

Testimony John 9:13-41 www.bible-sermons.org November 30, 2008

Jesus had declared himself to be the light of the world and told the crowd at the Feast that, "before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:12; 8:58) They tried to stone Him but He slipped through the crowd. As He left the Temple, the disciples asked Him about a man who was blind from birth, begging for alms. Jesus said the man hadn't sinned in the womb, and it wasn't because of his parents' sins, but that God might be glorified. Jesus made some mud with His spit and put it over the man's eyes and told him to wash it off in the Pool of Siloam. He could see!

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. The passage doesn't say who "they" are. I assume it would have been believers in Jesus who helped the man down the steps to the pool. They were probably so excited they wanted to show the Pharisees how this amazing miracle proved the words of Jesus to be true. They may have even had great hopes that this was turning point for their nation. If the leaders would just accept the Messiah, the world would change for them and the glorious promises would come to pass. (Isaiah 9:7)

14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. The last day of the feast, the eighth day, began in the evening with the lighting of the candelabrum. The eighth day was a Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:36) The feast was winding down. It was time for Jesus to verify that He is the light of the world. The Spirit of God predicted through Isaiah that the light of the world would also open the eyes of the blind. Listen to the prophecy given 700 years earlier. **6** "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, **7** to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. Isaiah 42:6-7 (NIV) Jesus giving sight to the man born blind verified that He was the One spoken of in Isaiah's prophecy.

15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." The people had brought the man to Jesus excitedly hoping that the leaders would now believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy. The leaders began an interrogation.

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided. There were two schools of thought in Jesus' day. The School of Shammai was very strict. They thought any breach of Law, written or oral, meant the person was a sinner. That is the first voice being expressed. They couldn't imagine the breaking of even oral traditions was done by anyone but a sinner. The making of clay and unnecessary healing were both considered a breach of their oral traditions about Sabbath observance.

The second school of thought was the School of Hillel. This school was more lenient in that if the outcome was godly, the method should be considered to have been done with a good heart. That is the second opinion in this verse. "How can a sinner

Commented [notes1]: 12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "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 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"
John 8:58 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.
Isaiah 9:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: 36 For seven days present offerings made to the LORD by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work.
Lev 23:36 (NIV)

do such miraculous signs?" The man that had been blind agreed with Hillel's school of thought.

For Jesus, this argument was nonsense. He was obeying the Holy Spirit, revealing to the desperately needy souls that He is the Messiah, the Light of the World, as Isaiah predicted. If anything, the Spirit may have had a poignant message in the making of mud to put over the man's eyes. Isaiah had also spoken of those whose eyes are plastered over, those refuse to see and understand. (Isaiah 44:18) The school of Shammai were certainly blinded by their self-righteous legalism.

Hopelessly locked in their separate ways of seeing the situation, ¹⁷ *Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet."* The Jews had three prophets that had performed miraculous healing, Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. (2Kings 5:10-14; Deuteronomy 34:10-12)

Because of some supposedly historical reports, it was believed that there were a number of people who performed miracles around the time of Christ. I don't give those reports any credit. There may have been magicians who tricked people, but the Jews believed in only a few prophets that actually performed miracles by the power of God. Miracles authenticated the messenger as long as the message was in accord with Scripture. These Jewish leaders don't have any desire to authenticate Jesus. He told them they were of their father the devil, (John 8:44) and that they were from beneath. They wanted to stone Him for blasphemy, not authenticate Him as the Messiah.

¹⁸ *The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents.* They knew the implications and the connection with Scripture, so they just refused to believe. They thought the parents of the man would verify that this was all a fraud perpetrated by believers in Jesus. So they asked if he was their son, if he was born blind, and how he came to 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."* The man who was healed probably lived with his parents. The parents may not have been present when he was healed, though they surely heard the story. The next verse tells us that they were afraid to testify because they had heard that if anyone said that Jesus was the Messiah, they would be put out of the synagogue. That was like being excommunicated only worse. Since the synagogue was the center of both religious activity and the town hall, it virtually meant they were ostracized from their community. That was to keep them from spreading their ideas. They had to be excited that their prayers for their son's sight had been answered, but out of fear they put it back on their son. They said he was of age to testify. That means he is at least 13.

