

John 9 Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind

A man born blind who was healed one Sabbath Day by Jesus of Nazareth. The apostle John, who probably knew Jesus Christ better than any other human, chose this incident for a purpose. He wrote so that present and future generations would, as 20:30-31 says, “these are written that you may believe^{(A)(C)} that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,^(D) and that by believing you may have life in his name.^(E)”

The context here is a carry-over theme introduced at the Feast of Tabernacles in John chapter 8: “I am the light of the world...”

As we consider our text today, let us consider this truth:

“It is bad to be born blind, but it is worse to be spiritually blind.”

Helen Keller was born in 1880 as a normal child but later contracted a disease which left her blind and deaf. Even though she learned to communicate and was the first blind woman to graduate from college, she had to grope around in darkness all of her life. It is very bad to be blind, but it is worse to be spiritually blind. In today’s passage we will learn about a blind man who had spiritual insight and who was healed of both his physical and spiritual blindness. We will also learn about seeing men who could see with their physical eyes, but were blind spiritually.

9 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.

In those days, and it is still true in some countries of the world, the only way he could get any income was to beg.

He had to sit because he could not walk around much – he couldn’t see where he was going. And besides, it’s tiring to stand all day. So he sat. Perhaps a family member brought him out to the road, maybe to an intersection of streets, every day, to sit and beg.

There is symbolism here – all people are born blind spiritually.

² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi,^(A) who sinned,^(B) this man^(C) or his parents,^(D) that he was born blind?”

The common belief current in that day: sickness was the result of sin. Those who had infirmities had them because of sin.

³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus,

Jesus did not mean that this man and his parents had never committed a sin – all people sin because they are born sinners. The only person who was never born with a sinful nature was Jesus Christ himself. What Jesus meant was that there was no specific sin that any three of these people had committed that led to this blindness.

“but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in his life.”^(E)

Jesus is saying that though this man has suffered from blindness all his life, there was a purpose behind all this: so that God’s work could be demonstrated in him.

⁴ As long as it is day,^(F) we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

What this probably means is that when Jesus is taken from them in crucifixion it will be a dark time for them. But of course this darkness will be relieved at his resurrection and at the pouring out of the Holy Spirit from heaven.

⁶ Having said this, he spit^(H) on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷ “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam”^(I) (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Why Jesus did this, is not known. Someone has suggested that even as God created Adam from the dust of the earth, so Jesus now mixed dust of the ground with saliva and put it on his eyes to demonstrate his creative power.

Mr. Barrett states, “The blind man, introduced as the theme of a theological debate, becomes the object of divine mercy and a place of revelation.” P. 358

Note the man’s unquestioned obedience.

He came home seeing. I remember when I got glasses at the age of 20. I walked outside the optometrist’s office and could see the outline of the leaves on the trees that I had not been able to see before – how marvelous it was!

And for that blind man, what a marvelous walk that was when he left the Pool of Siloam! Oh, he could see people and animals and buildings and trees and hills and streams.

He had heard the braying of the donkey and he knew their smell and he had felt their stiff hair – but now he was able to see one – he would have to now learn the name of colors.

He came home in great joy and for the first time in his life he beheld the faces of his mother and father. He had felt them and imagined how they must look, but now he could see the two with whom he had lived all his life – only imagining what they must have looked like.

What a great day of joy and surprise it was for him. He never imagined that he could be a seeing person. Now he could learn a trade and support himself without begging. Oh, day of joy! Oh, blessed washing in the Pool of Siloam – his blindness was washed away.

Who was this man named Jesus who told him to do this? What kind of man is he? How could he do such a great thing for he who had been a poor, blind beggar?

⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?”^(K)⁹ Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

These probably did not want to believe that this man had been healed.

But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

“Believe me, I am the man. I know what it’s like to grope around in darkness all your life – to never have seen the light of day. Believe me, I was the one who sat there every day – day after day – depending on the mercy of the passersby.”

¹⁰ “How then were your eyes opened?” they demanded.

So, if you really are the blind man – how did you get healed? What happened. Tell us, man, tell us!

¹¹ 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.”

Note the simplicity and honesty of the man’s reply.

¹² “Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

[The Pharisees Investigate the Healing]

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath.

Here is no doubt one of the main reasons they – whoever “they” is – brought the man before the Pharisees – he had made mud which might have been construed as illegally working on the Sabbath – they were so enmeshed in their legalistic rules that they couldn’t rejoice and praise God for the man’s healing.

¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.^(N) “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”

Notice their amazing blindness to the greatness of what had happened to this man. Keeping their man-made rules was more important to them than mercy for this man’s previously pitiful condition.

But others asked, “How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?”^(P) So they were divided.

Some, however, did not agree. They recognized that the performance of such a wonderful miracle had to come down from the Father of Lights - *Every good and perfect gift is from above,^(AB) coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights,^(AC) who does not change^(AD) like shifting shadows.* James 1:17

17 Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The Pharisees did something right (correct) here....

The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

Maybe he was thinking of Isa. 61 that Jesus quoted:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,^(V)
 because he has anointed me
 to proclaim good news^(W) to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
 and recovery of sight for the blind,
 to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

18 They^(S) still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. ¹⁹ “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”

²⁰ “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. ²¹ 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.” ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders,^(T) who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out^(U) of the synagogue.^(V) ²³ That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”^(W)

²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God by telling the truth,”^(X) they said. “We know this man is a sinner.”^(Y)

²⁵ 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!”

