing you can do with mud, but in our Bible story today, Jesus does something even more wonderful with a little mud. Let me tell you the story.

Jesus was walking with his disciples when they saw a man who had been blind since birth. The disciples thought that man was blind because he or his parents had sinned, but Jesus told them, "It is not because of his sins or his parents' sins. This happened so that the power of God could be seen in his life." God sometimes allows us to suffer that His glory might be seen in how we live with suffering. Then Jesus knelt down, spit on the ground, and stirred up some mud. **SLIDE** He took the mud and put it on the blind man's eyes. He told him, **SLIDE** "Now, go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam." The man went and washed the mud from his eyes and when he came back, he could see!

Now, you would think that everyone would be happy that the blind man could see, but the Pharisees weren't. Do you know why? It was because Jesus healed the blind man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees thought that was a sin to do anything on the Sabbath -- even if it was to help someone in need. You see they were more concerned with keeping their religious laws than they were with helping people. When the Pharisees asked the man how he had been healed, he told them that Jesus had healed him. They became angry and said to him, "God should get the glory for this -- we know this man Jesus is a sinner." **SLIDE** "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I do know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

SLIDE I don't know what problems you may be facing in your life, but I know that if Jesus can heal a blind man with a little bit of mud, he can help you with anything you might be facing.

Heavenly Father, we are here today in need of the touch of Jesus. We pray that lives will be changed so that your name will be glorified. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen

Slide Where I am, you cannot come

As we have read and studied the first seven chapters of the Gospel According to John it would be impossible to not become keenly aware of the building of the Jewish leaders' resentment towards Jesus. This knowledge also results in giving us anticipation of the coming conflict. At the beginning of his gospel account the Apostle John warns his readers that although **Slide** "He (*Jesus*) came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." (John 1:11_{NASB}) We know from history that most Jews did not receive Jesus and therefore did not come to salvation. Later in John's gospel account we learn that the Jewish leaders repeatedly schemed to kill Jesus. However, up to this point in chapter seven nothing has been acted out against Jesus. Now here, in verse 32 we now learn that, **Slide** "The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him (*Jesus*), and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him." The story in chapter seven is a mixture of good and evil, of light and shadow, of spiritual life and spiritual death. We have seen the favorable response towards Christ by some of the people and yet, it was their response that brought the Sanhedrin's action here in verse 32 against Jesus. The Sanhedrin, which is made up of the chief priests and Pharisees, now is spurred into action to publicly suppress Jesus out of fear – fear of the crowd's response towards Jesus and a fear of losing their positions of influence and power. Even the action of the Sanhedrin is a mixture of good and evil and success and failure as we learn as the story unfolds.

Slide I Am With You

The most important verses in our study this morning are verses 33 and 34. Let me set the stage by reading verses 33 and 34, **Slide** “Therefore Jesus said, ‘For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him (God) who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.’” There are number of lessons that can be taken from Jesus’ response. First and foremost is that Jesus is the servant of God the Father and cannot be held back from doing His Father’s work or be killed before His appointed time and He will complete His work and mission on earth. Jesus begins His response **Slide** “For a little while longer.” The Jewish leaders actions will not bear fruit for it is not yet God’s appointed time for Jesus to suffer. The guards end up not arresting Jesus. We are not told why – just of their failure to arrest Him. God’s time for Jesus to suffer at the hands of men was not far off. It was only six months from this Feast of Tabernacles to the Passover in the spring where Jesus would be crucified. But, until this appointed time no one would be able to take Jesus. Martin Luther wrote, **Slide** “Who is Christ’s protector? Who fends off his enemies? No one ... No, his entire armor is a little hour granted him until his crucifixion. That hour is not yet at hand, and since it was not, all the designs of his enemies against him were futile.” Nothing, no person or government could touch Jesus because it was not God’s will and the same is true for us – no success or persecution, health or illness can come to the Christian apart from God’s will. **Blank**

I am remembering the story in the Old Testament of a wealthy farmer and rancher, but who beyond his wealth was somewhat insignificant. However, he becomes great in spiritual wealth because of what God allowed into his life. God allowed a great struggle to be bought into his life by Satan. God allowed this struggle

because He is all knowing and therefore knew the outcome before the beginning. God knew that through the strength that He would give to His servant Job, that Job would triumph. Satan on the other hand is not all knowing and does not know the results until they are complete. There are many things to be learned from this story, but the one I am most interested in, as it relates to those who were against Jesus is our study this morning, is that Satan was unable to do anything to Job until God permitted it and even as God permitted it – God strengthened Job to be the victor. This is true in our study passage this morning. In spite of the distress God permits in the life of Jesus and permits in our lives, the scriptures will be fulfilled. There are number of verses that teach this in the New Testament. Let me read one, **Slide** “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13) Job proven he lived for the glory of God and Jesus demonstrated that He lived for the glory of God through all circumstances. My Beloved, the question is, “Are we living for the glory of God as modeled by our Lord and Savior?”

