

52 THE PURSUIT OF JESUS

Can Jesus Help Me to See Clearly?
Shane Philip
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The Crossing Church
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OPENING

We are spending this entire year walking through the life of Jesus. Our focus right now is on His power as we continue in Mark Moore's Quest 52 series this quarter. In Chapter 25, we studying an encounter Jesus had with another blind man when He gives us one of the greatest definitions of life-change or personal transformation. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) When we know we are blind, Jesus can give us sight and we can see clearly.

SCRIPTURE¹

John 9:1-41 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*. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the *same man* who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only *looks* like him." But he himself insisted, "*I am the man*." "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. He replied, "The *man they call Jesus* made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I *went and washed*, and then I could *see*." "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't *know*," he said. They brought to the *Pharisees* the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a *Sabbath*. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put *mud* on my eyes," the man replied, "and I *washed*, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is *not from God*, for he does not keep the *Sabbath*." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was *your eyes* he opened." The man replied, "He is a *prophet*." They still did not *believe* that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? *How* is it that now he can *see*?" "We *know* he is our son," the parents answered, "and we *know* he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we *don't know*. Ask him. He is of *age*; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were *afraid* of the Jewish leaders, who *already had decided* that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be *put out* of the synagogue. ... A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a *sinner*."

¹ Scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated.

He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I *don’t know*. One thing I do know. I was *blind* but now I *see!*” Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do *you* want to become his *disciples* too?” Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Now that is *remarkable!* You don’t know where he comes from, yet he *opened my eyes*. ... “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” To this they replied, “You were steeped in *sin at birth*; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out ... Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?” Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you *claim* you can see, your guilt remains.

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has *blinded* the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the *light of the gospel* that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

OBSERVATION

In previous weeks we’ve talked about the Jewish assumption that sin and suffering go hand in hand. If someone was suffering, it was because they or their parents had sinned and getting what they deserved. Not much compassion is then needed, right? But Jesus explains that sin and suffering can have a purpose as well. In this story, Jesus came to be a light – to expose what God is really like. He has already healed just by saying the word, but here He used an unusual method as He looks for obedience first. He made mud with His own saliva and placed it on the man’s eyes telling him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. Obedience is always a key for Jesus as when He said previously, “Take up your mat and walk.”

QUESTION: When has Jesus asked you to obey Him in some way before you had an answer to prayer?

QUESTION: Which Bible people can you name who God required to show their faith through obedience before their miracle came?

Now this healing took place on the Sabbath. This sounds familiar. Jesus is again violating Sabbath rules by working at the task of making mud. So, the people and priests and Pharisees and Sanhedrin put God into a box by deciding that since He wouldn’t do a miracle on the Sabbath, Jesus couldn’t be Him.

QUESTION: It seems that Jesus was deliberately angering His accusers. Why do you think He was doing that?

QUESTION: When have you put God in a box and assumed He was doing or not doing something in your life?

So, these presumptive and arrogant religious leaders found the man who was healed and questioned him and his parents about the event. His answer tells us we don’t have to explain everything to believe something. The man said, “I was blind and now I see!” We don’t have to have all of our questions answered and figured out. We see the result and can believe that. If it points to Jesus, then it identifies Him as the Son of God.

QUESTION: When have you experienced a sign or miracle from God that you couldn’t explain, but you knew it was from Him and believed?

APPLICATION

So, let’s talk about **Spiritual Blindness**. It is the inability to see **Spiritual Truth** – refusing to see what can be seen because it’s not what we want to see. The danger in it is that we don’t even realize we have a problem. There are three different things in this story that can cause Spiritual Blindness and maybe we can identify with several of them: **1) Pride**. Here are the Pharisees. They had presumptions about God – how He does and doesn’t work. Even when they have a healed man right in front of them, they can’t accept it. Their pride kept them from seeing. That’s true of us, too. The antidote is humility which invites God to bless us, to show favor on us – we can demonstrate humility by being obedient.

QUESTION: When has your pride prevented you from seeing the truth right in front of you?

QUESTION: In what ways are you obedient in your life today?

2) Sin. Satan is at work in our story. Sin and suffering are his work because he uses sin to blind us.

When we sin the first time we cross a line and we feel guilt. We promise God that we won't do it again. The next time it is a little easier and we begin to justify it, but it is blinding us from God's best for us.

QUESTION: What is your Achilles heel?

QUESTION: When was the last time that you gave in to sin? How did it make you feel?

3) Ignorance. The people who just don't know are probably ignorant – not necessarily stupid. Our man thought Jesus was a man, then a prophet, but he progressed to a believer when he recognized Jesus as Lord and his spiritual blindness was healed. He was transformed by believing Jesus' true identity. People can argue about the Bible, but they can't argue with a transformed life. They can push against what our beliefs are about God, but they can't discount what God has done in our lives. This is what our author, the Apostle John, is hoping will happen to us – that maybe we once considered Jesus to be a good man and **from** God, but he is hoping these seven signs we've been discussing will convince us that **He is God and He is Lord**. The power of the gospel is that we may not be able to explain everything about Him or about the Bible, but we can have transformed lives that speak to everyone around us.

QUESTION: What is the next step that God is prompting you to take? Is there a blind spot in your life that God is trying to reveal to you?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, give us eyes to see what You want us to see. Reveal our blind spots and give us the strength and courage to overcome them and heal us so we can serve You in truth and with compassion. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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QUESTION: Which Bible people can you name who God required to show their faith through obedience before their miracle came?

QUESTION: It seems that Jesus was deliberately angering His accusers. Why do you think He was doing that?

QUESTION: When have you put God in a box and assumed He was doing or not doing something in your life?

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