

Foreword by ROBERT MORRIS

SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ

YOUR MESS,
GOD'S
MIRACLE

*The Process Is Temporary,
the Promise Is Permanent*

“No one can weave together the major characters and stories of the Bible with the daily struggles we all face like my dear friend Sammy Rodriguez. *Your Mess, God’s Miracle* is a must read for every believer for the hour we are in.”

Jentezen Franklin, senior pastor, Free Chapel;
New York Times bestselling author

“Spiritual vision is essential in the darkness of the world around us. *Your Mess, God’s Miracle* invites us to live in the light and experience both sight and insight as Samuel Rodriguez opens our eyes to the reality of seeing the unseen and what matters most. I love this book and its theme!”

Dr. Jack Graham, senior pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church

“When do we experience God at work in our lives? When everything’s going well? When we’re happy and healthy? My friend Sammy Rodriguez wisely points out that Jesus accomplishes His best work in the midst of our struggle—we just need eyes to see it. Let *Your Mess, God’s Miracle* guide you and give you the perspective you need to allow God to turn your mess into a message!”

Greg Laurie, senior pastor, Harvest Christian Fellowship

“If you find yourself struggling in life and having trouble with believing God for a way out of your crisis, this book, *Your Mess, God’s Miracle*, will give you the tools to get out of the pit and on your way to victory!”

Cindy Jacobs, cofounder and president, Generals International

“If you’ve ever felt disqualified from doing great things for God, Pastor Samuel’s book *Your Mess, God’s Miracle* will encourage and empower you. You’ll discover that your greatest miracles germinate in ‘messy’ places, making them a crucial part of your journey toward your God-given destiny. I thoroughly recommend this book.”

Russell Evans, senior pastor, Planetshakers Church

“Pastor Samuel Rodriguez is one of the significant prophetic voices of our generation. His new book, *Your Mess, God’s Miracle*, is a must read. In this exciting volume, Pastor Sam takes the reader on a journey to help us see God’s power at work in our present situation or mess. He uses accounts of blind people in the Bible to help open our eyes to God’s miraculous promise. After reading *Your Mess, God’s Miracle*, you will never see your situation the same again. I was blessed by this book, and you will be as well.”

Dr. William M. Wilson, president, Oral Roberts University

“Wow! This fantastic book opens our eyes to who we are in Christ and what God is up to in all the mess, in us and in our world. Pastor Samuel, my dear friend, a voice to our generation, has unique insights for the Church that we need to listen to and ‘see.’ I know this message will help the prayer of Paul, ‘the eyes of [our hearts] may be enlightened,’ be fulfilled in you and me today.”

Phil Pringle, senior pastor and founder, C3 Church Global

“Reverend Samuel Rodriguez is one of the most impactful Christian figures in modern history. Many leaders aim to influence their generation for good. Reverend Rodriguez has helped shape his own as the undisputed leader of the explosively growing Latino evangelical movement.”

Reverend Johnnie Moore, author, *The New Book of Christian Martyrs*

“Pastor Sam has a unique way of articulating truth in a way that makes it accessible to readers of all levels of expertise, understanding and backgrounds. In *Your Mess, God’s Miracle*, his passion to see all God’s children thrive shines through. This book is a reminder that no matter where you are in your journey, you can expect a miracle.”

Kevin Sorbo, actor, director, author

“In these turbulent times, Christians need spiritual sight more than ever. Using scriptural examples, personal testimonies and prophetic promises, Pastor Sam shows us how to see the unseen in order to discern God’s work in our lives. Regardless of the challenges we face or the circumstances we are in, we will find spiritual strategies and principles to turn our mess into a miracle.”

Pastor Luke Barnett, senior pastor, Dream City Church

“When the eyes of your heart are open, you will see the world and yourself from God’s perspective. The Holy Spirit wants to encourage, enlighten and empower you with life-giving shifts. You are a culture changer. This book is theology on fire.”

Jesse Bradley, senior pastor, Grace Community Church;
evangelist; creator of Reviving Hope

**YOUR MESS,
GOD'S MIRACLE**

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*The Process Is Temporary,
the Promise Is Permanent*

SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ



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To Lauren, my tourniquet, my sunshine, Daddy's baby girl.

