

The Blind Man Sees, But the Seeing Men Are Blind

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[0:00] Good morning.

Good morning. It's good to see you. This morning, this is the fourth in the series. As I mentioned initially, there are seven main signs in the book of John.

And those signs point to the fact that Jesus is the Savior. He's the Messiah, the Savior King, who was promised from a long, long, long time ago to come to save and rescue his people.

And so he arrives. And the signs point to who and what he is, somewhat authenticating and somewhat proving, at least to those who have faith, that he is indeed the one who was promised.

So he is the prophet, the priest, and the king. And he does miraculous things. And this sign that we are looking at, this is four of seven.

[1:10] He heals a blind man. And it comes from John chapter 9. If you have your Bible, turn there. I'm not going to read the entire portion here.

But we will start. And I will read 1 through 12. John chapter 9. Now, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? And Jesus answered, Neither this man nor his parents has sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day and the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

And when he had said these things, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva. And he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

[2:13] And he said to him, Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which is translated sent or Shiloh. So he went and washed and he came back seeing.

Therefore, the neighbors and those who had previously seen that he was blind said, Is not this he who sat and begged? Some said, This is he.

And others said, He's like him. And he said, No, I am he. Therefore, they said to him, How were your eyes opened? And he answered and said, A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.

And so I went and washed and I received sight. Then they said to him, Where is he? He said, I do not know. And then they brought him to the Pharisees to verify and double check, you know, that he was healed, as often was the case, and the priests and so forth.

Father, may you grant to us eyes to see the spiritual truths that are beheld here in chapter 9 of the Gospel of John.

[3:30] And may we understand it and hold to it, but be encouraged by it and built up in it and strengthened in our faith. And that we will continue to see the beauty of the Lord and to see the awesome wonders that you continue to do here.

Thank you for our time, Father. Amen. Amen. In chapter 8 is the theme of the light of the world, that the light, that God is the light.

And the Jews understood the light as being the direction of the path on which you went in the life of righteousness. So if you walk in the light, you are walking in righteousness. And there was a lot of symbolism between righteousness and doing what is right, the way, and the light.

And the light was an exposure to the darkness, put away the darkness, and opened up the way for a true believer to walk and to live before the face of God.

Well, in chapter 8, Jesus is the light of the world. This is what you see. Now we come to chapter 9. And Jesus demonstrates the truth by healing someone who had been blind from birth.

[4:45] Now we don't have the details. We don't know the background. We're not sure exactly how it all happened. But there are four things anyway that we're going to look at in this passage. The first is that he is healed by the Son of God.

Then we see the judgment of the Pharisees. Then we see faith in the Son of God. And then we see Jesus' judgment on the Pharisees. Let's look at the first point in verses 1 through 12 that I just read. This man is healed by the Son of God. In the Old Testament, there is no record of any prophet bringing sight or healing someone who is blind. In fact, there were promises that said if Messiah was to come, he would do that.

But no other prophets could do that. Priests could not do that. Judges could not do that. Only God could do that. And if God were incarnate or God came to earth and he performed it, then it could be done.

But in the Old Testament, we don't see anywhere where this happened. But there was the Old Testament expectation. For example, in Isaiah 42, verses 6 and 7 says, I, the Lord, have called you to demonstrate my righteousness.

[5:58] And I will take you by the hand and I guard you. And I will give you to my people, Israel, as a symbol of my covenant with them. And you will be the light to guide the nations.

And you will open the eyes of the blind. You will free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons. And so what we see in here is verse 6 is a fulfillment and an expectation. An expectation and a fulfillment of, in John chapter 8 of verse 6. And then in verse 7, we see the fulfillment in John chapter 9.

But the Old Testament makes it very, very clear, many verses, that only God himself can bring sight to those who are blind. Well, here in verses 1 and 2, we have a teachable moment.

In verse 2, we see this rabbinic tradition, which basically said if you were sick, and remember last time if you were here or heard the message, they believed that sickness was caused by demons in some way.

[7:06] But the rabbis taught, and traditionally, if you were sick or ill or infirm, it was because you had sinned. Plain and simple.

And something you had done to cause this illness. Maybe it was because your parents sinned. Some even taught that the baby sinned while inside the womb.

So, you know, that was probably the case of this blind person. That was a popular belief, and it was a theology that they held to. And everyone bought into it.

