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JOHN 9:1-41

A famous author once said that the key to good writing is not in knowing what to put into a story, but what to leave out. And John wrote his Gospel because he wanted his readers to know that **“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they may have life in His name.”**

Consequently, John organized his Gospel around only seven miracles that Jesus performed...all seven pointing to His divine nature...

We've seen the first five of these miracles and today we see the sixth and in a couple of weeks we'll see the seventh...

- 1) **Chapter 2** - Turning water into wine, proving Jesus is the source of life.
- 2) **Chapter 4** - Healing a nobleman's son...proving Jesus is master over distance.
- 3) **Chapter 5** - Healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda...proving Jesus is master over time.
- 4) **Chapter 6** - Feeding of the 5,000...proving Jesus is the bread of life.
- 5) **Chapter 6** - Walking on water and stilling a storm...proving Jesus is master over nature.
- 6) **Chapter 9** - Healing a man blind from birth...proving Jesus is the light of the world.
- 7) **Chapter 11** - Raising Lazarus from the dead...proving Jesus has power over death.

Today we'll see the sixth miracle...the healing by Jesus of a man who was born blind.

This is an old familiar passage of Scripture, but let's look at it in a fresh way today...

Several things that I want us to notice are:

- **not only a blind man who was healed, but a lost man who was saved...**
- **that man can be blind in more ways than one...**
- **that some men would rather grope around in darkness rather than be healed of their blindness...**

So, keeping these things in mind, let's look at

Verses 1-7...

To understand the disciples' question in **verse 2**, we need to know a couple of beliefs that were prevalent in that day...

One belief was that the sins of the father were **always** visited upon the children...

Another view was that children were able to sin while still in their mother's womb...

But, what did Jesus say? He said that it was neither the man **nor** his parents who sinned. Jesus did not mean, of course, that this man nor his parents had never sinned, but that their sin had not caused the man's blindness.

Jesus said, **“...but it was in order that the works of God might be made manifest or be displayed in him...”**

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Before we go any further into the story of the healing of the blind man, I want us to see some **comparisons and some contrasts...**

In **verse 5**, we see Jesus saying again that He is the light of the world. It was in last week's lesson that we first heard Jesus say that, wasn't it? But, the interesting thing about these two statements is that in these two chapters the light reveals two different kinds of things.

In last week's lesson, the light exposed the sins of the Pharisees who brought the woman to the Lord Jesus.

Remember, they had brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus and their purpose was to trap the Lord Jesus. But, He turned the tables on them and He told them, **"He who is without sin among you let him be the first to throw a stone at her."**

Not one of them stoned her, did they? WHY? Because all **of them had sin in their lives! The light of the world, Jesus, had revealed that sin!**

But, here in **chapter 9**, we see Jesus again declaring Himself to be the light of the world. Is there a difference in the kind of light He was in **chapter 8** and the kind of light He is in **chapter 9**?

Well, I believe there is...let me explain...

Let's think of the effect that light has on something that has been shielded from light a long time. Imagine a board out in a field. Kick it over and what will you find?

Well, you'll find some dead looking grass and not only that, but you'll also find a lot of bugs and other squirmy things, won't you? But, as soon as the board is kicked away, immediately all the bugs and other squirmy things begin to slither away into dark areas.

This is exactly what happened when Jesus spoke to these leaders in **chapter 8**. Jesus turned over a board, and away went those Pharisees and scribes! They couldn't stand before the light, and they hated Jesus for it.

On the other hand, light also has another and entirely different effect upon some things that are exposed to it. Take the ground that was covered over by the board.

When the board is first turned over the bugs run for cover. But, leave the board off that patch of ground for awhile, and soon the same sun that made the bugs run for cover will begin to make the seeds in the ground grow.

In a short time that patch of earth will be covered with grass or flowers, just like the growth in the field that surrounds it.

And this is the meaning of the second "I am the light of the world," in **chapter 9**. In **chapter 8** the Light made the creatures of darkness run. In **chapter 9**, the Light begins to call forth life and produce growth in those within whom God has planted the seed of saving faith.

As Arthur Pink puts it:
"In **chapter 8** we behold Christ as 'the light' exposing the darkness.
In **chapter 9** we behold Christ as 'the light' communicating sight.

In **chapter 8** the Light is despised and rejected.

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In **chapter 9** the Light is received and worshipped.

In **chapter 8** Christ, inside the Temple, is called a demoniac.

In **chapter 9** Christ, outside the Temple, is called Lord.”

Well, let's get back to the healing of the blind man. Isn't it neat how many different ways Jesus healed folks?

- with the centurion's son in **chapter 4**, He just healed him from a distance...
- with the lame man in **chapter 5**, He said, "Arise, take up your pallet and walk"...
- and with this blind man, He applied to his eyes clay that He had formed from His spittle and dirt...

Isn't it the same when He heals us from our sin?

I've counseled with folks who have walked our aisles and I've heard so many various salvation stories...

Some have been saved as children in Sunday School or youth camps.

Some have been saved at their mother's or father's knee.

Some have been saved in large crusades.

Some have been saved as adults when they witnessed the miracle of the birth of their first child.

