

John 9:1-41

From Sight to Insight

Lent 4 - 2023

I. **The Healing:** He sits in his own personal darkness. John does not tell us his name. He could be any one of us. And he is. He begs. What else is there for a blind man to do in this culture? The alternative is to starve. He cannot see, like so many with good eyes.

The disciples' discipling is not yet complete. They see suffering and do nothing except talk about it.

The disciples' question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" This comes from centuries of trying to understand the problem of suffering. Nothing is different today.

Beyond a misunderstanding of cause and effect of sin, Their question of suffering gives way to a deeper misunderstanding of God's nature. Through Jesus' words and actions maybe we can gain fresh insights of how God works. Jesus provides for us a redemptive way to understand any and all suffering in the same light He understood His own suffering. His blindness is not a punishment for sin but a waiting testimony of God's glory.

Then comes the curious action of Jesus spitting in the dirt, mixing it into clay, and rubbing it into the man's eyes. Commentators have taken pains to explain this unusual action. Ancient sources list the uses of saliva in healing. Fasting saliva due to its righteous work is really potent. Others point back to creation. Jesus using dust to re-create the man's eyes. St. John speaks of Jesus as the Creator. Here is an example of that truth.

Looking at this way, An Earthly Element, Combined with God's Word, a Command and promise. "How can Mud and Water do such things?" Mud and Water by themselves are just mud and water, but when combined with God's Word does these things along with faith to trust God's promise.

The Mudding of the man's eyes forces an act of obedience and faith on the man's part. "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which means "sent." The man never questionw Jesus, "Why did you do that? The man by faith went as sent. He washed and his sight was restored.

II. **"The man called Jesus."** His darkness has been eradicated. He can see. The neighbors are astounded that the one who they used to see begging now can see. They desire answers. "How is it that you received your sight?" How did this happen? "The man named Jesus made mud. Put it in my eyes. Told me to go wash in the pool of Siloam. I did and now I see!"

First, he calls Jesus the 'man.' A good place to start for anybody desiring to understand who Jesus is. "I believe Jesus is true man, born of the virgin Mary..." His name is Jesus. The name Jesus means 'salvation.' That is why Jesus was sent into the world, not to condemn the world, so that it might be saved through Him.

Jesus saw this man, touched him with his grace. His physical eyes have been opened by a pool. Newly created eyes by the Jesus who "was with God in the beginning and not anything came into being without Him." In other words, Jesus was, and is and will be one with the God the Father who created the heavens and the earth. His eyes are open. He can see for the first time the beauty of God's creation with his newly created eyes.

This is just the beginning of the developing faith the man born blind. Not satisfied they take the man born blind to the Pharisees. Our story continues with...

III. **"The Investigation."** "The day on which Jesus made clay and opened his eyes was a Sabbath." --GASP! The pharisees are not interested in the miracle. The issue is, Jesus broke the Sabbath. He does not keep God's law. I do not know the exact law Jesus broke, but somewhere in there forbids making mud on the Sabbath. The law stated is something like this: "Anyone is forbidden to spit on the Sabbath lest the spit run down the hill and make mud." That constitutes work. The act of mud making becomes the central offense against Jesus. In their mind Jesus cannot be from God because He broke the Sabbath. Therefore, Jesus is a sinner.

However, The once blind man wonders, "How can Jesus be sinner?" In the face of the interrogation, the once blind man says Jesus is a prophet, one who speaks for God. The once blind-man's faith in Jesus is slowly but surely becoming illuminated. While the pharisees are moving deeper into their own spiritual darkness

Throughout the rest of this investigation, they want to know about the work of Jesus' mud-making. They even become skeptical about the once blind man's claim that he was ever blind.

They call his parents. The parents do confirm their son's blindness, but how he gained his sight they could not account for. They would need to go back to him. The Pharisees had put pressure on the people about Jesus. If anyone dared to claim Jesus as the Messiah faced excommunication from the synagogue. That means you are out of the community. No longer able to receive the benefits that come from being a part of the faith community. That fear kept the parents quiet about what they thought of Jesus. "Ask him. He is of age. He can speak for himself." And the Pharisees do as the investigation continues.

IV. **"Give Glory to God."** "We know that this man is a sinner." The pharisees cannot bring themselves to believe that Jesus could do such things such as restore sight to a man born blind. They are blind to the work of God. The Bible lists a number of things that blind us to God's work: greed, ignorance, and possessions that take away our attention from God. The earthly goals and passions we pursue can certainly act as blinders to God's work.

However, He is beginning to see in his heart that Jesus is from God. You can feel the frustration of the once blind man by the constant questioning. "I have told you and you do not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do want to become Jesus' disciple too?"

The once blind man continues to Testify to Jesus' work in his life. Under further pressure from the pharisees the man insists that if Jesus were not from God, he could not have opened eyes blind from birth. The pharisees see this man's blindness was caused because he is sinner and had no business teaching them. The once blind man is excommunicated.

V. **Conclusion:** Jesus seeks out the man. Jesus asks the man the question that ranks as the most important question that we all must answer. "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He replies, "Who is he so that I may believe?"

Suddenly we realize the man has never laid eyes on Jesus who brought him out of his personal darkness into the light.

GK Chesterton said, "There is no greater dissatisfaction in life in than to be thankful and not knowing who to thank."

There is only one name that fills the big blank in our lives. It is the name that is above every name. The name is Jesus Christ. The Light of the World." Jesus says to him, you have seen Him and he the one speaking to you now. The man responded, "I believe." and he worshipped him.

The greatest work of God is displayed in this man. Faith in Christ Jesus, God's Son. It is faith in Christ is God's work in us. It is amazing grace. I was blind and now I see.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.