²⁴ *A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."* The phrase "Give glory to God" is a phrase from Joshua when Achan was singled out by lot as the man who through disobedience had cause so much trouble to Israel. (Joshua 7:19) It was pretty

Commented [notes5]: 18 They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.

Commented [notes6]: 10 Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

11 But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.

12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

13 Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'"

14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

2 Kings 5:10-14 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: 10 Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

11 who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt--to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. 12 For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

Deut 34:10-12 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: John 8:44 (NIV)

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Commented [notes9]: 19 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me."

Josh 7:19 (NIV)

audacious of them to put themselves in Joshua's shoes and the healed man in the place of Achan. It does show us how much Jesus had gotten under their skin that they would go to such an extreme.

They were commanding the healed man to tell the truth and insisting that his previous testimony was wrong. They even told him the answer he is supposed to give, "this man is a sinner." You can see their insistence in this questioning coming out the way they want it to whether that is truth or not. That's because the alternative is that they are all wrong, blind, arrogant, children of the devil, leading their people astray. The truth is with them or Jesus, and they won't settle for confessing that they are the ones that are wrong. (Hebrews 3:7-8)

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!" This man that was blind is no dummy. When people refuse to believe you, just repeat the facts. This is where the author of Amazing Grace got that line, "was blind but now I see." The healed man just told them that he knew what had happened and there was no disputing it, so they had to deal with it!

Seeking to find a contradiction or fault in the story, they ask him to tell them again what had happened. It reminds me of some of the trials in our own justice system. They can't get a conviction so they just keep questioning until they can get a perjury conviction. They weren't getting the answers they wanted so they started again. ²⁷ He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" That's what those who brought him there had hoped. It was now obvious they didn't want to be disciples. They didn't even want the truth. They refused to hear it! He could have told them a thousand times about the miracle and pointed out the passage in Isaiah that predicted it; they still weren't going to change their position. (Jeremiah 7:26)

Their response was to insult the man and claim to be Moses' disciples. It was usually the Pharisees who made this claim of being Moses' disciples to contrast themselves with the Sadducees. It was like saying, "We keep the Law better than you do!" The Pharisees went back to the phrase of not knowing where Jesus was from, implying that he was of illegitimate birth. (Psalm 15:1-3)

The healed man came back with a gutsy and stinging rebuke that sounds like he had some training or knowledge of the School of Hillel. 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 man who does his will. This was a very Scriptural observation. Psalm 34:15 (NIV) declares, ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry... In other words, God listens to the prayer of the righteous man. And in Proverbs the wise man wrote, ²⁹ The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous. Proverbs 15:29 (NIV) The Lord is far from the habitual sinner. Why would God answer the prayer of a wicked man unless it was a prayer of repentance? A wicked heart won't allow itself to ask for what is good.

Commented [notes10]: 7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, Heb 3:7-8 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 26 But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their forefathers.' Jer 7:26 (NIV)

Commented [notes12]: 1 LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? 2 He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart 3 and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, Psalms 15:1-3 (NIV)

The healed man finished it up with this rebuke to their assessment that Jesus had to be a sinner. ³³ *If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.* The healed man with his simple plain truth was wiser than these scholars. He did see, in his simple understanding, what these men with all their education could not grasp! Jesus performed this miracle through the power of God. He did what He did because He is from God. Jesus will tell us later in this Gospel that we can do nothing without Him. (John 15:5) (Nothing of lasting meaning and significance)

We would hope that this simple clear logic would have gotten through. Here is how they responded, *"You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.* They assumed what the disciples asked Jesus was true, that the man either sinned in the womb, or his parents sinned and that is why he was born blind. They should have listened to David, the psalmist, ⁵ *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* Psalms 51:5 (NIV) Perhaps they would have then realized that they were no better or worse than the man they were rebuking. Maybe that humility would have allowed them to receive his words, and Jesus' words as well. (Deuteronomy 33:3) That is what those who brought the man to the leaders were hoping, but they left disappointed. Yet, those believers' hopes were being turned away from a political solution to a heart solution.

The man that had been blind shared his testimony. It was powerful, irrefutable, and convicting. He couldn't have said anything more convincing than what he said. You have a testimony too. It is one of your best witnessing tools. People may reject it and mock you for it, but it is reality that they can deny in their minds but not in their hearts. Share what Jesus did for you and you have delivered your soul. (Ezekiel 2:19) It's up to the hearer to then decide what they will do with the truth.