Slide God’s Hedge of Protection

Let me continue relating the story of Job to Jesus and of Jesus to us. We know from the story of Job, **Slide** “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” (Job 1:6) First, we see Satan, who is evil, was allowed to appear before God who is pure and the opposite of evil. Secondly, we know that Satan had just come **Slide** “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” (Job 1:7) The passage teaches that even though Satan had been on the earth he did not know Job. God

brings the man, Job, to Satan's attention. This would indicate that the sufferings of Job began with God's permission. **Blank** God was pleased with Job, but Satan says this is only because God has put a "Hedge of Protection" around Job and all he owns. Satan challenges God, (which is never a good thing to do), to take away Job's blessings and wealth and when God does this Job will curse God. God allowed Satan to have his way with Job for a season but Job stayed true to God. Not Satan nor his demons could penetrate God's "Hedge of Protection" until God allowed them to do so. Satan would make Jesus fall if he could, but God would not allow it, for Jesus' time had not yet come. Satan would cause the chosen of God, Christians, to fall if he could, but God protects His chosen and allows difficulties and suffering to come into our lives for the purpose of growing us and maturing us for His glory. God allowed suffering into Jesus' life, **not** to grow and mature Him, for Jesus is God, but so that He would give us an example of how enduring suffering grows us spiritually and that steadfast faith brings God glory. Satan will have influence in this world for but a season, just as he did with Job, but God's plan for the salvation of mankind will not be thwarted.

Slide Jesus' Warning

Jesus has warned the Jews that since they did not believe in Him as the Messiah that even if they were seeking the Messiah they would not find the Messiah. As the writer of Hebrews wrote quoting Psalm 95, **Slide** "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." (Hebrews 4:7) People have always had the same problem – because of their own ambitions and sin when God speaks they do not hear because of the hardness of their hearts. Where Jesus is going ultimately only His followers or believers will be able to follow. Yet, instead of taking heed to Jesus' warning the Jews respond mockingly saying in verse 35, **Slide** "Where does this

man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?” In their blindness they understood this to mean He would go where **they would not want to go**. The Jews had a great distaste for the Greeks with their multiple gods. The thought that the Messiah of the Jews could minister and teach the Greeks was absurd. However, in reality it was because of Israel’s spiritual blindness and because of their persecution of Jesus’ followers that the Gospel of Good News and Salvation did indeed reach beyond Israel and to the Greeks and beyond. Today it is the same; persecution both makes the church of Jesus stronger and forces the church to spread. The prophet Isaiah spoke truth to the nation of Israel and his writing is just as true for us today, **Slide** “Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.” (Isaiah 55:6) My beloved, the Day of Judgment is approaching – “Seek the LORD while He may be found.” Jesus reinforces that His time is growing short and that even His disciples will not immediately follow Him upon His resurrection. In chapter 13 of John we read, **Slide** “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” **Slide** Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered, ‘Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.’” (John 13:33 and 36) The disciples would follow upon their death – the same is true for believers today – for us.

In closing out this first paragraph of our study this morning we conclude that first, **Slide** God commands and directs both plenty and lack, peace and evil to fulfill His plan for the salvation of mankind. Second, **Slide** Satan cannot speed up or delay the plans of God. Third, **Slide** Satan has access to the world and to believers as allowed by God, and fourth, **Slide** only believers will be able to follow Jesus to

heaven and be in the presence of God. This means that no one should delay in either believing in Christ or if one is a believer then they should not delay in sharing the saving gospel of Christ with the lost.

Slide Invitation and Promise

As we move on to the paragraph beginning in verse 37 Jesus presents an invitation and a promise. Reading now verse 37 to 39, “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.’ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” As the year unfolds we receive invitations to events

that we are excited about and look forward to – a wedding, birthday party, dinner with friends, concert or a play. We also receive invitations that we are not excited about, in our minds we think, “Do I have to go?” or “How can I get out of this?”

Here is the greatest invitation ever offered to all people by Jesus the Christ - **Slide**

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.’ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.” (John

7:37-38) It is an invitation that is not forced on anyone. However, when we give

our lives to Jesus and submit to His authority He fills us up spiritually until there

flows a *river of living water* out of us. We are refreshed and we become refreshing

to others. Let me ask, how are you doing in serving others – serving not out of

obligation, but serving out of joy and love?

Slide The Setting

Think of the setting of this great feast – here in Jerusalem Jews have come from all over Judea and beyond Palestine, in fact, there would have been Jews from every territory of the Roman Empire. In addition there would have been Gentiles there as well. Jerusalem was the hub of several trade routes. There would have been Gentile proselytes who lived in Jerusalem and there would be those travelers and businessmen who would have observed all of Jerusalem coming together to celebrate this feast. The mixture of this multitude would have been much like it was on the **Slide** Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 and as the result of Peter’s preaching – Libyans, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Arabians and people from every known part of the countries and provinces of the Roman Empire heard Peter and thousands responded. The difference in our study was Jesus had not yet been crucified and resurrected and this meant that the Holy Spirit was not universally present as verse 39 tells us **Slide** “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Believers at this time had to wait to receive the Holy Spirit. Today, believers are given the Holy Spirit the moment they believe and give their lives to Christ.