Go change the world!

Contents

- Foreword by Robert Morris 11
1. Sight Unseen—Open Your Eyes to Your Blindness 15
 2. Bless Your Mess—Open Your Eyes to the Power of Jesus 35
 3. Fresh Perspective—Open Your Eyes to What You Have Been Missing 53
 4. Holy Spit—Open Your Eyes to God’s Spirit 73
 5. Mud Pies—Open Your Eyes to God’s Original Design 93
 6. Double Blind—Open Your Eyes to a Holy Mess 113
 7. Wash Up—Open Your Eyes to Clean Obedience 135
 8. Look Again—Open Your Eyes and Worship Jesus 155
 9. No-Secret Identity—Open Your Eyes to Who You Are in Christ 175
 10. Point of View—Open Your Eyes to Eternity 195
- Notes 215

Foreword

When Sammy Rodriguez and I began our friendship, I quickly learned that he is one of the most teachable leaders I have ever met. He is an accountable, humble man of God who strives to live a life of integrity. I know this because, years ago, Sammy asked me to be one of his mentors. I was honored and privileged that he asked me, and I was even more impressed by his desire to truly grow in his relationship with God. He wanted to be accountable as a husband, father, pastor and leader. To this day, he will say to me, “Now, don’t forget, you can call my wife at any time and ask her how I’m doing.”

Sammy and I have a great relationship and a tremendous friendship, and we make sure we connect as often as we can. There are many times we will be at an event together and see each other from across the room, and we will make a beeline toward one another to hug. Every time I see him, I feel like I’m with a brother.

It is easy to see that God has put a special touch on Sammy’s life. When I think of my friend, I think of what the Bible says about John the Baptist—“a man sent from God” (John 1:6). It would be easy for a man like this to not remain humble and teachable, but as you read the pages of this thought-provoking book, you’ll sense the

voice of a man who leads with humility and has a strong knowledge of God's Word. It is remarkable to see just how much Scripture Sammy was able to put into this book along with incredibly practical ways to apply it. His objective is to help people to grow personally *and* in their relationship with the Lord, and to see a glimpse of the *permanent* work He is doing in their lives.

As someone who has led a church for more than two decades, I have seen so many people in my congregation become hopeless and stagnant when they find themselves in messy circumstances. One of the keys to helping people in these situations is to help them take their eyes off their problems and put them on Jesus. In this book, Sammy does an excellent job of inviting readers not to confuse the temporary journey with the ultimate destination.

There is such a need for people in the body of Christ to walk in faith and know that God has a plan and a purpose for their lives. If there is an area of your life you think you've messed up and can't be redeemed, I am here to tell you that you can't mess up too much for God! He has a greater plan for your life than you could ever imagine. In fact, the Bible is full of stories about God taking people out of their messes and restoring them, such as the blind man Jesus healed by spitting in the dirt and putting a muddy mixture on his eyes. As you read through the following pages, you will see Sammy return to this story time and time again. This is such an important, foundational story because there are many areas in our lives in which we have been blinded and find ourselves in a mess.

As you make your way through this book, I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and eyes to see any area in need of help. Allow Him to begin working in your heart so you can experience a breakthrough. If you find yourself in a mess, whether it's one you made or a circumstance you can't control, I believe God wants to do a miracle in your life. I pray that as you

Foreword

read Sammy's words, you'll allow God to step into your mess and open your eyes.

Robert Morris
Senior pastor of Gateway Church, bestselling author
of *The Blessed Life*, *The God I Never Knew*,
Beyond Blessed and *Take the Day Off*



Sight Unseen

Open Your Eyes to Your Blindness

Our God is not only the God who restores.

Our God is a God who gives us what we have never had before!

Learning to see is a lifelong process.

Physically, your vision usually develops over the first two years of life if your eyes are healthy. Just as babies must learn to walk and talk, they learn to see as their eyes begin working in tandem to distinguish the world around them as their body grows and matures. For the first four months, infants are attracted by large shapes and bright colors but cannot usually discern depth and distance. Gradually, they begin following moving objects and people and reaching for them, which is the genesis of eye-hand coordination.

