

**Find Life in the Son:  
Was Blind, but Now I See  
John 9:1-25**

**Introduction**

At the end of the fall Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus declares that He is the light of the world. Just as God's presence with the Israelites in the wilderness was evidenced by the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, so Jesus as Immanuel, God with us, is with us to lead us and to protect us.

As we cross over into chapter 9 Jesus is still in Jerusalem. The darkness of unbelief is strong there among the very people you would expect to be lovers of the light. It is not uncommon for the most religious people to be the greatest enemies of gospel truth. Here the guardians of biblical revelation and worship are the leading enemies of Jesus. Jesus has taught He is the light of the world. Now He will demonstrate it in a way that is impossible to deny. Yet some will persist in their determined unbelief.

<sup>1</sup> As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who

sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup> Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup> and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

<sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup> Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." <sup>10</sup> So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup> He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight."

<sup>12</sup> They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man,

“What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

**18** The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” **20** His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. **21** But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” **22** (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)

**23** Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” **24** So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” **25** He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

1. Human Suffering and God’s Works (1-7)
2. Unbelief and Verified Miracles (8-12)
3. Manmade Religion and the Messianic Savior (13-25)

## 1. Human Suffering and God's Works (1-7)

<sup>1</sup> As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

The disciples' question gets at one of the things that troubles us most about our world. Why do people suffer? People like this man blind from birth.

So much of our living depends on our sight. Think of the grief his parents experienced when they realized their newborn son could not see. How difficult it had to have been to rear him, educate him, and find some way for him to survive. For him, year after year of darkness. No hope of it ever being different. Just trying to cope. *Our natural question, especially if we believe in a good, all-powerful God, is why? Why should this man suffer so?*

Our sense of justice kicks in and won't let go. What did he ever do to deserve this? What did his parents do? The disciples start here. Did his own sin bring this blindness on? That seems impossible since he was blind from birth. Then maybe his parents sinned? But it does not seem right that he had to suffer for what his parents did wrong.

It is true that sins we commit can bring us troubles. Every good father disciplines his kids. We would expect the same from our heavenly Father. So whenever we hit the hard stretches, it's worth making sure we're not living in a way we know is wrong. When we are holding on to sin in our lives, suffering often moves us to get right before it is too late. But not every calamity and sorrow is because of some particular sin.

It is also true that our sin affects others, especially those who look to us to train them and lead them. Parents can teach their children to do right or to do wrong. The sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at the beginning of human history resulted in everyone who descended from them being sinners by birth and by choice. Their sin brought God's curse on all creation, including us—hence the suffering and the dying. Because of the curse on our sin we are broken people living in a broken world. But Jesus wants us to understand that suffering has a greater, more positive purpose than just punishment.

Romans 8 tells us God subjected the creation to the curse in hope. And that is where Jesus turns His disciples' attention. This man's blindness wasn't a result of his sin or his parents' sin, and while it reflected the

brokenness of our sin-cursed world, its primary purpose was for God to reveal clearly His works.

*God's character shines more brightly in those He heals and rescues from trouble than in those who need no help.* God will display His compassionate, powerful, healing works in the person of this blind man when Jesus miraculously gives him his sight. Experiencing this miracle of receiving physical sight led to his gaining spiritual sight so that he comes to trust fully in Jesus. That would change him forever, resetting his eternal destiny, making him a child of God who would inherit the eternal kingdom. All those years of blindness, bad as they were, could not compare to the joy and glory of what this man would receive. It was his blindness that opened the door to overwhelming blessings for him and for all who saw what Jesus did for him and believed.

We struggle in the long years of suffering. We grow discouraged and cynical with the pile-up of wounds and sorrows, calamities and disease. God sometimes seems cruel and unjust, and sin's scourge, an impossible burden to bear. But we must not forget how often God uses such afflictions to display His mighty works.

How many have come to the end of their self-reliance because of suffering, opening their

hearts to desire and to trust the Savior. And many a saint has found suffering an eloquent platform from which to share the good news to caregivers, family, and friends. Many a hospital stay has turned into a multiple opportunities for gospel witness.

