

On Sunday, many of us reflected on the story of Jesus healing the blind man, and the events that the healing triggered. The Pharisees wouldn't accept the facts that were plainly before them. Why not?

In an article I read recently, George Lakoff says:

Neuroscience tells us that each of the concepts we have – the long-term concepts that structure how we think – is instantiated in the synapses of our brains. Concepts are not things that can be changed just by someone telling us a fact. We may be presented with facts, but for us to make sense of them, they have to fit what is already in the synapses of the brain. Otherwise facts go in and then they go right back out. They are not heard, or they are not accepted as facts, or they mystify us: Why would anyone have said that? Then we label the fact as irrational, crazy, or stupid.

To me, that's a scary idea, that I could reject a truth because of the programming in my brain.

One of the Lectionary passages for today is the story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:1-20](#)). It is the classical story of a dramatic conversion experience, and it gives us an idea of what it can take to change the programming in someone's brain. Paul (Saul) received a revelation so powerful that he couldn't just reject it and keep going. For three days he was completely out of commission, blind and not eating or drinking. Whether he was literally or figuratively blind doesn't matter; it amounts to the same thing; he couldn't make sense out of the world. But just having the revelation wasn't enough to change Paul. It took an intervention by an agent of God. Ananias helped Paul to build a new concept so that his brain could process the fact that Jesus was from God.

We all suffer from some degree of blindness. Fortunately it does not have to be permanent. If we are open to God's grace and revelation, and allow ourselves to be ministered to by God's agents, we can continue the process of our own conversion. We can also function as God's agents, extending God's grace to others in the realization that the process of restructuring thinking takes time, and can be painful.

Prayer:

God,

- Help me to not be blind to my own blindness.
- Help me to extend grace to others who do not share my views.
- Help me to demonstrate Christlike patterns of thinking.