

Exalting Jesus Christ

"A Blind Man Sees the Light of the World"

INTRODUCTION:

- I. I want you to imagine for a moment what it would be like to lose your sight.
 - A. Imagine what it would be like to spend the rest of your life unable to see anything.
 1. Suddenly you would realize all the things you took for granted when you had sight.
 - a. You would never again experience the warmth and love from the smiles of loved ones, or see the joy and excitement in the eyes of your children or grandchildren.
 - b. You would never again see the beauty of creation, or marvel at the splendor of another sunset, or witness the grandeur of another sunrise.
 2. Your world would be reduced to the things you can hear, feel, smell and taste – but the things you could see with your eyes would be gone forever.
 3. You might still have the memory of all those things you saw in life etched deeply in your mind, but you would never see them again.

B. But now, try to imagine someone who has never had sight – someone who was born blind.

1. They have no memories of what it was like to see a smile, let alone being able to recall the splendor of a sunset.
2. And no matter how much you try to describe these things, they have no way of even imagining what it's really like.

II. As we continue our studies through the gospel of John, "Exalting Jesus Christ," we come to the ninth chapter where "A Blind Man Sees the Light of the World."

A. As we will see right from the start, this is more than a simple story of Jesus giving sight to a man born blind.

1. It's a story about two kinds of blindness – physical blindness, and spiritual blindness.
 - a. On one hand we have the story of a beggar born blind – a castaway from society.
 - (1). He is forced to sit on the streets of Jerusalem depending entirely on the grace and kindness of others to sustain life.

- b. On the other hand we have the story of a group of self-righteous, pride-filled Pharisees who are inflicted with a far worse form of blindness – spiritual blindness.
 - (1). They are groping around in spiritual darkness, unable to see the beauty of God's mercy and grace.
 - (2). Instead, they are bound up in the darkness of a religion that promotes judgmental legalism and the keeping of endless traditions, rather than being able to enjoy a vibrant, life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ, the Savior.
 - (3). And what makes matters even worse, these proud Pharisees didn't even realize just how blind they are.

B. So, let's open our Bibles to the ninth chapter of John and step back in time to the day when "A Blind Man Sees the Light of the World."

- 1. As we do, there are four things we want to consider.
 - a. First, let's we want to learn a few basic facts about the blind man, and consider the question the Lord's disciples asked about him.
 - b. Then we want to look at the specific things the Lord did in healing this man – many might consider some of the things the Lord did as rather unusual.

- c. Third, we want to consider the reactions prompted by this miracle – the reactions of the man's friends, and more importantly the reaction of the Lord's adversaries, the Pharisees.
- d. And finally, we want to look at the discourse between the Lord and this former blind man, and in doing so, we'll notice how Jesus exposed the self-imposed spiritual blindness of the Pharisees.

BODY:

- I. The ninth chapter of John opens with some important background information about this blind man.
 - A. Unlike many who lose their sight as a result of damage or disease, this particular man had been born blind – it was a congenital blindness.
 - 1. **John 9:1** – *Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.*
 - a. From our previous lesson, we learned that Jesus was in the area of the temple in Jerusalem during the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - b. And it was during this time Jesus made two claims to deity that outraged the Pharisees.

- (1). Jesus had claimed to be "The Light of the World" – a term that every devout Jew understood applied to Jehovah. And in making this claim, Jesus was saying He is as much "The Light of the Word" as God the Father.
 - (2). Jesus also said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" – claiming to have the same divine eternal nature as God the Father, who spoke to Moses in the burning bush and called Himself, "I AM, THAT I AM."
- c. The reaction? **John 8:59** – *Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*
2. However, on His way out of the temple courtyard, Jesus happened to pass by ". . .a man who was blind from birth." (**John 9:1**)
 - a. You would think that Jesus would have simply chosen to leave the temple altogether, since the Pharisees were still standing in the background with stones in their hands ready to stone Jesus for what they considered were blasphemous claims to deity.