That's how culture is. You know, we just kind of accept things as they are. But Jesus denies that. You know, there are Christians who even believe that today.

I remember many years ago, where Johnny Erickson Tata was invited to go to a university, a Christian university that believed in healings.

[8:06] And right at the last minute, she was told she couldn't come. And the reason why she was not able to go, they did not want her to go there because she had no faith. If she had faith, she would no longer be crippled, so to speak.

She wouldn't be in the wheelchair. She'd be up and walking. So if she was still in the wheelchair, she had no faith. She had no business talking to anybody who was a Christian. It's a very popular belief that we have in Christian circles and many different groups.

But in verse 3, Jesus essentially denies this. You know, he corrects this bad theology. And he says, on the contrary.

So he is asked, you know, what's the cause? And Jesus answers in terms of God's purpose. Not the man's problem or sin. As scripture does, he talks more about the purposes behind the illness or the disease of the calamity.

And ultimately, all things will give glory to God. Not that God is pleased with illness and sickness and wickedness and sin. But that God can use those things and will use those things to demonstrate his power and his grace, his mercy and love.

[9:21] But Jesus does not focus so much on the person and the problem. Rather, he points us to God, as it should be. The cause ultimately is due, obviously, to the evil effects of sin that we inherited from Adam and Eve.

But it doesn't necessarily mean that the man or you or me deliberately sinned and therefore were sick. You know, we get COVID because what?

You know, we said a bad word. We get the flu because, you know, we had a bad thought. It could be never ending.

And yet, Jesus corrects us. Now, we know scripture tells us that there are purposes for suffering. For example, sometimes God wants to discipline his people to teach us humility.

To teach us how to have sympathy or empathy for others. I have a dear friend who is a pastor. He's been a pastor for many, many years.

[10:23] And he was a jokester, you know, always clowning around. And there was a time where this man who had apparently been afflicted by a lot of arthritis, just had a hard time getting around.

And the man was sitting on the couch in his home and he had a hard time getting up. And my friend jokingly mocked the guy.

He thought he was, you know, being funny. The guy actually had, you know, arthritis. The man didn't appreciate that. And my friend was embarrassed by his foolishness.

But years later, his wife got liver cancer. And it took her within less than six months. And it was a grueling, horrible, horrendous time for him and his family, his three small kids.

And he told me afterwards that that event alone straightened him out. It gave him not only more sympathy, but empathy for others who were suffering. So sometimes God puts those things in our lives.

[11:28] And one of the things that we get to learn is sympathy and empathy for others. Could be Satan that causes it. Or it could be, you know, a wonderful witness to other people.

As it was here in this case, who pointed to Jesus. So Jesus says the purpose for this man, as in verse 4 and 5, is to point to God, the Father.

To glorify him. And then in verses 6 and 7, he spits in the ground and he makes this little mud.

There's been a lot of speculation, theological debate over why he did that and when he did that.

What kind of mud it was, you know, and how much spit he had and all that. That's irrelevant. That's irrelevant. Spit in the day was thought to have some kind of cure.

But why the mud? Some think that possibly he's going back to show creation, a recreation of Genesis, a recreation of this man. We don't know.

[12:32] But he did it. And the pool of Siloam, tradition said that the pool was for purification. And if a person was healed from leprosy or healed of some major problem, they were to go to a place and be washed and purified even further.

And come back and be declared by the Pharisees that they were healed. And so he does that. That was tradition. And then in verses 8 and 9, we see the effect on the community.

We don't only see the effect on the man himself, but also on the community of people. People who knew him. His neighbors, his friends, his associates.

And those Pharisees who made sure that everything was done perfectly. According to their beliefs. They were so stunned by the man's healing, they couldn't believe it was him.

So they thought maybe it was another guy. And he had a twin. And, you know, here's this blind man who can see. And the guy says, yeah, it's me. Really? I can see.

[13:42] Which underscores the fact that when Jesus gets hold of our life, we indeed are a changed person. Our eyes spiritually are open and we can see.

Well, the second main point here is in verses 13 through 34, which I did not read, but we'll go over it. The judgment by the Pharisees. The judgment by the Pharisees.

The Pharisees' job, they believed, was to interpret the scripture and the law specifically. So that everybody got it right. And that, you know, you would become holy.