Around five months old, babies' eyes work in sync to produce three-dimensional perception of their surroundings. The rods and

cones in their eyes develop more fully so that colors look more vivid in a variety of hues and tones. As they approach their first birthday, many babies have transitioned from crawling to walking, aiding in their coordination and ability to judge distances within their field of vision. By their second birthday, little ones can see amazingly well, with eye-hand coordination and depth perception usually developed fully.¹

But learning to see is more than just the physical development of our eyes, because there are many ways to see.

The Eyes of Your Heart

Intellectually, seeing is often used synonymously with observing, comprehending and processing the data your senses relay to your brain. People who “get it” see connections and reach conclusions, often filtering what their eyes see or read with their personal experiences and observations. This kind of perception enables them to solve complex problems and recognize the way puzzle pieces fit together, whether in a logical, linear fashion or a more associative, intuitive method.

When it comes to your emotions, seeing refers to empathy, compassion and your awareness of your own feelings and the feelings of others. In recent years, the phrase “emotional intelligence” has evolved from a leadership buzzword to a mainstream concept, referring to your ability, both innate and cultivated, to recognize the emotions of others and see issues and situations through their eyes. Emotional vision allows you to read body language and interpret what is left unsaid, translating what is written between the lines for greater clarity and comprehension of the communication between individuals and within groups.

Spiritually, seeing goes beyond our physical, intellectual and emotional senses and abilities and becomes a matter of faith, which matures over time as we learn to trust God for all we need and in all areas of our lives. Faith requires confidence in what usually cannot be seen by our human faculties. “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

Addressing the followers of Jesus who came after His ascension into heaven, Peter wrote, “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8–9). With a similar goal in mind, Paul encouraged the believers at Ephesus, “I pray that *the eyes of your heart* may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you” (Ephesians 1:18, emphasis added).

Spiritual vision clearly does not rely on the accuracy of our ocular organs, the eyes. Regardless of how well our pupils, irises and corneas work in harmony with our optic nerves, we can glimpse God’s power, presence and purpose in our lives if we walk in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. Conversely, a person’s physical vision may be 20/20 while they remain blind to spiritual matters. No matter how healthy, wealthy and stealthy someone may be, their spiritual vision relies on their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sometimes you cannot read the fine print, but you can see clearly what matters most. Sometimes you can read the eye chart perfectly but remain blind to your own heart.

**SOMETIMES
YOU CAN READ
THE EYE CHART
PERFECTLY
BUT REMAIN
BLIND TO YOUR
OWN HEART.**

Divine Dose of Double Vision

This doubly ironic condition of being blind and seeing compared to seeing but being blind is at the heart of one of Jesus' most profound and provocative miracles. In fact, the situation surrounding this miracle is as fascinating as the method Jesus employed to give sight to a blind man He encountered. This encounter illustrates the convergent collision of physical healing and spiritual blindness and explores the dilemma of human suffering from an eternal perspective. Notice the sequence of events:

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

John 9:1-7

On one hand, the narrative is simple and straightforward. As Jesus and His disciples were out walking, they saw a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples asked their Master a question about the cause of the man's congenital condition, and Jesus likely surprised them with His answer. Then He spat on the ground, again probably not what anyone expected, made mud with His saliva and the dirt, then spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. Then Jesus told the man, with his eyes still covered in this mud mask, to

wash himself in the nearby Pool of Siloam. The man went there, washed and returned *seeing*.

Considered from another perspective, we glimpse a paradigm for how God often chooses to meet us in the muck and mire of our greatest trials and produce a miracle of healing and wholeness. And I do not know about you, but even after reading and reflecting on it dozens of times, I still find this encounter intriguing. Because the blind man presented an opportunity not only for the miracle of healing but for addressing the origin of his condition. In addition to this divine dose of double vision, the way Jesus healed this man is unexpected to say the least.

First, Jesus spits on the ground, which was not any more customary or socially acceptable then than it is now. Simply put, it is messy. We do not often think about the Son of God, our Lord and Savior, performing an action that is probably considered uncouth by most social and cultural standards. I remember as a kid how my mother would react if she saw me sneeze without a tissue or, heaven forbid, spit out my bubble gum—let alone landing a nice wad of spittle on the sidewalk. Polite, well-behaved kids did not spit, at least not in public.