Slide Timing

Jesus’ timing is also important because of the feast and His use of water, thirst and the flowing of “*rivers of living water*” as found in verse 37 and 38. Let me walk you through the main event on the seventh and final day of the feast of Tabernacles or Booths. Men would carry in their right hand a **Slide** *lulabha* (*lu-lab-ha*). This was made from branches of a myrtle, willow and palm trees tied together. In the left hand one carried the *ethrog* (*eth-rog*), which is citrus and branches tied together.

The priests would bring the crowd waving their *lulabha* and holding the *ethrog* to the pool of **Slide** Σιλωάμ *Silōam* where the chief priest would fill a gold pitcher with water. The priests and the people would then return to the temple in a great parade. The chief priest would proceed to the Alter of Sacrifice and pour out the water. People would publically chant together Psalms 113 to 118. **Slide**²⁴ “This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”²⁵ O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you from the house of the LORD. **Slide**²⁷ The LORD is God, and He has given us light; bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.²⁸ You are my God, and I give thanks to You; *You are* my God, I extol You.²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.” (Psalm 118:24-29_{NASB}) **Blank** The question was did the people believe what they recited or was it just ritual? We must ask ourselves the same question today.

The purpose of this water ritual, which was the climax of the Feast of Tabernacle, was designed to remind people of God’s giving water during the time of Israel’s wandering in the desert wilderness and that it is God who brings the rain that showers the earth - bringing life to the crops. Here with the high point of the Feast of Booths and with the water ritual still fresh in the minds of the people and the priests, the time was ripe, for we read, **Slide** “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘**If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.** He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” **Slide** As Sam Storms wrote, “Jesus was saying: ‘This feast is all about **me!** The water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness symbolized **me!** The sacrifice on the altar is about **me!** The water in

the golden pitcher points to **me!** The promise of refreshing waters of salvation refers to **me!** The water that I offer is better than that which flowed from the rock, better than that just taken from the pool of Siloam. I am the water that gives eternal life, eternal refreshment, and eternal joy! No longer do you need the temple. **Slide** No longer do you need to celebrate the feast. Celebrate **me!** Come and drink of **me!** ” (Kingdom Come, page 22) Our lives are to be a celebration of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

So, my beloved, when we celebrate Christ, when we live for Christ, we are continually celebrating the Passover and the feasts that were to be observed forever, for Jesus is the complete fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, law and ceremonies. To practice these Old Testament rituals today diminishes what Christ has done and who He is. It is God the Holy Spirit that softens the hearts of people; it is the Spirit that regenerates the soul so that people may fall in love with Jesus. God has chosen His children, the believers in Jesus as the Christ, to be His ambassadors and to take the gospel to the lost. We need to be faithful for the Spirit is forever faithful. People need to come to church to celebrate and worship as a community of Christ. We need to live, worship and share the gospel of Christ, because of our love for Jesus. **Blank**

It is now the last day of the feast and on the next day the crowds would begin to disperse to go home. Verse 37 tells us “**Jesus stood and cried out.**” The crowds were amazed by Jesus’ teaching and began asking if Jesus could be the long awaited Messiah. The Jewish leaders, on the other hand, became inflamed in their hatred of Jesus and wanted Him dead. It was Jesus’ desire is to touch people’s hearts and draw them to Him for the sake of their salvation. His appeal to the people to come and be saved is intense and straightforward. It was a time of “now

or never” for some of these people. As they left Jerusalem to return home some would never see Jesus again. So Jesus passionately gives the invitation **Slide** “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.” It is a time of “now” for all of us. Do you desire salvation? If so, then come to Jesus for He is the only One that can give salvation and peace to you and He gives it as a gift without cost.

Some responded and came, but most walked away. It is the same today when people fail to heed Jesus’ invitation of salvation because of the hardness of their hearts. It is these people we should earnestly be praying for, asking God the Holy Spirit to come into their soul and prepare them to respond to the invitation of Jesus.

Slide Prime Directive

What Christ desires is for us to return to the prime directive He has given for all people, for all generations **Slide** “‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’” My beloved, “There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31) This is the foundation to Christian life and the living out of our daily lives. Living this spirit filled life will cause “rivers of living water” to pour forth and bless others in the name of Jesus. Please stand and read the word of our Lord and Savior – Jesus Christ with me. **Read.** Now, let me ask, have you decided to commit your life; your heart, mind, soul and strength to worshipping and serving God? Then, let us go and serve our God with joy.