

The Gospel of John

Blind for the Glory of God

John 9:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing in our series from the Gospel of John. The entirety of John chapter 9 is basically built around one miraculous healing. The miracle of healing the man born blind. As with most miracles performed around the Jewish leaders, it is followed by a discussion and further hatred of Jesus Christ.

I would like to go back to the final verse in chapter 8 to set the context for this passage. Jesus had just had a big discussion with the Jewish leaders where Jesus had told them that they did not know the very God they claimed to serve. In fact He told them that their real father was the devil. He told them that He was God in the flesh and in their presence. This infuriated them because they were not willing to hear the truth of God. Thus in the final verse we are told "**Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.**"

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 9:1-12 (NASB)

9 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "*It was neither that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." ⁶ When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back* seeing. ⁸ Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Others were saying, "This is he," *still* others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." ¹⁰ So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is He?" He *said*, "I do not know."

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE PURPOSE FOR THE BLINDNESS.

John 9:1 (NASB)

9 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

Chapter 9 begins with Jesus walking out of a gate of the temple. Now remember, He is being pursued by the Jewish leaders wanting to stone Him. But He notices a man blind from birth. He is sitting at one of the temple gates, begging as Jesus passed by. Jesus stops near him. And I want you to notice, His disciples are with him. So they were apparently with Jesus when the Jewish leaders wanted to stone Him. It was not in God's timing for Jesus to be killed. So, in reality, there was nothing that the Jewish leaders could do. Jesus **and the disciples** were able to slip away from them and even perform a miracle. If you remember, according to scripture, miracles were performed in order to prove that what Jesus was claiming was truth from God.

The **simple** fact that Jesus **and** His disciples could allude them and even stop to perform a miracle should have substantially changed their view of Jesus. If they still were not convinced that He was divine, this should have been enough to prove His claim to deity. But instead of acknowledging that there was no human explanation for what they had seen and experienced, all it does is elevate their anger. The more evidence that Jesus gives, the more angry they become. They are laboring to gather more outrageous accusations against Jesus so they can press the issue of His execution. It is a sad fulfillment of the first chapter of John. **“He came into His own, and His own received Him not.”**

This man's blindness illustrates the spiritual darkness and the lost condition of mankind. Helpless from the start, this blind man is at the mercy of somebody who comes up and chooses to help him. That's how grace operates. He is like the sinner. We are lost, we are dead, we are blind, we know no truth, we see no Christ, we have no God, and God draws us to Him. He comes in compassion and grace and bestows spiritual sight upon us.

John 9:2 (NASB)

2 And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”

The **disciples** asked Jesus this question. They had been taught that if something is wrong with you, it is a **direct** sin issue. We would all agree that our illnesses are related to the fall of Adam, right? But you cannot make a direct link between "I am sick" because "three months ago I committed a certain sin". But in **their** theology, that is how it worked. If you are deformed, if you are diseased, if you have some kind of illness, it was not because of the fallenness of the world, but it is a direct result of sin.

The rabbis were also convinced that the sins of the parents were visited upon the children. Where did they get that? It was from a misinterpretation of Exodus 20.

Exodus 20:5 (NASB)

5...I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity (or sins) of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

What does it really mean? It is saying you had better take care of your generation, because if you are characterized by iniquity and sin, it's going to take three or four generations to turn it around.

This is actually confirmed in Ezekiel 18. All 32 verses address this one issue.

Ezekiel 18:30-32 (NASB)

³⁰ “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, **each according to his conduct,**” declares the Lord God. “Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. ³¹ Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord God. “Therefore, repent and live.”

Faithful people are occasionally sick or permanently disabled. Many sinful people are completely healthy. Although our sins can cause us to be sick or crippled, our infirmities are a result the inherited sin that was initiated by the fall of man.

However, when we stand before God in judgment, our sins will be a direct result of our eternal destination. It is only through the grace of God and His Son, Jesus that our sins can be wiped away and we can be found righteous before God.

John 9:3 (NASB)

³ Jesus answered, “*It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*”

Here is the reason he’s blind: He is blind for the glory of God. He is blind so that we could experience this miracle at this precise moment. He was born blind so the power of God would be put on display, and the works of God be undeniable, and God be glorified.

Some may protest, “Why would God create a man and cause him to be blind from birth? Is this not a case of injustice?”

Romans 9:14-21 (NASB)

¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.” ¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “**Why does He still find fault?** For who resists His will?” ²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it? ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

God created all of us for His purposes. Consider Job. He was a wealthy man of great moral character. Satan challenged Job’s goodness before God. He proposed to God that He allow him to test him because he claimed that Job was only good because of God’s protection. God agreed and removed Job’s protection. Satan removed Job’s wealth, children and health so he would curse God. But despite his extremely difficult situation, Job did not curse God. When Job’s trial was over, he was restored to health and he regained more possessions than he had lost during the trial. He lived for another 140 years.

We may not understand why we are going through different illnesses and trials in our life, but we can rest assured that God **is** in control and He knows our true needs. He sees the whole picture. We must put our full trust in Him and thank Him for the blessings that He continues to give us every day.

