

All Signs Point to Jesus

Session 6

April 6, 2025

The Sign of His Light

The Point: Only through Jesus can we truly see.

Session Passage: John 9:1-11,30-33

John 9:1-5

Connection to the Point. Jesus is the light of the world.

As he was passing by (v 1). The preceding chapter is one filled with conflict. Pharisees accused Him of lying (8:13), suicidal tendencies (v. 22), and being a Samaritan and a demon (v. 48). As Jesus withdrew (v. 59), He may have passed by an area of the temple where sick people sought alms and prayer. En route, Jesus and the disciples **saw a man which was blind from his birth.**

Rabbi (v. 2). The English word is a translation of the Greek word *rabbi* and means master or teacher. Jesus is called rabbi, by this title thirteen times in the Gospels. His disciples recognized Him as their authority and followed His teaching and wisdom. They eventually recognized Him as Messiah.

Who did sinned (v. 2). It was common to relate illness to sinful behavior. It was natural for Jesus's disciples to think as Job's friends had—that past sin lay behind the present malady. They may have remembered the Old Testament warning about judgment in Exodus 20:5—"I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth." They wondered if this man's parents bore judgment for personal or ancestral wrongs that brought about the birth abnormality.

We fail to understand all the reasons people suffer. It's fruitless for us to offer personal speculation in these instances. We, like Job, can speak of things "too wondrous" or great for us to know (Job 42:3). Whatever the case, the disciples sought new understanding from their rabbi. They were seeking the truth from Him. Jesus proceeded to dispel their "either-or" assumption.

Neither this man nor his parents sinned (v. 3). Jesus did not teach that this man and his family were sinless; of course they were not. But He taught that the blind man's condition was not due to what he or his family had done or how they had disobeyed the Lord. He had an entirely different rationale for the blindness.

God's works might be displayed in him(v. 3). This passage deals with the sovereignty of God and offers another difficult theological issue for modern believers. Some interpret this passage to mean that God's preexisting plan was for the man to have blindness so that years later Jesus could heal him and demonstrate the power of God within him. Others suggest that Jesus stepped into a situation of need independent of God's preexistent will and decided to show favor to the man. However we interpret the passage, we can conclude that the miracle of healing underscored the truth of Jesus's teaching in the preceding chapter and His statements later in this chapter about being the light of the world. Jesus

demonstrated God's light that day through this miracle, and only the spiritually deficient religious leaders would fail to recognize it.

We must do the works (v. 4). Jesus insisted He must do God's work, even in times of testing. Tension was in the air. Jesus may have had only a few moments to escape being stoned. The Pharisees were not finished (8:59). They targeted Him for further attack. Jesus's delay in departure in this uncertain moment demonstrated His commitment to compassion. Most would have quickly fled the area if under threat of hurt. Jesus gave a stellar example of commitment. We learn from Him that we must live His light and show compassion to others. We must make it a priority to love and serve others despite adverse circumstances around us.

Night is coming (v. 4). In the ancient world night mean it was impossible to work as the normal day shut down. Night implies finality and the end of opportunity. Jesus taught that His disciples, like Him, should do the works of God and do them promptly. The night comes at some point and cancels opportunities to serve. There is only regret when we fail to do the will of God in the day, that is, when we have opportunity.

The light of the world (v. 5) This is another of John's seven "I am" statements of Jesus, and a restatement of John 8:12. John introduced this theme in the Gospel's prologue. He contrasted Jesus with John the Baptist: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world" (1:6-9). Night is coming, and opportunity will cease, to be sure. But night also implies danger or the willful ignorance of humanity who choose to disobey God (3:19). Jesus, in contrast, bears the light of God's presence, love, and purpose. We follow this light to find security and salvation.

John 9:6-11

Connection to the Point. As the light of the world, Jesus brought sight to a man born blind.

Spit on the ground (v. 6). Spitting is often associated with great insult, as it was when directed toward Jesus after His arrest (Matt. 26:67). But this incident is certainly not to be understood as an insult. Some ancient peoples believed saliva had healing powers, but, of course, Jesus did not need any medicine in order to show the power of God. Nor did the pool of Siloam have any unique healing properties. Though not typical, the methodology in this miracle is not unique, since it is one of three similar incidents involving saliva in the Gospels (see also Mark 7:32-35; 8:22-25). John gave no explanation why Jesus chose such an unusual method.

Pool of Siloam (v. 7). Jesus made a pasty poultice to anoint the man's eyes, applied it to his eyes, then told him to find his way to Siloam for washing. The pool of Siloam is introduced in 2 Kings 20:20 as King Hezekiah's public works project to bring water inside the gates of Jerusalem, though its name does not appear in that passage. It was fed by Hezekiah's tunnel, sometimes called the Siloam Tunnel, for the purpose of providing the city a supply of water, particularly during a time of siege when enemy troops surrounded the city to prevent inhabitants from coming and going. The pool's location was discovered by

modern archaeologists in 2004, near the ruins of a Byzantine church built to commemorate the pool. It's believed the pool was more than two hundred feet in length.

John noted that the pool's name means **Sent**. The One who had been sent from heaven to take away the sins of the world and provide sight to the spiritually blind sent this physically blind man to the pool of Sent. In obedience, the blind man **left** and made his way to the pool.