As if spitting was not enough to get the attention of the disciples and others who paused to watch, Jesus then used His spit to make a little puddle of mud. What was already messy became messier. Again, I do not know your habits, and after reading what Jesus did here, I would never judge you. But most adults do not spit and then reach down and use the salivary solution they just ejected to create mud. I mean, mud made the natural way—with dirt and rain—is bad enough, right? Most of us do not like stepping in mud puddles and getting our shoes dirty, but there was Jesus, deliberately mixing up a batch.

His peculiar behavior then went one step further: *Jesus put the mud on the blind man's eyes*. We are reaching maximum messy here,

what most of us would regard as downright gross. If we saw one of our kids on the playground spit, make a little mud cake and then start to smear it over another kid's eyes, we would be rushing to stop them before you could say, "Time out!" But this was no toddler improvising brown fingerpaint. This was an adult man, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Messy to Miraculous

Or think about this incident from another point of view. Just consider how you might feel if you had been in the blind man's sandals. You have been blind since birth, so you have never witnessed the glorious reds and golds of a sunrise. You have never looked on the faces of your parents, family and friends. You have never glimpsed the vibrancy of a rainbow arching across a turquoise sky. You have never seen your reflection in a mirror or the food you put in your mouth. Darkness is all you know.

Then one day you are sitting by a busy corner, most likely begging because you are unable to work, when a group of strangers comes along. You hear them talking and discussing a question you have pondered many times. *Why me? Why was I born blind when most others can see?* The next thing you know, one of the strangers reaches down, touches something on the ground and then places it over your eyes. And that something feels gooey and earthy just like—mud?

Yes, there is little doubt that Jesus' unorthodox method piqued everyone's curiosity. And as the Son of God, He certainly did not have to heal the man this way—He could have healed the blind man instantly without saying a word. So the fact that Christ chose to do it this way must be significant—amplifying the message it delivers with a wellspring of hope for us today.

Regardless of what the blind man might have thought or felt in that moment as the cool paste of earth and divine saliva enveloped his closed eyes, there is no indication he hesitated when Jesus instructed him to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash himself. And his unwavering obedience was rewarded with the gift of sight—something he had not experienced until that moment.

Can you just imagine him there, splashing water from the pool, rinsing away the caked-on dirty mask dripping down his face? But as he kept splattering water onto his face, suddenly he could sense a change. Something was different.

Fluttering his eyelids, he felt light pour into his pupils as blurry forms took shape—he could see! Not only could he see, but he could see perfectly, with the kind of clarity, colors and coherence that could only come from the living God. Yes, the technique used seemed a little crazy, but the results were undeniable.

No matter how messy the method, the Master had managed a miracle.

**NO MATTER
HOW MESSY
THE METHOD,
THE MASTER
HAD MANAGED
A MIRACLE.**

Blind Spots and Blindfolds

I pray that you have never experienced blindness. Nonetheless, most of us have endured times when we felt in the dark, unable to see where we were or how to proceed. Just as sight has many layers and metaphoric implications, blindness does as well. And sometimes the worst kind of blindness is the kind that escapes your awareness. If you want to experience deeper intimacy with God, a closer walk with your Savior and greater reliance on the Holy Spirit, then you must be willing to open your eyes to areas of blindness in your life.

We have all heard of blind spots and being blindsided, which reminds us that no matter how well we think we see and know what is going on in our lives, we can rarely see everything going on—at least, not naturally. Sometimes we may feel blindsided by circumstances so sudden and unexpected they leave us reeling in their wake. Having your job terminated when you had just been given an excellent review by your boss. Overhearing your best friend gossiping to others about a secret you shared in confidence. Learning of a spouse's betrayal when you felt the love between you was unshakable. Discovering your teenager's addiction to prescription medications stolen from your own medicine cabinet.

Other kinds of blindness often result from our unwillingness to see what is right in front of us. Whether out of fear, uncertainty, denial or an attempt to control our lives, we ignore the aches and early symptoms in our body, pretending nothing is wrong with us so we do not have to see our doctor to have it checked out. Afraid to confront our coworker about the budget shortage, we look the other way until someone accuses us of embezzling or misappropriating funds. Unwilling to talk through our painful feelings with our spouse, we let the silence grow until we barely know one another.