Now, it was almost impossible to be as holy as they were because they did everything right. So they thought. But here we have a theme of judgment.

Whenever we find light coming into the world in the Old Testament, we always see where God is judging others by exposing the evil that is about.

[14:42] And now they are being exposed. But they think they're going to expose Jesus and the fraud that this man supposedly is. But Jesus uncovers their darkness, which represents judgment.

You know how light is. It can melt wax or soften it. It can harden clay. That's what the sun will do. But Jesus, the light, has a different effect on different people.

And John brings this out very beautifully. Notice, three times the blind man confesses his ignorance of Jesus. He really doesn't know Jesus. He really hasn't seen him yet.

He doesn't know who he is and what he's done. Maybe he hasn't even heard about him yet. But he confesses that three times. And three times the Pharisees say, oh, we know Jesus.

Interesting. The blind guy doesn't know him. But the Pharisees supposedly do. They don't like him. Jesus is always causing problems.

[15:49] But the blind man's spiritual sight slowly begins to unfold. Maybe like your own testimony. Some people, it takes six or seven years before they finally get it and they come to believe in Jesus.

In verse 11, he says, some man, Jesus. And then in verse 17, he concludes, he must be a prophet. But that wouldn't fit the Old Testament prophets. And then 33, the man says, Jesus must be from God. And then in verse 37, there's verses 37, 38.

The man says, Jesus is the son of God, the Lord. Wow. He's the son of God. He's the son of man. He's the one. He's Messiah. And yet the physically sighted Pharisees even become more blind spiritually.

In verse 15, they accept that there was some kind of healing. Back in verse 8, at first they try to claim that it was a hoax. Oh, he wasn't blind. Some other guy was.

[16:59] You couldn't have this truth. You're lying. The fact is, the spiritual elite are spiritually blind. And Jesus' light is blinding to them.

It's sad when people get so caught up in theology and the law that they themselves become blind to the very things they are supposed to unfold and expose in truth.

And the deeper they get, sometimes the worse their blindness is. And yet we see in verse 14, Jesus heals on the Sabbath, showing that he is the Lord of mercy.

Because the Sabbath was supposed to be a time of rest and rejuvenation and mercy. It was a day of mercy.

And Jesus gives mercy to this guy. They don't like it. He shows mercy on the day of mercy.

[18:01] But the legalists typically, and the same is true today, they're always angry at others for not being as holy as they are. And they get frustrated with that.

They are, they're always angry for other people not measuring up to their standards. And you can talk to this legalist over here and then go to this church and have a legalist.

And they will, you know, they have different rules and different laws. You know, this legalist will not permit certain kinds of clothes. You know, men always have to wear white shirts. You know, the sleeves go down to the wrist and never wear shorts.

You know, they have to wear long pants. Always have to have a tie. You go here and say, no, you can wear a shirt, you know, that has a short sleeve, but it has to be dressy, you know. And so this legalist will contradict this one.

And then you go to another one and they all contradict each other. Because legalism is made and derived out of the hearts of men and not from the truth of God himself.

[19:02] But they also want to make sure that everybody is holy and as holy as they are. And they're always angry because you're not holy enough.

You didn't do it right. You didn't say it right. Verse 18, this is, essentially what's going on here is they're refusing to admit that this is the same man that was blind in verse 27.

They become angrier. They try to trap the blind man, which happens today. And I hear horrendous stories from dear moms or wives or children who grew up in legalistic homes.

Where the legalists, often the man, sometimes the woman, often the father, sometimes the mother, they twist the truth to trap others.

I had a horrible experience back in 2014 where Dr. Aquila and I went up for a meeting.

[20:12] And a group of elders wanted to determine whether or not what I had told them was the truth. And it was like a kangaroo court.

It was awful. It was horrible. They had come up with their own rules and regulations. And I failed the test, of course. But they were angry.

And one of the guys who was an elder broadcast to others, even before we had this meeting, he says, I've got him. Now I've got him.

He was delighting in the fact that he was going to, I'm going to crush him. Nice. Sad. But it happens frequently. They're angered.

So they try to trap the blind man, as these elders try to do with me. They twist the truth. It's quite often. Verse 34, they're disgusted with the healed man.