1 Peter teaches us that suffering has a purifying effect in our lives. Paul tells Timothy it trains us to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. He testifies from prison to the believers in Philippi that suffering has brought him into closer fellowship with Christ. But there's more yet when we look at the bigger picture of human history.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

*Jesus came into this world to display God's saving works. It was a path through suffering that led to victory. Not just our suffering but His. Not just His victory but ours.*

John 9:4-7

<sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup> Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed

the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup> and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

The work God the Father had sent Jesus into the world to do was to shine light and life where darkness and death reigned. His was a short ministry of three and a half years, but He displayed God's power to save. His saving work continues to this day.

Why the mud made from saliva and dirt? We don't know. Sometimes Jesus healed people with just a word or a touch. But what Jesus does here reminds us of God's creating man from the dust of the ground. A God who can make a living man from dirt can certainly cause the eyes of a man to see. John notes that Siloam means "Sent," perhaps reminding us how often Jesus said of Himself that He was the Sent One of the Father.

The way Jesus performed this miracle was with no fanfare. You would not have known it was evening happening or why until the blind man came back seeing. How did it happen? The man just did what Jesus told him to do.

Those who take Jesus at His word and rely on it gain their sight. They are no longer in the darkness. And you can be sure, this man rejoiced over his ability to see more than any



of the vast numbers who had always been able to see.

### **Applications**

- What troubles have you asking God why?
- What sins has your suffering brought to mind that you know you need to confess and forsake?
- What gospel opportunities could your suffering create?
- In what ways does suffering increase the value and joy of being released from it?

### **2. Unbelief and Verified Miracles (8-12)**

<sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup> Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." <sup>10</sup> So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup> He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." <sup>12</sup> They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

It was hard for the crowd to get their heads around the idea that the man born blind could now see. Some account for it as just a mistaken identity. He just looks like the man

born blind. But he himself dispels that theory, convincing them that he is the one who was blind.

So that leaves the question of how it was even possible. Many people today believe miracles are impossible. They therefore assume that earlier generations that reported miracles were just more gullible than we are. There has to be some other explanation for what they thought was a miracle. But these people in John 9 are just as reluctant to believe a miracle has happened as any modern person would be. We wrongly assume ourselves to be superior thinkers to people of the past. A tour of any social media site should disabuse us of any such notion, or for that matter, a survey of what passes for wisdom in the educational institutions of our day.

They can't believe the miracle has happened, so they ask how it happened. He tells them, but nothing about the process accounted for his recovery of sight. The process was not the key. The Person who did the miracle was.

We live in an age that declares miracles never happened because its impossible for them to happen. Circular reasoning. The definition of a miracle is a mighty work too great to be possible. Historically, miracles can't happen—

except when they happen. If you could explain it away, it would not be a miracle. What was the point of this miracle? That Jesus is the light of the world. That He has the power to remove blindness—or for that matter, any other malady. He will even raise the dead. Jesus displays in His earthly ministry that as God in the flesh, He has both the power and the compassion to lift the effects of the curse—to remove every sickness and every defect and to free human beings even from death. In other words, He shows that *when God promises that one day He will wipe away all tears, along with the sickness, death, and sorrow that cause them, He's not boasting about what He can't deliver.* He is not a God who looks on human suffering and is not moved to relieve it, and more, to remove it one day completely forever.

*If there are no miracles, there is no gospel. Because it takes a mighty work of God to rescue us from our sin, suffering, sorrow, and death. If He's too small to do that, we have no hope. There is no good news to proclaim.* Just bad news. The best we can do is bear up under all the pain till we die.

### **Applications**

- If miracles like this one are for real, why should you not believe that the ultimate rescue God has promised through Christ is for real?

- If God can't bring about miracles, what will you do with Jesus and where have you set your hope—if you have any?