Even when you have invited Jesus into your life as Lord and Savior and welcomed the Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart, you may still experience times of blindness. These include moments when you refuse to recall the truth in order to justify giving in to temptation. Days when you tell yourself there are no consequences for the secrets you keep. Times when you cannot see how far you are drifting away from God when you stop going to church. When you hang out with people who encourage you to do things you know God does not want you to do. When you turn to old habits and addictions to numb the pain of life's storms. When you ignore

consequences—at work, at home, at school or at church—until they cannot be ignored.

The encounter between Jesus and the blind man reminds us to examine our blind spots and to exercise our spiritual vision as much as possible. Blindness is a condition that you can experience when you take your eyes off Jesus. When succeeding at work eclipses your commitment to loving and serving your family the way you know God wants you to. When focusing on your status and popularity on social media consumes the time you once spent with Him in prayer. When pursuing money or obsessing over what you do not have overshadows gratitude for the many blessings God continues to pour into your life.

Anytime you lose sight of God, the devil tries to blindfold you and keep you from seeing the truth.

False Fabrics

One of the most effective fabrics used by the enemy to blind you is despair. If he can convince you—or set you up to convince yourself, as is often the case—that your circumstances are hopeless, then he knows your spiritual vision has been impaired. When you cannot see any way to get out of the abusive relationship, the enemy is blindfolding you. When you are ready to give up financially because you believe you can never get out of debt, that is the devil darkening your spiritual vision. When the doctors have exhausted known treatments and left you writhing in the agony of your body's condition, then Satan wants you to believe that your situation is hopeless. When you long to change careers but fear you could never take such a bold risk, the enemy enjoys keeping you stuck in place.

Another fabric the enemy uses to blind us to God's truth is shame and false guilt. If the devil can weave these two heavy burdens

together into a dense shroud, then he knows you will eventually collapse under its weight. This is not the holy conviction of a healthy conscience arising from the Holy Spirit in you. No, the enemy wants you feeling guilt unnecessarily, even after you have asked for and received forgiveness from God and those you have offended. Satan wants to sideline you by not simply triggering feelings of guilt for what you have done, but by creating shame about who you are. Guilt relates to what you have done; shame goes to the core of your identity.

When blinded by shame and false guilt, you are susceptible to the devil's lies that obliterate your perception of truth. "You're so weak and needy that you will never remain clean and sober," the demons whisper. "You will never manage money well so why don't you quit trying? You're a loser who was born poor and you'll die poor. You can never get out of debt so you might as well buy what you can while you can."

And when the enemy starts attacking your worth, then the darkness seems thicker than ever. "You're pathetic—no one will ever love you. Not once they get to know who you really are. You've messed up too many times for her to forgive you again. Once he sees who you really are, you'll be rejected and abandoned."

The enemy of your soul will even try to use shame to blind you to the truth of how God sees you. "If God loves you so much, why won't He help you overcome this addiction? Why are you still struggling in your marriage? With your kids? In your job?" Once seeds of doubt are planted, they begin to take root and try to block your view of who God says you are. The devil tells you that you are a liar, a thief, a gossip, a cheater, a fornicator, an adulterer, a murderer or a hopeless mess that can never be loved or redeemed. But this is simply not true.

Old labels may have reflected some of your past behaviors, but they can never define you once you have experienced the grace of

God and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible makes it clear: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11 *ESV*). Do not allow the devil’s accusations to blind you to who you really are.

Because you are not who you used to be.

You are not where you were.

You are not how you used to be.

You are not what others did to you.

You are not what you did to yourself.

You are who God says you are.

You are what God says you are.

It is not about how others see you or how you see yourself—it is about who you are in Christ. When you know who you are in Christ, then you will never be blinded by old labels and the devil’s lies. Your identity in Christ will bring an end to your blindness.

It is time—today is the day you wash away the mud of past mistakes and open your eyes to your glorious future. It is time to become *who you already are*. And who are you? You are God’s masterpiece, His beloved child, a co-heir with His only Son, Jesus Christ. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10 *ESV*).

The good news is that God wants you to see clearly. He is opening your eyes to His truth even amid the mess of where you are right now. What Jesus did for the blind man that day is what He will do for you—if you are willing to trust Him through the mess.