[21:12] And so ultimately what they do, the actions that they have, is they excommunicate him. The guy was blind all his life. And now he can see.

Why don't they throw a party? No. Because he wasn't healed by a Pharisee according to their way of doing it.

Verse 34 essentially is a figure of speech for excommunication. Now let's see a few things here that goes on. You know, it's very typical. There's always this inner Pharisee. All of us have.

We all have that and we all deal with it. But notice the point of the Pharisee's interrogation is whether or not Jesus had that kind of miraculous power.

Because they knew if they said he had that power, then they have to admit he's got to be a great prophet. Or he has to be the Messiah of the Old Testament. And they couldn't bring themselves to do that.

[22:17] So who is he? Finally, in verses 13 through 17, they admit that there was some kind of healing. But then they argue over they love to do this.

They argue over what it means. Was it, you know, because somebody prayed for him? Was it because God showed mercy?

But they could never admit that it was this man Jesus who did it. They didn't like him. You see, their form of piety and holiness back then had 39 additional laws in order to make sure everybody kept the Sabbath the right way.

Did you know if you're a woman and you were young and you started to notice some gray hair? You've heard this before, I'm sure. You could not look in the mirror and pluck the gray hair out of your head because that would be considered harvesting.

You can't harvest on the Sabbath day. And in fact, they wanted you not to even look in the mirror on the Sabbath day because it would be too much of a temptation for you to sin and break the Sabbath.

[23:23] 39 extra rules. And one of the things they said you could not do is knead. You couldn't knead bread.

And what did Jesus do? Essentially, he was kneading mud. He broke the Sabbath. How ludicrous, we think.

And yet they wanted to be so pure and perfect and bring everybody else to the level of their holiness by law. Law over grace. You know, they had a certain...

This is not true piety. This is pietism. It's this ungodly holiness that comes by law. So, the Sabbath was given for man.

Jesus said man was not given to live under the burden of a Sabbath rules. It was for his benefit, for rest and refreshment, for rejuvenation, for grace, for truth, for mercy.

[24:26] And that's exactly what Jesus does. The Lord of the Sabbath brings these things to this man who had been blind. And these Pharisees have a fit.

According to the Bible, true holiness to true piety is not what the Pharisees say and not what legalists say today.

It's not what God has, his rules and then some, adding additional rules onto that. I often hear this. Well, you know, I know that's what it says, but let's look at all these other things that we could apply to make sure that we fulfill the law exactly, perfectly, the best way ever.

You can have, we can have our own rules. We can live by them. What pietism and what legalism does essentially is say, my rules now have to apply to you and you have to live up to them.

Because my rules are God's rules. And that's wrong. And that's what they were doing. You know, you've been there, you've experienced it in the kind of books you read or don't read, what you eat on certain days.

[25:42] You know, if you have chocolate cake, you know, that's, that's against the rule because it's chocolate and, you know, has icing, which has sugar, which is bad for your health. You're killing your body.

Therefore, you're sinning. And, you know, whether watch TV or not, or the kind of clothing you have or having a nap on the Lord's day.

You can't do that because that shows, you need to be in prayer all day. You know better than that.

Take a nap, shame on you. Whether children can play on the Lord's day.

Whether they can play at all. But pietism or legalism are rules imposed by others. It's law oriented.

And it really is like the wraith who just take the life, suck the life out of you. I could tell stories.

[26:38] I could tell so many stories of people who had been beaten down, of wives who had been so beaten down by rules and regulations. And when I was, would counsel them, they often, they would often say, I don't think I'm a Christian.

Why? Because I don't do this, this, and this. I don't do it right. I don't do it enough. God can't love me because I've failed.

No grace. But Jesus overwhelms this man with grace. And he shows everyone else in that neighborhood, all his associates, his family, how gracious he is.

It's the good news. It's the gospel of grace over law. It's not our works that earn God's approval or earns our merit.

Like Jesus did when he sought out, you know, the lost one out of the 99. He goes to this man. The man doesn't deserve it. He doesn't ask for it. He doesn't seek it out.

[27:45] And yet Jesus goes to him and shows his grace and mercy. Our standing alone with God is based on Christ's perfect work done for us. It's not our work done for God.

And, you know, we often need to be reminded it's not about the works. You know, our works are a result of what God and what Christ has done for us and in us.

