

Jesus Heals a Man who was Born Blind (John 9:1-12)

Jesus claimed, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). In the deepest spiritual sense, Jesus dispels darkness and death, replacing them with light and life. His wasn’t a baseless claim. Jesus proved His ability to replace darkness with light by healing a blind man in Jerusalem, possibly on the very same day in which He declared Himself to be the light of the world. Just as Jesus could give physical sight to a blind man, He can also give spiritual light and life to those who are spiritually dead in spiritual darkness. Jesus alone can open our eyes to receive the light of life.

Jesus can turn tragedies into a source of spiritual triumph (9:1-3).

When Jesus and His disciples encountered a blind man, the disciples wondered out loud about the man’s condition and its relationship to sin. Instead of focusing on sin, Jesus pointed to the power of God.

When they encountered a man who had been blind since birth, Jesus’ disciples asked Jesus whose sin caused this man’s condition (9:1-2).

Jesus noticed a blind man—a man who had been blind since birth. The congenital nature of the man’s blindness is significant. In giving the man sight, Jesus wouldn’t simply repair something that had become broken but would create something that had never existed. The fact that this man had been born blind also raised a question in the minds of the disciples. “Rabbi,” they asked, “who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” We tend to seek a cause for anything that rings of tragedy. Had this man sinned in the womb? Had his parents sinned in some way as to bring about a judgmental blindness on this man? Someone must be at fault, or so the disciples assumed. Sin does carry consequences, but not every tragedy in life stems directly from a specific act of sin. We often experience tragic situations simply because we live in a fallen world.

Jesus denied that any individual’s sin was responsible for the man’s blindness, but assured them that his blindness would result in the manifestation of God’s power (9:3).

It must have been comforting to the blind man to hear Jesus defend both him and his parents. Jesus stated that neither the blind man nor his parents were culpable. The man’s blindness wasn’t a judgment for sin. By contrast, Jesus stated that the man’s blindness would prove to be an opportunity for God’s powerful works to be displayed. This doesn’t mean that

God made the man suffer a lifetime of blindness simply to heal him, but that the man's blindness—a consequence of living in a fallen world—would result in God's glory. Jesus can turn tragedies into triumphs. The tragedies in our lives can become triumphs when we recognize how Jesus works through those tragedies.

**Jesus is light in a dark
and needy world (9:4-5).**

Jesus had claimed to be the light of the world (John 8:12), and now He reinforces this claim. He declared that He had been sent by the Father to accomplish the Father's work. That work included dispelling darkness.

Jesus reminded His disciples about the importance of doing the works of the One who had sent Him while the time was right (9:4).

Jesus told His disciples that it was appropriate for Him (and possibly them, based on some Greek texts) to “work the works” of the Father who had sent Him. Jesus had a deep sense of mission. He had been sent into the world by His Father. He came to accomplish the Father's mission, the works that the Father had determined. This cooperation within the Triune Godhead is consistent throughout the Bible, from creation to the end—the Father plans, the Son performs, and the Holy Spirit perfects. Jesus came to do the works which the Father had planned for Him to do, including the work of redemption. However, Jesus' time on earth was limited. While He was present it was, spiritually speaking, daytime. Jesus was accomplishing His Father's will while He had the opportunity. Nighttime was coming, the time in which Jesus would leave this world. In His absence, no one can work. Thankfully, because Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, He is still present among His followers and is still working in this world.

Jesus reminded His disciples that He is the light of the world (9:5).

Jesus again stated that He is the light of the world. His physical presence brought light, spiritual sight to those who received Him. As long as He lived in the world Jesus was the light of the world. Jesus is still the light of the world in the sense that, through Him, we have life (compare John 1:4-5). In this spiritually dark world Jesus is the light.

**Jesus is not limited in the ways
in which He can touch our lives (9:6-7).**

Having turned the conversation away from the issue of sin and onto the issues of spiritual light, Jesus now gave light in the form of sight to the blind man.

Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud, and put it on the blind man's eyes (9:6).

The blind man must have been listening to Jesus' words with rapt attention, wondering what Jesus had in mind for him. Jesus then spit on the ground, formed some mud, and put the mud on the eyes of the blind man. This was certainly an unusual way for Jesus to bring about healing. He could have, of course, simply spoken the word and healed the man. But Jesus treated people individually. He wasn't limited in the ways in which He met people's needs. For this man, the application of mud that would need to be washed away would best reinforce his awareness of Jesus' healing power.

Jesus instructed the man to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam, and when the man did so he received his sight (9:7).

Having applied the mud, Jesus then instructed the blind man to go and to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The word "Siloam" comes from a Hebrew term that means "send." Jesus had been sent by the Father to do the Father's works. Now the blind man was sent to receive the healing power of God through Jesus Christ. The Pool of Siloam was located at the southern end of Jerusalem, and excavations have revealed remains of this significant site. Jesus told the blind man to go to the Pool of Siloam and to wash away the mud He'd applied to the man's eyes. In three staccato sentences John describes what happened next. The blind man "went," he "washed," and he "came seeing." As the blind man made his way to the Pool of Siloam he must have harbored a sense of hope. Could this teacher named Jesus give him sight? Upon washing away the mud, the man could instantly see. Jesus had performed a great miracle, one that would prove to any reasonable mind the truth of Jesus' identity as the Messiah and the Son of God (John 20:30-31). Jesus can touch our lives in unique and special ways. He isn't limited by His past works or our expectations.

**When Jesus touches our lives, others
will recognize His transforming power (9:8-12).**

The restoration of sight to someone who had been born blind couldn't go unnoticed. News quickly spread about Jesus' latest miracle. People began to recognize the transforming power of Jesus.

People questioned whether this man who could now see was really the same blind man whom they knew, so the man affirmed his identity (9:8-9).

The blind man had, of course, been a beggar. Begging was the only possible source of sustenance for someone in that condition in ancient times. Many people in Jerusalem—John calls them neighbors and those who had seen the blind man—would have been familiar with this individual. But apparently few knew him well, at least well enough to be confident in identifying him once he'd received his sight. Some thought he was the blind beggar, but others denied that he could be the same man and assumed that he merely looked like the blind beggar. But the man himself resolved the issue by stating, "I am." He was, indeed, the poor blind beggar, but now he could see.

The people asked the man how he received his sight, and the man told them how Jesus had healed him (9:10-12).

Of course, the people asked the man what had happened. How could he now see? The man simply explained that someone named Jesus made some mud, anointed his eyes, and told him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. The blind man had obeyed Jesus. He went, he washed, and he now could see! The people saw the transformation in this man's life. When Jesus touches our lives, we're transformed. The people asked where they could find Jesus, but the man didn't know where Jesus was. He could only testify to what Jesus had done in his life. When Jesus transforms our lives, we'll want to testify to His power and grace. After all, He's opened our eyes as well. We should be eager to tell others that Jesus alone can open our eyes to receive the light of life.