Some have been saved right there in the counseling room!

The fact is that God meets each of us at our point of need. If we went around this room this morning, we would hear many different stories of how salvation came to us. God isn't limited to a set **pattern or diagram or plan**. He deals with each individual the way He thinks best.

And the very fact that He deals with each individual is a wonderful thing! He dealt with the woman last week. He deals with the blind man this week. He could have just passed this man by. The blind man didn't call out to Jesus. The blind man couldn't see Jesus. But, Jesus saw the blind man...

By the way, did you notice that the blind man did what Jesus told him to do...without hesitation? Remember the story of Naaman, a Syrian army captain, in the **Old Testamen?**

He had leprosy and when he was told to go dip 7 times in the Jordan River, he hesitated. He could not understand why he had to go to a river in Israel when he had plenty of good rivers in Syria... Finally, he went to the Jordan and dipped 7 times and God cleansed him.

Many times folks cannot accept the fact that salvation is so simple. They want to do "something more"...when all God has called us to do is to believe and trust and be obedient!

Verse 8-12...

Here we see the man giving testimony to the fact that it was Jesus who had given him his sight!

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Doesn't it amaze you that instead of rejoicing in this man's miracles...and perhaps preparing to throw a celebration for him, that these folks are suspicious and probing and questioning?

Notice, that this man didn't know anything about Jesus except that He had healed him. He didn't know where He was...all he knew was that he had done what Jesus had told him to do...

And all we need to know to be saved from spiritual blindness is really very little...isn't it?

- we need to know that we are indeed blind (we are sinners)
- we need to desire to see (or be saved)
- we need to accept the fact that only Jesus can give us sight (salvation)

Verses 13-16...

On the surface at least the problem was the old Sabbath problem that the Lord had already dealt with in His ministry. It was bad enough that the Pharisees found out that Jesus had healed the man at all. I mean, they already hated Jesus and were planning how they might do away with Him.

But, for Him to heal on the Sabbath! Jesus had broken the Sabbath! This healing was considered work and of course, work on the Sabbath was forbidden.

Not only that, but by rabbinic law, it was all right to practice medicine on the Sabbath...**if life was in danger**; that is, it was permissible to try to keep the patient from getting worse, but it was forbidden to do anything to make the patient get better.

So, since the blind man had been born blind and was in no danger of dying from his blindness, Jesus broke the Sabbath laws when He healed him.

We see from **verse 15** that these Pharisees didn't intimidate the man...they didn't make him waver from his testimony of Jesus, did they? **In verse 16**, we see division among the Pharisees.

Some said Jesus definitely could not be from God because He did not keep the Sabbath. And on the other hand, others said **"how could He be a sinner and perform such miracles?"**

Jesus brings division many times...He said in Matthew that He didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. By this He meant that we cannot sit on the fence...we must either accept Him or reject Him...we cannot do both!

We must whole-heartedly believe He is who He claims to be, or we must completely reject that claim. And when we believe Him, folks aren't going to like it!

The man was healed of a blindness that had afflicted him for his entire life. We might expect the leaders to have rejoiced with him and his family over this.

Instead, we see them dredging around in the dark recesses of their minds to discover what they could do about this unfortunate event!

Can they discredit the miracle and thereby brand the carpenter from Nazareth a fraud? Or, better yet...can they maneuver the testimony of the blind man to trap Jesus?

As a blind man and as a beggar, this man held no interest for the Pharisees. They would have stepped on him as they made their impressive prayers on the street corners. But

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now, as a healed man, he was interesting in a negative sort of way. Perhaps he could become their tool to trap Jesus.

Verse 17...

The Pharisees asked the man, "what do you say about Him?"

"He is a prophet..."

Don't miss this man's descriptions of Jesus. Don't miss the progression of this man's spiritual awareness as we go through this chapter!

Verses 18-23...

Well, these poor Jews are frustrated again, aren't they? They didn't get the answer they wanted from this man so they decided they would ask his parents.

But, the parents aren't as sure about this situation as their son, are they?

They were afraid...WHY?

They knew they would be put out of the synagogue if they confessed Jesus as Christ or as Messiah. This would have been a disgraceful thing to happen.

So, they evaded the issue...

Twice they said, "he is of age, ask him..."

"Ask him how he was healed, we weren't there, we don't know!"

Verse 24...

Can't you just hear the venom in their voices as they deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Verse 25...

We know from what we'll read later in this chapter that this man still does not know exactly who Jesus is...so he really didn't know if He was a sinner or not, did he?

Remember...this man may have not even seen Jesus yet. As soon as Jesus applied the clay to his eyes, the man went away and washed and we don't see Jesus speaking with him again until much later... (**verse 35**).

Verses 26-27...

Well, we've got to hand it to this guy...he surely didn't back down, did he?

Somebody probably should have informed this poor beggar how important those Pharisees were!

Verses 28-29...

How strong their tradition and their ties to Moses were! Time and time again, Jesus had told them that His Father had sent Him...that He was sent from Heaven.

Verses 30-33...