You know, in Christ we are free. In Christ we don't need to work for God's approval or even for other people's approval. There's no need to earn anything because he paid it all.

True piety is by grace and it resists condemning others and it resists others condemning us. Well, the next thing the Pharisees do after is to interrogate the man.

After they interrogated the man, they went to interrogate the parents. There's a judgment of the parents. They just can't help but be furious and they find blame in others.

[28:54] They're angry. They show fear and timidity and a readiness to submit to the Pharisees' authority. This is their son who now can see.

But they're upset about it. And they don't want to get under the disapproval of these legalists, these Pharisees. They know the truth but they're not committed to it.

And they could not get to the point to admit that this man, Jesus, did that. Well, after the parents then, the Pharisees return their judgment to the man in verses 24 through 34.

They want the man to deny the truth. And because he does not deny the truth, instead, he gives glory to God, which is a figure of speech, telling him to tell the truth in verse 24.

He tells the truth. And they get angry still. Outward piety, like the Pharisees had, is no guarantee of inner piety.

[29:58] And true piety and holiness exudes and gives off grace and mercy and love and truth. And notice in verse 27, the clever rebuke.

He answers, I told you already and you did not listen. You don't say that to Pharisees. At least not without getting slapped in your face.

Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples? Being a little facetious. Of course they don't. So the consequence of being healed by Jesus in verse 34.

It says, they answered and they said to him, you were completely born in sin and you are teaching us. And they cast him out. What that means is they excommunicated him.

Right there on the spot. You are no longer a Jew. No longer a Hebrew of the Hebrews. You are no longer one who has faith in Moses. Which is okay because now he has faith in Jesus.

[31:06] Then they judge the parents. Well, there's always a consequence of holding the line. And believing in mercy and grace and in the truth of Christ.

And not living according to Pharisees or legalists or rule setters. You know, that don't conform to the law of God. The third thing that we see and we're almost done is the faith in the son of God.

Verses 35 to 38. Here we find the point of John's use of light and darkness. That there is victory of light over darkness. Which is what we find here with this man.

Jesus acts out and he lives the declaration that he himself is the light. I am the light of the world.

And he proves it. But they don't want to see that.

There was now an ever increasing spiritual sight of the man who once was blind. And we are probably safe to say that he ended up becoming quite the follower of Jesus. But the purpose, the real purpose in the gift of sight is that it enabled the man to see and believe in Jesus.

[32:18] Who is the light of the world. And that's the point. Victory of light over darkness. Victory of grace over law.

Jesus then comes to him to show him that he is the true disciple. The one of whom Moses sought. The light. The son of God.

And what was his response? He believed. He worshipped. In verses 23 and 24. He worships Jesus. Just like some of us who are spiritually blind. Who came to faith in Christ. And finally we have the last point. The judgment of the Pharisees.

Verses 39 and 41. While the Pharisees were judging the man and Jesus. Jesus shows how they are judged by the witness of the man. And essentially what he's proclaiming is something that they understood.

[33:17] At least the Pharisees did. Who believed in an afterlife. That others would judge those who did not believe. Who were against God. Who were evil.

Who were in their sins. There would be a great witness of those in heaven. At the great judgment. Who would come and proclaim. As witnesses against these people.

And that's what Jesus is essentially saying. Oh you judge me. You judge this man who is blind but now can see. You will receive the judgment.

With the Pharisees there was an ever increasing blindness. Meaning there was ultimate darkness that leads them. Into the pit of hell. They're blind and condemned because they rely on their own vision.

Their own sight. Their own rules. Their own life. Their own laws. Theirs is an ever increasing blindness that comes upon them.

[34:21] But for those that Jesus has opened the eyes. Especially spiritually. There's an ever increasing sight. That we can see the beauty of God.

The glory of God. And to understand his grace. And truth. Jesus has shown himself several times. And again he does it with this sign. That he heals the blind one. Father. Who finally sees. Not only literally. But he sees Jesus.

Jesus. The light of the world. Father may we. Indeed. Always. Understand. And see. And have the spiritual sight. To behold. The light of the world.

Who is Jesus. Thank you for this passage. And for all that it means. And help us to. To escape. To flee. To get rid of.

[35:19] In our own lives. That pietism. That we may have true piety. Because of the grace and truth of Christ. Amen.