

Week 21

The Blind Beggar

All through the gospel of John Jesus was explaining His identity by using, what we would call visual aids.

In Chapter 4 He explained to the Samaritan woman at the well that He could give her "living water"

In chapter 6 Jesus fed over 5000 people with 2 small loaves of bread and then explained that He was the "Bread of Life".

In Chapter 7, at the Feast of Tabernacles where a symbolic act took place commemorating the time when Moses struck the rock in the Wilderness and it brought forth water for the Israelites, Jesus told all the people there that "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink".

In Chapter 8, again at the Feast of Tabernacles, another symbolic act took place commemorating the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites in the Wilderness Jesus told all the people "I am the Light of the World. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the Light of Life.

Keep in mind that all these signs were recorded that we may understand and believe Jesus is the Messiah and believing this, have eternal life.

So John follows Jesus' teaching about being the "Light of the world" with the account of Jesus restoring sight to a man born blind, Jesus literally gave this man light. The man came to "see" and understand that Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus is offering us spiritual sight so that we can see Him as our Savior and Lord. We too are born spiritually blind and need the gift of sight that only the Light of the World can bring. The Light of the world can heal our blindness and become our Light when we put our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

As we move on to Chapter 9 of John's gospel we read of a miracle of healing, which is told with great detail. Jesus is still in Jerusalem.

John 9:1-2

I can hardly imagine a worse affliction, blind from birth is a type of isolation from which he could never be free, totally dependent and unable to work. Blind people had no choice but to be beggars. He was probably very poor and begging by the roadside, as Jesus was passing by.

Jesus disciples asked an interesting question. The Jewish people had the idea, based on misunderstanding Exodus 34:7 that if someone was affected by a birth defect it was due to a sin in the life of the parents.

People tend to conclude that sickness or other calamity is punishment for sin. While the consequence of sin can bring suffering, suffering is not necessarily punishment for sin, think of Job. God allows suffering for many purposes but the most important one I know is to bring us close to Him, to reveal Himself to us and to bring us into His kingdom. I have found that God will deliver through trials and suffering not from trials and suffering and I have gained more of Christ through suffering than any other way. Although we all dread trials, God is sovereignly controlling everything in our life, He is the blessed controller. He is good, He has a plan, a believer is never a victim of back luck. There are those who get rich teaching that a Christian will never have any problems or sickness, this is a lie, and God's word will prove it untrue.

Jesus shifted the discussion from what caused the blindness to the purpose and then demonstrated God's power by healing the man. How can God use our problems to demonstrate His power and draw us closer to Him?

John 9:3

Jesus said this man's blindness had nothing to do with punishment for sin. God had not heartlessly inflicted blindness on an innocent baby, but God had allowed nature to run its course and now would use the blindness to allow the man to know Christ and to bring glory to God through receiving physical and spiritual sight and ultimately eternal life.

John 9:4

There is urgency here, don't put off until tomorrow what God has asked you to do today. Jesus knew His ministry was short, 3 years altogether and He redeemed the time. One great work God had given Him was to heal this man. He was always working the works that the Father gave Him to do.

I urge you to use your time wisely, our daylight will soon be gone, resist procrastination. It seems Jesus is speaking of the work both He and the disciples would do, speaking of Himself and His disciples as co-workers. What a privilege to be a co-worker of Jesus.

John 9:5

Jesus would bring light to this man and He would do it in His own way. The healing of the blind beggar was further proof that He was Messiah, as Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would heal the blind. Speaking of the time when Messiah would come, Isaiah 29:18 "On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see". And Isaiah 35:5 "then the eyes of the blind will be opened". The Pharisees should have known this.

John 9:6-7

This was a very unusual way to heal this man, Jesus seldom worked this way. In this miracle, the man had to participate, he had to go and do something in faith. Be careful to not compare how God is working in your life to the experience of another person.

Note the making of the clay, constituted work in the definition of the Pharisees (not God's definition). Jesus was also teaching the Pharisees the meaning of the Sabbath.

Consider the power of Jesus has shown by this miracle. This man had nothing operational in his life by which sight takes place, obviously a serious birth defect. Jesus overcame this with ease and He can open the eyes of the most ignorant and sinful and make us see things we never saw before. This man showed amazing faith and obedience. He simply obeyed and in obedience, he was healed.

After a lifetime of blindness, it would take great faith to do what he did; after all, he did not know Jesus.

John 9:8-10

John's commentary in these verses records the reactions of various people to this healing. Some thought that it was not the formerly blind man, but he kept insisting that he was.

John 9:11-12

The man then testified to the healing of his blindness by Jesus, but he did not know where Jesus had gone. Most likely, he wouldn't recognize Jesus since he had never seen Him.