Opportunity for the Impossible

Surely the blind man, whose eyes had not functioned properly since birth, must have assumed there was no hope that he would see. It would be one thing if he had lost his vision from disease as a child or because of an injury as an adult. Then he would know what he was missing, which might spark just enough hope that he could see once again. But this was not the case. This man had never been able to see. Surely he did not expect to receive something he had never had in the first place.

And based on the questions the disciples asked Jesus—“Is it this man's fault that he's blind? Or is he being punished for the sins of his parents?”—the blind man probably carried a burden of shame for his condition. He had likely heard plenty of people, perhaps even family and friends, ask the same questions. Aware of his blindness since birth, this man must have felt at times that he was the victim of grave injustices. Why should he be punished for something his parents did? And what could he possibly have done as an infant to deserve such cruel punishment, the deprivation of his sight? Eventually, this man might have started believing that somehow his blindness was his fault.

But Jesus corrected such faulty thinking before He proceeded to give this man his sight: “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him’” (John 9:3). The blind man's condition was not a punishment or even the consequence of anyone's sin. It was an opportunity for God's power, glory and goodness to be showcased. The answer Jesus gave to the disciples reframed the way they perceived the blind man's condition, and it continues to shift the paradigm of our perception today.

What if the suffering, pain and struggles you are facing are similar to the blind man's condition? What if they are not an injustice

to endure but an opportunity to showcase God's glory? Have you ever considered that you are not being punished when you are faced with challenges, but rather you are being presented with the potential for experiencing the miraculous, omnipotent power of God? This has happened so that the works of God might be displayed in you.

And, my friend, no matter what you are facing—blindness, cancer, bankruptcy, divorce, addiction, homelessness or betrayal—nothing is impossible for God.

Throughout the pages of Scripture and across the centuries, this refrain continues to echo. No matter what you are going through, no matter how dire the circumstances, no matter how unbelievable your loss or unfathomable your pain, you are more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus! What you perceive as impossible is simply an incomplete vision obstructed by your human limitations. Jesus said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). When you have the power of the Holy Spirit within you, then you can move mountains with faith as small as a mustard seed (see Matthew 17:20).

I am convinced that God is attracted to impossible circumstances.

Show Him a barren womb.

Show Him a closed door.

Show Him a broken heart.

Show Him a shattered dream.

Show Him a bad medical report.

Show Him an empty bank account.

Show Him a dysfunctional family.

Show Him your need, and get ready for God to show up!

We are promised, “For no word from God will ever fail” (Luke 1:37).

He gave Abraham a word, and it never failed.

He gave Moses a word, and it never failed.

He gave Joshua a word, and it never failed.

He gave Hannah a word, and it never failed.

He gave Elijah a word, and it never failed.

And God gave us not just *a* word but *the* Word: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:1, 14). Our Abba Father God gave us Jesus, the Word, and He has never failed!

The Lord has a word for you now, so get ready for the impossible. Your family is about to give birth to something amazing that will have an impact on generations. In your family, get ready for the impossible to take place. In your faith, get ready for the impossible to take place. In your finances, get ready for the impossible to take place.

Open up your mouth, speak into your house and say, “The Word of God will never fail!” I dare you to look into your bank account and say, “The Word of God will never fail!” Speak into that relationship that is full of drama and proclaim, “The Word of God will never fail!” I dare you to text your children and declare, “The Word of God will never fail!” I do not care how impossible it looks today—God is about to show up!

He is attracted to the impossible so that no human can get credit for what He is about to do. Your God is the God of the impossible.

Miracle from a Mud Pie

I know God can do the impossible, you might be thinking, but I'm not sure He's actually going to do the impossible in my life. Perhaps you consider experiencing God's miracles like winning the lottery or inheriting a windfall from a distant relative. These things happen, but what are the odds that they will happen to me? Not very likely, you conclude. Better to rely on your own power, ambition and tenacity to achieve results, you assume. That is surely better than some pie-in-the-sky miracle from a mud pie.