²⁶ Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

²⁷ He answered, “I have told you already^(Z) and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

A sarcastic reply. This man was not afraid of the Pharisees.

28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses!^(AA) 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”^(AB)

30 The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will.^(AC) 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God,^(AD) he could do nothing.”

This man recognized the implications of his healing and of the one who had brought him healing.

34 To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth;^(AE) how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.^(AF)

Spiritual Blindness

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe^(AG) in the Son of Man?”^(AH)

36 “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”^(AI)

37 Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”^(AJ)

38 Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

The healing led to faith and worship.

Jesus said,^[a] “For judgment^(AL) I have come into this world,^(AM) so that the blind will see^(AN) and those who see will become blind.”^(AO)

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?”^(AP)

41 Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”^(AQ)

APPLICATIONS:

1. Specific illnesses cannot always be precisely connected to a specific sin. Sometimes it can. If I’ve been an alcoholic for 40 years, I may well get cirrhosis of the liver. But we live in a sin-cursed world and all of us suffer physically in one way or another from the effects of sin in the world.

Gal. 4:13 - ¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness^(A) that I first preached the gospel to you,

The apostle Paul had some kind of eye disease – but it’s unlikely it was the result of some specific sin he had committed.

1. The possession of a physical handicap does not mean a person cannot have **greater spiritual insight** and wisdom than a person who is physically strong and normal. This man was handicapped, a beggar, yet he had spiritual insight and understanding greater than the teachers of the law. Maybe you have handicaps and weaknesses and defects – perhaps society, men and women, do not hold you in high esteem. But as the proverb says something like this, “Because I fear you, I am wiser than my teachers.”

2. Boldness Before Authorities

John Calvin wrote: “If he, who did not yet know that Christ was the Son of God, courageously and freely confess He was a prophet, who shameful is the treachery of those who out of fear either deny Him or are silent, through they know that He sits at the right hand of the Father and from thence will come to be the judge of the whole earth! If this blind man did not quench his tiny spark of knowledge we should endeavor that a frank and full confession should blaze forth from the full brightness which as shone in our hearts.”

3. If we have a sickness, an illness, an infirmity – we should seek to **glorify God through this illness**. Example: Joni Eareckson Tada: [info below copied from Wikipedia]

Tada was born in 1949 in [Baltimore, Maryland](#), the youngest of four daughters.

As a teenager, Tada enjoyed riding horses, hiking, tennis, and swimming. On July 30, 1967, she dove into [Chesapeake Bay](#) after misjudging the shallowness of the water. She suffered a fracture between the fourth and fifth cervical levels and became [aquadruplegic](#), paralysed from the shoulders down.

During her two years of rehabilitation, according to her autobiography, she experienced anger, depression, suicidal thoughts, and religious doubts. However, Tada learned to paint with a brush between her teeth, and began selling her artwork. To date, she has written over forty books, recorded several musical albums, starred in an autobiographical movie of her life, and is an advocate for disabled people.^[1]

Tada wrote of her experiences in her 1976 international best-selling autobiography, *Joni*, [The unforgettable story of a young woman's struggle against quadriplegia & depression](#), which has been distributed in many languages. The book was made into a 1979 feature film of the same name, starring herself. Her second book, *A Step Further*, was released in 1978.

She married Ken Tada in 1982. In 2010, she announced that she had been diagnosed with [breast cancer](#). She emerged successfully from cancer surgery and is hopeful of a positive prognosis.

Tada founded Joni and Friends (JAF) in 1979, an organization for [Christian](#) ministry in the disabled community throughout the world. Wheels for the World collects wheelchairs, which are refurbished by prison inmates and donated to people in developing nations where, physical therapists fit each chair to a needy disabled child or adult.

Joni and Friends, a daily five minute radio program, heard in over 1,000 broadcast outlets. In 2002 it received the “Radio Program of the Year” award from [National Religious Broadcasters](#).

4. **God is in control of all things** – even the suffering in our lives. But there is a greater purpose behind our suffering. We must look for that purpose in this life: How can what I have suffered or am suffering be something that God has ordained for a reason? We may not ever know why God has allowed this suffering, but we must trust that in his infinite wisdom he is doing something greater than our suffering. What did the apostle Paul say?

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Rom. 8:18

5. **If you belong to Jesus Christ**, no matter what suffering you go through in this life cannot be compared to the glory that awaits you in the presence of the resurrected Christ in the splendor of his eternal kingdom – in the new heaven and earth that will descend from heaven at the return of Christ.

6. Pray for healing of blinded eyes spiritually. Jesus is the only one who could heal this man blind from birth....and only by faith in Him can men and women be healed of their spiritual blindness and behold Christ by the eyes of faith and be saved from their sins.

Hymn stanza written by Jeff Gregory, preacher of the above sermon, on 8-24-13, to coincide with John 9. Tune: Lead On, O King Eternal

**Into this world for judgment, Christ came to show his light,
To liberate the captives, who live in darkest night;
To wash away their blindness, and give them eyes to see
Lord, wash away my darkness, and help me worship thee!**