

That You May Have Life in His Name - July 2, 2023

John 9 - Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

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We are in a year long series on the book of John - the theme of which comes from John 20:31 -

“these are written (signs and stories) so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

In our day, there is much that would have you believe it to be true. That salvation can come from a certain affinity group, or ideology. That your purpose can be found in anything in this world. Even noble things - the seeking of justice, identity, or even the reformation of broken systems - all of them come up short, woefully, in providing meaning and life.

Please remember that when you read News Headlines.

John records these stories of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection that we might believe that they are true. But not a mere intellectual nod → that by believing IN these things...we would have life. **Something alters/fundamentally and radically transforms a person when he/she believes in Jesus Christ.**

And when you find yourself face to face with the person of Jesus as the Bible reveals him, not as your culture does, it radically changes you. As we will read today and discuss in very short form → **there are those who see Jesus, and there are those who don't see Jesus.**

If you have your Bible, turn with me to **John 9**. (READ).

Context - sometime between feasts in Jerusalem, Jesus is still in Jerusalem and has recently declared (**8:12**) - I Am the Light of the World (repeated in **9:5**).

- Based on his claims in the preceding chapters, there is a mob led by the religious elite that are ready to stone him for blasphemy.
- But undeterred and unphased by their assault, Jesus hides himself and walks out of the temple.
- **Jesus was often reviled, but never ruffled.** *“One of the things worthy to be noticed in our Lord's character is his wonderful quiet of spirit, especially his marvelous calmness in the presence of those who misjudged, and insulted, and slandered him.”* (Spurgeon)¹
- Jesus goes from almost being stoned on to the next desperate soul in need of his care. **“We must work the works of Him who sent me” (9:4)**

Who sinned? This man or his parents?

While we may not ask the question this way, there is an underlying human condition at work here. As Matt Carter writes: “A legalist operates under the (usually unspoken) assumption that people earn or keep God's favor through righteous deeds, so legalists begin to view themselves as deserving of certain blessings. In other words,

¹ Charles Spurgeon as quoted in [The Enduring Word Commentary](https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-9/) by David Guzik, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-9/>

if I can earn God's favor by my good works, then the more good works I do, the more God becomes indebted to me. If something bad happens to me, it must be because I did something bad."²

The common beliefs were either...this person's sin (in utero??) caused his birth defect or the sin of his parents caused his condition. BOTH WRONG according to Jesus... and "Jesus had no sympathy for legalism."³

Jesus makes it clear that the reason he was born blind, while yes a part of being born into a broken world is that not all things are as they should be (blindness in general), this man's condition was sovereignly ordained that the power of God would be displayed.

"This man was born blind so Jesus could teach the profound truth of spiritual blindness and reveal himself as the light of the world. That puts a different perspective and (all) trials we face."⁴

9:4-7

- Jesus sees the man, tells disciples that he is the light of the world...
- Makes mud with dirt and his own spit, cakes the man's eyes with the mud,
- And says, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.

**** Important to note here that the man cannot yet see. Jesus has covered his eyes with mud, has made some astonishing statements about being the light of the world and doing the works of Him who sent Him...but the man is still blind.

Imagine the story this way...

"Jesus and his disciples meet a man born blind. Jesus promises to heal the man's eyes. He makes little mud packs, places them in the man's eyes, and tells him to go wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. A couple of hours later, a friend of the blind man walks by and see him begging in his normal spot, but his eyes are caked with mud.

"What's going on?" His friend asks.

"Not much! What's up with you?"

"Nothing. What's all over our eyes?"

"It's mud. Some guy came by and put this mud on my eyes and said it would help me see. I let him do it, but didn't make sense. I'm fine. There's nothing wrong with me."

Could it be possible for a man who was born blind to assume he was fine? Only someone who realized he was blind would long for sight. Only the one who understands his condition will allow Jesus to fill his eyes with mud and go through town looking ridiculous in the hopes of healing. Only when a person understands his spiritual blindness will he turn to Jesus for healing."⁵

But that's not what happens.

V.7 - so so he went and washed came back seeing.

Prophecy fulfilled...

² Carter/Wredburg - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary, Exalting Jesus in John, 2017, p. 208.

³ Ibid, 208.

⁴ Ibid, 208 (italics mine).

⁵ Ibid, 211.

**“The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. (Psalm 146:7-8).**

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened” (Isaiah 35:5)

And the Pharisees are livid....

Interrogation ensues - who did this thing that no one has ever heard of?

- The question him – one they called a sinner for his current (now past) blindness...
- Then they bring in his parents. Out of fear they refuse to answer the questions (only that this is in fact their son who was born blind).
- The now seeing man cannot believe their questions!
 - “Whether he is a sinner or not i do not know. One thing i do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” (v.25)
 - And again in v.30-32, dripping in sarcastic astonishment, “Why this is an amazing thing. You don’t know where he comes from and yet he opened my eyes. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. V. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”
- How could they not see?
- Answer: **they cared more about their status, their rules, and power than they did about the Kingdom of God. and so...**

- “A blind beggar shames the spiritually elite be seeing what they could not”⁶

There are two types of people in this story.

1. Those who are blind.
2. Those who see.

And Jesus is teaching that just because you can physically see with your eyes doesn’t mean that you can actually see the reality of the Kingdom of God.

Plenty of people then (and now) believe that they can see, but unaware of their need for Jesus to open their eyes they roam the earth looking for anything and everything else that will satisfy.

The beggar in this story is a picture of all a humanity. since the Fall.

It is one thing to be born with eyesight and have something tragic happen that takes away your vision. To have a memory of sunset over the lake is wildly different than never having seen it to begin with.

We all are born with no memories. We are born blind. We cannot see the beauty of God. All of us are born blind. Longing for something, someone, we have not yet seen.

⁶ Ibid, 210.

But as there are two types of people there are also only two types of responses to Jesus.

1. Those who respond in obedience.
2. And those who respond in arrogance.

After the interrogations are over, there's an incredible exchange between Jesus and the beggar starting in v.35. The Pharisees excommunicate him from the synagogue, and

“Having **found** him, Jesus asks him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” Who is he sir? (**note Jesus’ initiative**)
“You have seen him” → it's me!

The very words that caused pain and shame for his entire life, Jesus flips → YOU HAVE **SEEN** HIM.

Without a single shred of human reason that Jesus should have entered this man's world, the creator reaches into his body and turns his eyes on.

- And with that same spirit of compassion, Jesus finds him again, and this time, opens his spiritual eyes to see the one who created him.

The man's response to the mud cakes, and the pool of Siloam → obedience. He goes and does as Jesus commands and he is healed.

Here, in seeing and hearing the words of Jesus, “LORD I believe. And he worships him.”

Jesus continues teaching his disciples, and the Pharisees still lingering...

“For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” (9:39)

In other words:

For those who see Jesus and recognize their blindness, **Jesus will always give sight.**

But for those who think they can see on their own, **You can't.**⁷

A Universal truth in this world is this:

1. You will see Jesus. Either in this life or the one to come.

But your seeing him – and seeing his beauty now – and responding in obedience when he tells you to go and wash – and be clean – will lead to an eternity with him.

And by seeing and believing, and now having life in his name, would you live with all of your life for his name.

We cannot give men eyes, but we can give them light.” (Spurgeon)⁸

⁷ Ibid, 207.

⁸ Charles Spurgeon as quoted in The Enduring Word Commentary by David Guzik, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-9/>