John 9:13-15

Why did they take him to the Pharisees? They were the local authority and there was a mystery to solve. The man who had been blind from birth was healed in a strange way and on the Sabbath. They knew Jesus had broken the rules of the Pharisees regarding work on the Sabbath and they wanted to report it. Healing was work and it was only allowed in the direst cases of life and death. The blind man did not qualify for a miracle on the Sabbath according to the Pharisees. Can you see why we now equate the word Pharisee with "phony Christians?" They make up rules, say you have to obey them to be a Christian and then live lives, which are anything but godly. These hardhearted men did not understand that the Sabbath was made for man, rather than man for the Sabbath.

So the man explained again what happened to him, since he hadn't seen Jesus, he really didn't know who He was. Where are the congratulations and the praises to God for this amazing miracle? No, we hear only condemnations for the healer.

John 9:16

So breaking the Pharisee's rules makes a man a sinner, according to them. Are you following a leader who has made rules for you to follow, which are not of God and yet you are called a sinner if you break this leader's rules? God has clearly stated that whoever adds to His book or takes away from it is cursed.

John 9:17

Some of the Pharisees are beginning to wonder, how could a man who is a sinner do such a miracle? And so this created division among them. While they were arguing and condemning lives were being changed.

John 9:18-21

Since the Pharisees were unable to agree among themselves they investigated further and called the man's parents. They knew their son was born blind and that he had been healed but they didn't know how it had happened. Why were they so evasive?

John 9:22-23

Put out of the synagogue was like excommunication. There were 2 kinds of excommunication, one was temporary and lasted 30 days and the other was a permanent "ban" accompanied by a curse. Because the synagogue controlled every part of Jewish life; civic, recreational, legal and religious, an individual cut off from the synagogue would suffer severe isolation. Its obvious why the Pharisees could make the rules, they had all the power over all the daily life of the Jewish people. Friends, this is not what God intended, this was a total corruption of God's plan for His people and the way the priesthood was to function. God expected them to serve, not lord it over people.

Many people were beginning to believe Jesus was the Messiah or a prophet and they had been warned by the Pharisees against believing in Him.

John 9: 24-25

So they called him a second time. "Give glory to God" means tell the truth. They tried to force the man to agree with them that Jesus was a sinner. They had no intention of finding out the truth, or of following Jesus. Their intent was to disqualify Him.

But the man held firm against them, he would not say Jesus was a sinner. Many believers can testify to this truth. Because of Jesus. All we know is that Jesus changed our lives, always be ready to tell what Jesus has done for you.

John 9:26-27

It sounds like they are trying to trip up the man or find a loophole in the story so they can accuse him. The harder they were on him, the more determined he became about Jesus

John 9:28

Notice how cruelly the Pharisees treat someone who does not agree with them.

Here the Pharisees go again, falling back on Moses, when Jesus had already told them that if they were of Moses, they would know the Messiah, because Moses wrote about Him. Remember Moses wrote the first 5 books of the bible.

John 9:29

Notice how derogatory this statement is about Jesus calling Him, "this man" as if Jesus were nobody. Its interesting that they keep claiming they do not know where He is from, He has told them several times.

John 9:30

The man is amazed at the reasoning and the insults.

John 9:31-33

He was probably schooled in the scriptures as a boy and is surprised that the Pharisees don't seem to know even the basic scriptures. The Old Testament is full of references to God hearing and answering prayers for godly men and women.

The formerly blind man then gives a beautiful testimony.

John 9:34

In their anger and foolish rejection of Jesus the Pharisees overlooked the scriptures that specifically say the Messiah would give sight to the blind. In fact, this was considered the main evidence that a man was the Messiah, since there are no such miracles recorded before Jesus.

So the healed man's condemnation of the Pharisees irrational rejection of Jesus enraged them to the point where they excommunicated him.

Again I notice how cruel and unjust these men were and "religious leaders" in every age have treated believers in the same way.

John 9:35-38

Jesus found him and comforted him; He knew what excommunication from the synagogue meant to him.

The man could physically see Jesus but also he could spiritually see Who He is and he acted on that belief, he worshiped Jesus. Just think what this means, if Jesus were not God, He would not have accepted this worship.

John 9:39

These words reveal that, as the Light of the world, Jesus sees and reveals people's innermost thoughts and motives. In this way, He separates those who claim to have great spiritual knowledge, such as the Pharisees from those who humbly seek to follow God and who find the Savior.

John 9:40-41

In contrast to the man who had received his sight, the Pharisees had physical sight but no light, they were spiritually blind. Those who admit blindness receive light, those who claim to see remain in their darkness. It was only blindness, stubbornness and arrogance that could excuse the behavior of these men.

Has Jesus opened your eyes so that you can see and understand the truth that He is Messiah and thus gain eternal life or are you spiritually blind? He has promised to free you from your darkness and slavery to sin, only ask Him, He is willing.