³⁵ *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"* Jesus searches out those the world rejects. He finds the ones that are thrown out. (1Corinthians 1:26) Jesus healed his physical problem and now He is about to heal his spiritual problem. The Son of Man is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14. He is the One who will reign forever. The passage must have been very familiar to the people of Jesus' day for Him to ask the man this question.

³⁶ *"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."* The man was convinced that if his healer wasn't the Messiah, he could certainly tell him where he could find him.

³⁷ *Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."* ³⁸ *Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.* The greatest handicap one can have is spiritual blindness. But once you realize you are a blind beggar in need of salvation, there is hope. Jesus finds you and introduces Himself to you. You can do what that man did this morning. You can believe in the Son of Man and worship Him. That is what the world will one day do, as is written in the Son of Man passage from Daniel. They worship Him, for He alone is worthy of worship. Or you can be like the Pharisees, refuse to accept what Jesus has done, how He has proven Himself, and reject those that have a testimony of His healing and deliverance. But you can't be neutral about Jesus. His claims are too great.

Commented [notes13]: 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: 3 Surely it is you who love the people; all the holy ones are in your hand. At your feet they all bow down, and from you receive instruction, Deut 33:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes15]: 19 But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself. Ezek 3:19 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: 26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 1 Cor 1:26 (NIV)

Commented [notes17]: 13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Dan 7:13-14 (NIV)

³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Jesus tells us that this physical healing is a picture of a spiritual need. There are many who are spiritually blind. Acknowledging you are spiritually blind is like acknowledging you are poor in spirit. (Matthew 5:3) Jesus promises to fill those that recognize their need, who are honest about their spiritual condition. (Matthew 5:6)

Commented [notes18]: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt 5:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Matt 5:6 (NIV)

Then there are those that claim to see. The religious think they can be good enough to please God. They claim to see, but in reality they are the most blind of all. I think that when Jesus said that He came to make those who see blind, He is saying that He helps them recognize their spiritual need. When Jesus does things the religious can't explain, they start to realize there is something they are missing. When they hear testimonies they can't explain, they realize things don't fit into their neat little theological boxes. Then they can start to realize that they, too, are blind and in need of help.

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" If you have to ask the question, guess what? You are indeed blind. Now you just have to realize it and humble yourself to ask for the light of the world to light up your darkness.

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. The blind don't know any better and God does not hold it against them. It is those who say they can see that are held accountable. They had the Word of God that they should have been convicted by, but they justified everything they did. (Luke 16:15) They said they could see, but they rejected the Son of God. Their guilt remained. The only way they could get rid of their guilt was to accept Jesus as their Savior and admit how blind they truly were.

Commented [notes20]: 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. Luke 16:15 (NIV)

I was blind but now I see. I hope that is your testimony too. The light of life illuminated our darkness. Our guilt has been removed. We were given sight. Jesus found us begging for forgiveness, and we believed He is the Son of Man. Our sins were removed as far as the east is from the west, not because of our good works, but because of His good work on the cross for us. (Psalm 103:12) Like this man we have read about today, we'll be unaccepted by the world and thrown out too, but it's worth it. (Hebrews 11:36-38) We have a new community, a new family, the family of God. We keep sharing that testimony of how He gave us sight, because some will listen and receive the light.

Commented [notes21]: 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Psalms 103:12 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. 37 They were stoned ; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Heb 11:36-38 (NIV)

Can you see? It is only by the Light of the World that any of us can see. If you think you can see without Him, you are blind. Won't you let Jesus be the light of life to you today?

Questions

- 1 Why would the people bring the man to the Pharisees?
- 2 Go over the connection with the days events and Isaiah 42:6-7.
- 3 What were the two schools of thought in play in verse 16?
- 4 Why didn't the Pharisees want to believe the man?
- 5 What does the oath, "Give glory to God!" refer to?
- 6 What did the healed man know for sure, and why should that have been enough?
- 7 Does God answer the prayers of unrepentant sinners?
- 8 Why did Jesus go find the man?
- 9 Who is the Son of Man?
- 10 What does seeing spiritually have to do with guilt?
- 11 How do we vanquish that guilt?