Washed (v. 7). If Siloam was two hundred feet long, the blind man could have stepped into the pool and washed his body. In this way it would have been something like a baptism. But the same verb is used in Matthew 6:17 to describe washing one's face while fasting to prevent drawing attention to oneself. Therefore we do not know exactly how the man washed. Furthermore, neither Jesus in His words to the blind man nor John in his account of the incident gave any rationale for this "stage two" in the healing miracle—first the saliva mud, then the washing. Regardless of Jesus's rationale for placing mud on the blind man's eyes and sending him to the Siloam pool to wash it off, the man's compliance resulted in his healing. The one who had never seen a day in his life **came back seeing**.

We remember the Old Testament prophet Elisha told Naaman of Syria to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman protested that the river was polluted and his own country had better water in their own rivers, but at the urging of his servants, Naaman eventually agreed to this instruction. His obedience brought cleansing from leprosy (2 Kings 5). In both cases we might wonder about the methodology. Why was healing delayed until and dependent on these unique instructions? We do not know for certain. But in both cases, traveling to the water source indicated following through on the instructions given was an act of obedience and faith.

His neighbors and those who had seen him before (vv. 8-9). The blind man found healing and joyously returned home. Those who had previously known him puzzled over this, not recognizing him at first. They debated among themselves whether this was the same man or simply someone who looked like that man.

He kept saying (v. 9). The verb form reflects an ongoing effort on the man's part. He did not make a single claim to be the same person but repeatedly identified himself as that man.

The man called Jesus (v. 11). Upon being questioned about his ability to see, the formerly blind man explained that Jesus had given him a strange command that, when followed, had brought about the presence of his sight, though he didn't know where Jesus was at the time. Presumably his neighbors and acquaintances wanted to go and meet this man of miracles for themselves.

Notice the progression in the man's understanding of who Jesus is. In talking with his family and friends, he identified Jesus a man (v. 11). When the Pharisees began to question him regarding the identity of the One who healed him, the man replied, "He's is a prophet" (v. 17). His understanding would continue to grow as we move through the remainder of his story.

John 9:30-33

Connection to the Point. The work of Jesus points to who He is.

Context. His neighbors brought the formerly blind man to the Pharisees. Perhaps they wished to learn a theological explanation from the religious elite, or maybe they wanted the Pharisees to rejoice with them that the power of God was in evidence among them. Perhaps they thought the Pharisees might know where Jesus was. But the response of the religious leaders was mixed. Some of them were distraught about the healing having taken place on the Sabbath, as they often were, while others questioned how an evil man could have done such a remarkable act of healing. Having reached no conclusion on their own, these leaders further interrogated the man who was healed about the exact circumstances of the healing. At this point, the healed man called Jesus a prophet and other than this, seemed to know very little about Him. Jesus is called a prophet four times in John's Gospel (4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). This designation indicated those who used the title believed Jesus was sent by God. The Pharisees also summoned the formerly blind man's parents to testify further about what had happened. His parents were afraid of being identified with Jesus and forbidden to worship in the temple; and they might not have known anything beyond what had already been said.

The religious leaders insisted Jesus was a sinner and couldn't do the works of God. The man who was healed insisted he didn't know everything about this matter, but only knew that Jesus had miracle-working power. The man gave a familiar response to his inquisitors: "Whether or not he's a sinner, I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!" (v. 25). This is a proclamation popularized by John Newton in his hymn of testimony, "Amazing Grace."

An amazing thing (v. 30). The healed man described the healing as *amazing*, as indeed it was. The Greek word is used six times in the New Testament. It appears in 1 Peter 2:9 when Peter described God bringing people from darkness into His "marvellous" light. It is translated "awe inspiring" in Revelation 15:1 to describe a sign of the end times. Surely this miracle was beyond the comprehension of the man who was healed and beyond that of the Pharisees as well. Their hearts were hard, and they tried to find a way to condemn Jesus rather than to join in responding with awe and rejoicing. God's work in His world and in the lives of people is always amazing.

You don't know where he is from (v. 30). The man who was healed demonstrated boldness in responding to the critical inquisition of the Pharisees. They claimed they didn't know where Jesus was from, implying that He didn't have the same spiritual credentials as Moses (v. 29). The implication was that Jesus was a "no name" teacher with no spiritual authority, a spiritual upstart without sanction.

God-fearing (v. 31). God-fearing doesn't mean terror, but reverence for God. The Greek uses a compound word composed of "God" and "worship" or "devout." The Greek adjective is used only here in the New Testament when the healed man continued his bold testimony. **God doesn't not listen to sinners**, he said. His assertion was that it was impossible for Jesus to do miracles without God-ordained authority. The miracle he experienced demonstrated Jesus was a man of holiness.

Listens (v. 31). This common verb is used over four hundred times in the New Testament, and interestingly, twice in this man's assertion that God doesn't hear sinners but does hear those who reverence Him. This observation came from the presumably unschooled, formerly blind man who now had amazing spiritual insight. The Pharisees didn't know where Jesus came from nor His spiritual pedigree. Their self-righteousness and jealousy blinded them to the truth before them. The man who had been physically blind demonstrated he was not spiritually blind. He had a greater understanding than they did. He knew Jesus was, no doubt, a man sent from God to do the work of God.

From God (v. 33). Whereas the healed man had previously identified Jesus as a man (v. 11) then a prophet (v. 17), he now concluded that Jesus had to be *from God*. A few verses further on, he came to recognize and acknowledge that Jesus is "Lord" and worshiped Him for who He is (v. 38). This man's spiritual wisdom is inspired motivation for us to earnestly seek God in our lives and to bring our needs to Him in prayer. We can be assured that the God of Scripture hears the fervent prayers of humble men and women who reverence Him (Ps. 10:17-18).