



DAY 36

Anticipating Joy

Scripture: John 9:3 – "Neither this man nor his parents sinned...but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

When I saw the name pop up on my phone, I braced myself. The person calling was someone I had pastored for years and they always seemed to be in some kind of crisis. Every conversation carried the weight of deep struggles, and I had grown accustomed to expecting bad news. I took a breath. A pause to strengthen myself, brace myself, and get ready to listen deeply. But this time, the voice on the other end was different. Lighter. Hopeful.

"Pastor, I just had to call and tell you some good news..."

I listened as they shared about a shift in their life. A long season of darkness had begun to lift. They weren't sure what exactly happened, but their relationships, prayer life, even just waking up in the morning felt different. They told me, "It's not just that I *know* God is there, I can *feel* him there for the first time."

It was a powerful conversation. I am ashamed to say that at first, I was a little skeptical. Were they really happy? Really changed? But I'm so grateful that something quickly pushed away those thoughts (the Holy Spirit?) and I joined them in their joy and excitement. I think we both knew this wouldn't be the end of the struggles in their life, but it felt good to share a ray of light in that moment and to soak it in.

In John 9, the man born blind surely must have felt the weight of being defined by struggle. People questioned his worth, his past, his suffering. But when Jesus saw him, he saw more than his pain. Jesus saw the possibility of transformation. Jesus always operates from the perspective of hope, not fear. What was sad though is that when healing came, not everyone was ready to see it. The Pharisees couldn't see it. Even the man's own parents hesitated. They paused—but not to celebrate. They doubted, resisted, and questioned. They anticipated the struggle. Jesus anticipated the joy and transformation.

Sometimes, we grow so used to expecting struggle that we forget to make space for transformation and to be surprised by joy. To really let ourselves *feel* it! For God is always working, even in lives where change seems impossible. And when joy arrives—when healing breaks through—we are invited to embrace it, to believe in the miracle unfolding before us.

– Pastor Chad