This man is only just about to really become a believer, and he delivers a five-point sermon:

- 1) **Jesus opened my eyes.**
- 2) **God does not hear sinners.**
- 3) **God does hear those who fear Him and do His will.**

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- 4) **No one has ever heard of this kind of miracle before.**
- 5) **“If this man (Jesus) were not from God, He could do nothing.”**

He was not in the least intimidated by these Pharisees. Think about it...

He had never before seen their long, flowing robes...
Nor the fringes that hung on them...
Nor their phylacteries...

But, he knew Jesus had done something for him that these men certainly had never done. Jesus had opened his eyes!

And we need to take a lesson from this...God will always tell us what to say if we will be open to Him. Jesus told His disciples in **Matthew 10...**

“...do not be anxious about how or what you will speak;
for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak.”

Verse 34...

How could this ignorant beggar, who was because of his blindness obviously born in sin, dare to teach these righteous men who were steeped in the Law and saturated in Jewish tradition?

Paul tells us that God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and He has chosen the weak things to confound the strong and He has chosen the base things and the despised and the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are...

WHY?

So that no man can boast before God! But, boasting before God is what these men did best...

So, they did the only thing left for them to do... “They put him out...”

- Excommunication from the synagogue meant
- **no one would employ him...**
- **his family would disown him...**
- **anyone caught helping him ran the risk of the same...**

I'd dare say that no one in this room has had this happen to them. Most of us have never known that kind of persecution for our faith.

As believers, we may experience some sort of persecution from members of our own family...or by fellow workers...but I doubt we've ever known this kind.

Phillip Lim did. When he became a Christian his mother and father put him out of his house...and as a teen age boy he had to go live with an uncle.

Praise God, his mother and father have come to know Jesus in recent years...but how many of us would have been as faithful as Phillip as a teenage believer?

Verses 35-38...

Did you notice that while all this interrogation of the man and his parents was going on...Jesus was not around!

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But, when He heard what had happened to the man, He came and found the man. He always does...He finds us when we need Him most!

This man had walked faithfully...this man had testified boldly and truthfully according to the knowledge that he had of Jesus...and now he was going to find out more about Jesus!

What a beautiful picture of salvation!

Did you notice the progression of this man's faith?

Verse 17 tells us the man called Jesus "a prophet."

Verse 33 tells us the man thought Jesus to be a man of God.

Verse 38 tells us the man believed Jesus and worshipped Him!

Never before had a man born blind ever been healed.

The folks who passed by him every day saw the blind man as a beggar.

The disciples of Jesus saw the blind man as a sinner.

The Pharisees saw the blind man as a tool with which to trap Jesus.

But, the Lord Jesus saw him as a man who needed help and He saved him!

Verses 39-41...

What does this mean?

Well, remember when we said that sometimes light does two different things? Remember we said that light can make plants grow...and also remember we said that light can also drive away the creatures of darkness.

These were precisely the effects that Jesus had on all who met Him. As the light of the world, He either caused faith to sprout and that which was alive spiritually to grow...just like we've seen today in the life of the blind man....

Or on the other hand, as the light of the world Jesus repelled the religious leaders who, as creatures of darkness, hated Him and wished to extinguish His light.

And in these last verses Jesus says that to some, like the man born blind, He was the restorer of spiritual sight. But, to others, like those who thought they could see, He caused an even greater darkness.

Let's think about it this way...

To the person who accepts a little light, more light will be given. We see that happening in the life of the man who was healed of his blindness.

But, in the case of the person who thinks he can see...who has light enough to see but **refuses** to see...then the light he had will be taken away!

Jesus said, **"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see'; your sin remains."**

What Jesus was saying is this:

"If you were blind, you would be better off. But you claim to see. Therefore, you are guilty!"

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Blindness would at least be an excuse for not knowing what was going on. But they **did** know what was going on. Jesus had performed many miracles and the religious leaders ignored the evidence to make a right decision.

They had enough knowledge of the Scripture...all the prophecies that pointed to the birth of the Messiah...that they should have know Jesus the very first time they saw Him!

Let me conclude by quickly giving you **three characteristics** of those who are spiritually blind and prefer to stay that way...

- 1) **They have no sense of need.** They're all right by their own standards, and since they do all right by their own standards they imagine that they will do all right by God's.
- 2) **They consider the teachings of Jesus foolish.** All we have to do is tune in to some of the "religious" seminars and we will see folks who are spiritually blind and they consider the teachings and miracles of Jesus foolish.
- 3) **They are guilty of willfully rejecting Jesus.** They don't even have the excuse of "being blind." Their eyes are open, but they refuse to see. They've heard the message, but they've refused to believe. And they are held accountable for that!

Jesus, speaking of these same folks, will later say in **John 15** that if He had not come and spoken to them, they would not have guilt, but since He had spoken to them they have no excuse!

We don't know what happened to the man Jesus healed that day. But, from what we've seen of him today, I truly don't believe he just quietly hid away. I believe he became an even bolder witness for Jesus. Maybe...hopefully...he led his fearful parents to the Lord.

We know that when the Jews put him out, the Lord Jesus took him in. Surely he found more joy and love and mercy and grace in the arms of Jesus than he would ever have found in the Jewish traditions.

He made the right choice, even though the cost was great!