### **3. Manmade Religion and the Messianic Savior (13-25)**

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

We have already seen multiple rounds of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day. These men demonstrate that *religion cannot save us. It never saved anyone. If anything, it often makes people twofold enemies of the gospel, apostles of hell that cut off the only path of rescue.*

These enemies of Jesus start with their standard argument: Jesus did not keep their rules about how to keep the Sabbath, so He

could not be from God. Fact is, their Sabbath regulations distorted the whole meaning and purpose of the Sabbath. Jesus never broke God's command to keep the Sabbath day holy. He restored it to its proper use. And then there's the miracle itself. How can such a display of divine power come from a man who is a sinner. Even the Pharisees were divided on that point.

The problem is that *they had elevated their own teaching to the level of Scriptural command. That always leads to distortion of the truth and blindness to the power of God. Many a church and religious institution does not know what the work of God even looks like.* They're too busy promoting and defending their own version of holiness. It makes them advocates of a false gospel—a manmade one—instead of the God-given gospel that actually works. They in essence preach, "Keep our rules and you will be saved." No one was ever saved that way. That's just the garden variety works righteousness that has infected every false religion on the planet. The gospel is not about what you must do. It's about what God has done. This miracle of sight was a free gift from Jesus, not about five steps you must take to recover from blindness.

Next, these men try to disprove there's even been a miracle, but they fail.

## John 9:18-25

**18** The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" **20** His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. **21** But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." **22** (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) **23** Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Here we get to the core issue. Many people were becoming convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah. They were right.

## Isaiah 29:18

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.

## Isaiah 35:5-6a

**5** Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
**6a** then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

Among the many miracles Jesus performed during His ministry, Jesus healed the blind and deaf, the lame and mute. He fulfilled what Isaiah prophesied. There was every reason to believe Him to be the promised Messiah.

But to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah would overturn the whole system of false religion these religious leaders had built. It would call them to repentance like the rest of the rabble. It would expose their hollow holiness and unrighteous self-righteousness. They risked losing their high standing in the community and the comfortable living that went with it. So instead of refuting that Jesus is the Messiah, they attacked those who believed He is. Kicked them out of the synagogue as if they were heretics and unbelievers.

*Persecution is not an argument. It's just treating those who love God the way Satan treats them.* They have so intimidated people that the blind man's parents are afraid to confirm the simple fact that Jesus healed their son. "He's grown now. Ask him."

John 9:24

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner."

You can't glorify God and at the same time dishonor Jesus, who is sent from God. Refusing to credit Jesus with having done this miracle dishonored God. If you dishonor God the Son, you dishonor God the Father who sent Him.

The blind man cuts through their theological mumbo-jumbo to the reality literally staring them in the face. They want to call Jesus a sinner because He's violated their manmade Sabbath rules. But the fact remains that man born blind now sees.

John 9:25

He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

*The gospel of Jesus Christ is not about adding more rules to your religious playbook. It's about a Savior mighty to save. The God-man Messiah with power to rescue you from what is humanly impossible to escape. In Christ's time on earth and ever since then, Jesus continues to give sight to the blind and to bring eternal life to those doomed to die for their sins. It's a rescue that pushes past the boundaries of this mortal life into the infinite years of eternity. No one who genuinely trusts in Him is ever the same again.*



## **Applications**

- Is the Christianity you practice about what Christ has done to deliver you or about what you must do to win favor with God or man?
- What evidence can others see in your life of the power of the gospel of Christ to transform people?

## **Conclusion**

The gospel is only for those who know their need for rescue. A Savior who can deliver them from their darkness and distress. Those who think they can do just fine without Him don't want the good news.

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Closing Song: Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

## **Applications Summary**

- What troubles have you asking God why?
- What sins has your suffering brought to mind that you know you need to confess and forsake?
- What gospel opportunities could your suffering create?

- In what ways does suffering increase the value and joy of being released from it?
- If miracles like this one are for real, why should you not believe that the ultimate rescue God has promised through Christ is for real?
- If God can't bring about miracles, what will you do with Jesus and where have you set your hope—if you have any?
- Is the Christianity you practice about what Christ has done to deliver you or about what you must do to win favor with God or man?
- What evidence can others see in your life of the power of the gospel of Christ to transform people?