**YOUR GOD
IS THE GOD
OF THE
IMPOSSIBLE!**

But that is the exquisite beauty illustrated by how Jesus healed the blind man. Of all the ways the Lord could have given this man his sight, Christ deliberately made a mess as the precursor to the miracle. Why? Could it be to remind us that nothing is impossible for God? That even the most unlikely, unexpected messes can become fertile soil for harvesting God's power?

If you are struggling with applying the blind man's encounter with Jesus to your own life, then allow me to share your discomfort. In fact, let me confess something that you probably will not find shocking if you know me: I have a bit of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). I like order and organization, efficiency and productivity. Schedules, lists and agendas help my world run smoothly and on time. I like focusing on preparation, solutions and resolutions as quickly as possible in order to move on to the next challenge. My mind works in a very linear, sequential manner. For all the Trekkies, I may preach revelation like Captain Kirk, but I process information like Mr. Spock.

Accordingly, I find it a bit challenging to reconcile what I perceive as utter chaos with miraculous order. In other words, how can such

a miracle emerge out of a mess? This is why this biblical narrative speaks to me—because I have lived it. I have been blind to temptations until it was too late, blind to the heartaches of others and blind to my own selfishness at times. I need the messy miracle that only Jesus can perform in order to see clearly. And not simply to see clearly, but to open my eyes to what I have never seen before.

Because that is what this incident is all about.

As Jesus was walking along, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. Notice that this man was not losing nor had ever lost his sight. He never had it in the first place; he was born blind. You see, this circumstance facilitates the environment for Christ to reveal a functional miracle, an ontological extension of the creative nature of Providence.

With the woman who had the issue of blood, Jesus gave her back her health (see Matthew 9:20–22). With the invalid man at Bethesda, He gave him back his walk (see John 5:1–15). With Lazarus, He gave him back his life (see John 11). With another blind man (see Mark 8), He gave him back his sight.

But with this blind man, Jesus did not give him something he lost. Jesus gave him something he never had in the first place. For, you see, there is a difference between God restoring something you had and God giving you something you never had in the first place.

Our God is not only the God who *restores*. Our God is a God who *gives us what we never had before*. Our God is Lord of doing what has not been done before. His Word tells us, “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19). Some of us focus our time on getting back what we lost when we should be asking God to give us what we never had in the first place.

God is not interested in renovating your past. He is more interested in releasing your future. Are you ready to see what you have

never seen before? To experience what you have never experienced before? To go where you have never gone before? Then get ready, because you are about to give birth to the impossible. Get ready to sing and shout for joy! “Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,’ says the LORD” (Isaiah 54:1).

God is giving you sight to see what you have never seen before. He is birthing a miracle in the midst of your mess. From the spit and mud of your life, get ready to discover His priceless gift. Remove the blindfold and take off your mask. Recognize the areas of blindness that are being transformed.

Open your eyes to what you have never seen before!

OPEN YOUR EYES

At the end of each chapter, you will find a few questions to help you reflect on the main points we covered and how they apply to your life. Do not feel burdened or think of it as homework. While you do not have to write down your responses, you might be surprised to discover how helpful it can be to keep a record of how God speaks to you as you read each chapter.

Whether you record your answers or not, after you have spent a few moments thinking through these questions, I encourage you to go to the Lord in prayer and share with Him what is going on in your heart. To help ignite your conversation with God, you will find a short prayer. No matter what you are facing, remember that He is your heavenly Father, your Creator and the Lover of your soul. *Open your eyes to the new thing He is doing in your life!*

1. What are some blind spots or areas of struggle in your life right now? What burdens are you carrying that impede your journey of faith? What has kept you going this far?
2. In what ways do you relate to the blind man in John 9? What has obstructed your view of God's truth in your life? What lies of the enemy have been blindfolding you?

3. How have you seen God at work in the midst of your life's muddy mess? What do you need from Him most right now?

Dear God, allow me to see You with the eyes of my heart. Remove the lies of the enemy that are blinding me to Your truth, and cleanse my vision of old labels that impede my view. Thank You, Lord, for the new thing You are doing in my life, the miracle You are bringing to life. Give me courage to slog through the mud and to endure the mess because I know You are birthing a miracle in the messiness. May Your Spirit empower me so that I can know Your strength, stamina and security as I learn to see with new eyes. In Jesus' name, Amen.