II. THE HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.

John 9:4 (NASB)

4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

With no further discussion, Jesus instructs the disciples that **WE** must work the works of Him Who sent Me. He pulls the disciples in with the “**we**”. We are **all** called together to “**work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day.**”

What does He mean by **day**? Not daylight. Lifetime! The remaining time that we have on this earth. There is a far greater spiritual implication here. Death is looming on the horizon. He has months. The disciples have a few years. And then they will all be martyred except for Judas who betrays Jesus and hangs himself, and John.

It’s good to have a theological discussion, but sooner or later, you need to go to work. He says “**Night is coming when no one can work.**” He’s not talking about physical night. I suppose it was daytime, and I think He probably wanted to heal the man during the day so the man could experience the fact that he could see are world around him.

We don’t know how much time we have. Months? Years? We don’t know. Our life gets shorter after each breath we breathe. I don’t know how much time I have so I must work the works of God while I am alive.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NASB)

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

What are you doing with your life? Are you frittering it away with a bunch of nonsense that doesn’t matter. **Listen carefully!** As long as it is day, stop flirting with the world. Stop doing those things that have no value in the future, and get at it, hand-in-hand with the Lord, hand-in-hand with the Father. What an incredible thing to work with the One who is able to do exceeding above all we can ask or think. Get to work!

John 9:5 (NASB)

5 While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

Jesus knew His death was coming in just three months. He will always be the Light, in one sense, but it will never shine in the world as brightly as it did for those three years. He says, I must use my power and light while I am here. He is going to use His power to give this man physical sight. But more importantly, He’s going to give this man spiritual light.

John 9:6-7 (NASB)

⁶ When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, ⁷ and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back* seeing.

Why did He use this method? I have no idea. But there is an element in it that I do understand. Jesus could have just touched his eyes and he would have immediately seen. But He chose to send him to the pool of Siloam. Why? Because I think He was seeking his obedience. He’s calling for the man to submit. Now remember, the man does not know who is talking to him. He has never seen anybody. But he obeys. He goes, and washes in the pool. I don’t think he had any hesitation at all. I think a spark of faith ignited in his heart as the Spirit of God began to change him on the inside. His conversion is completed in verse 38 when he says, “**Lord, I believe,**” and worships Him.

This is how salvation works. The sinner is blind and helpless, a hopeless begging sinner. He cannot see God's truth. He cannot see God. He cannot see Christ. But through God's grace the sinner is drawn to Him. He places His merciful hand on his sightless soul, and seeks a response of faith. By obeying His commands he finds his way to the cleansing waters and he can see, spiritually. It’s really a beautiful picture.

III. THE CONFUSION OVER THE RECEIVED SIGHT.

John 9:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” ¹⁰ So they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?”

This was a daily ordeal for him in order to survive. It was someone who was very familiar to them.

The miracle led to confusion. The Jewish leaders were saying that Jesus was a blasphemer. They knew His parents. He was not God. But yet this man was running around telling everyone who wanted to know that a man named Jesus had caused him to see!

So they were saying, “**How then were your eyes opened?**”

John 9:11 (NASB)

¹¹ He answered, “The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.”

I love this verse. He answered with a very simple explanation. “**The man who is called Jesus,**” somebody must have told him that. He told me to “**Go to Siloam and wash;’ so I went away and washed, and I received sight.**” That does not explain **how** it happened. It just explains what he did. There is no explanation for how it happened. That is a creative miracle.

The man can only describe the experience. So, he is trying to push the darkness back for the rest of the folks. All I can tell you is this: this man named Jesus came, put mud on my eyes, told me to go to Siloam and wash. And I did, and I can see.

John 9:12 (NASB)

12 They said to him, “Where is He?” He *said, “I do not know.”

He said, “I do not know.” But he could have just as well said, “Where is where? I’ve never seen any of this place before! You want directions from me? I don’t know where anything is.”

They were confused, so they brought the man who was formerly blind to the Pharisees. They are going to go to the experts. And this is where **unbelief begins to investigate a miracle** with a predictable result. This is where we will begin in two weeks, Lord willing. Next week, Lord willing, we will get a different perspective on Christmas by looking at it through the eyes of John.

CONCLUSION:

When Jesus showed up, miracles explode in every direction throughout His three-year ministry. John tells us at the end of his gospel, that he had a purpose for selecting the miracles that he used in his gospel.

John 20:30-31 (NASB)

³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Let’s pray.

It’s such a blessing, Lord, to live these scenes, to feel like we are there experiencing the miracle with Jesus and the disciples, because of the clear, beautiful, simple language of the Holy Scripture. It is even more wonderful than seeing it as history, as great as that is, to know that this is our own reality as well, for we were blind, and did not see You, and we did not see Christ, and did not know Your truth. We didn’t even know there was a world to see beyond our experience until You came in mercy and grace, and chose to give us spiritual sight. All You asked from us was a simple act of faith, and we came and we washed. We were cleansed, and now we can see. Thank You for the salvation that You have given to us through Your Son! Lord, if there are any who are here today who are still blind, still sitting, begging with no sight, and have no hope: Lord, stop by those souls, and reach down, and touch them. Give them sight. Empower faith in their lives, to embrace You as Lord and Savior.

We pray that you help us to know Your will. Open doors in front of us and help us to enter in. May we be available to Your Holy Spirit to speak the words of hope and salvation to those we meet. Use us for Your glory.

We pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

Go Tell it on the Mountain.