- b. But Jesus deliberately chose to perform one more miracle that would provide further proof of His power and godhood.
- B. Upon seeing this blind man, and since the nature of his disability left no doubts about him being born blind, the disciples ask the Lord a question.
 - 1. **John 9:2** – *And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*
 - a. When we consider the culture of that day, the question asked by the Lord's disciples was logical.
 - b. In those days, it was commonly believed that a fetus could commit sin while in the mother's womb and that it's kicking indicated its sinful state.
 - (1). Of course, that belief is contrary to everything the Bible teaches about the sinlessness of newborn babies and young children.
 - (2). It is not only impossible for a fetus to sin, all children are brought into this world as sinless and pure as driven snow.
 - c. The other common belief of that day – and a belief that is still held by many today – is that God can impose judgment on a fetus for their parent's sin.

- (1). In fact, the Mishnah, the book of traditional Jewish beliefs, claimed God would often inflict children or grandchildren as a way to punish the parents or grandparents.
 - (2). This is also completely contrary to everything the Bible teaches about the nature and guilt of sin.
 - (3). In fact, speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, God said:
Ezekiel 18:20 – *"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."*
2. Sadly, there are many today who look at a child born with birth defects and wonder what terrible things the parents had done to give birth to a child inflicted this way.
 - a. That kind of thinking is not only sick, it's as ungodly and unbiblical as anything can be.
 - b. God does not do those sorts of things – in fact it's totally contrary to His nature.
 - c. If you're going to blame anything, blame time and chance.

- (1). Solomon wrote: **Ecclesiastes 9:11** – *"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all."*
- d. Calamity can strike anyone, at anytime, anywhere. We can be in the right place at the right time just as easily as we can be in the wrong place at the wrong time – it's all a matter of time and chance.
 - e. And if time and chance can happen to us, it can happen to an unborn baby as well.
 - f. So don't ever blame God when birth defects or death claims a newborn. Don't ever say, "Well God must have willed it so" or "God must have needed a new angel in heaven."
- C. In this particular case, Jesus told His disciples this man was providing Jesus with a wonderful opportunity to reveal the works of God through this blind man.
- 1. **John 9:3-5** – *Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

II. That brings us to the miracle Jesus performed.

A. When we look at the miracle Jesus performed here, the Lord does something unusual which He does on two other occasions.

1. **John 9:6-7** – *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. 7 And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.*

2. On two other occasions Jesus also used saliva to affect a miracle.

a. **Mark 7:32-33** – *Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue.*

b. **Mark 8:22-26** – *Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. 23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. 24 And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." 25 Then He put*

His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

3. Why did the Lord use saliva in the healing of these men? And why did the Lord send this particular blind man to wash in the pool of Siloam?
 - a. The most simple answer is, "We're not told why." Therefore, any speculation would be pointless.
 - b. But one thing we do know – no one could question the divine power of Jesus in completely and permanently healing any physical impairments, including those congenital impairments that go all the way back to the moment of conception.

III. So what was the reaction to this wonderful miracle of Jesus?

A. As we might expect, the reaction was mixed.

1. Those who knew this man were clearly excited by the prospect that such a powerful miracle had been done.
 - a. **John 9:8-12** – *Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" 9 Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." 10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" 11 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.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." 12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

2. But their enthusiasm wasn't shared by everyone, and for a very good reason – once again, Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath.

- a. **John 9:13-17** – *They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."*

- b. Do you remember what we said in a previous lesson about the traditional Jewish beliefs concerning working on the Sabbath?

- c. God had simply said, "*do no work*" (**Exodus 20:10**). But the Jews understood there were exceptions to that rule.
 - (1). If a man's oxen fell into a ditch on the Sabbath, they could work to get it out, and not be guilty of Sabbath-breaking because grace and mercy outweighed the strict observance of the Law.
 - (2). But in the minds of these self-righteous, legalistic Pharisees, they considered Jesus a sinning Sabbath-breaker for healing a lame man on the Sabbath (John 5), and for now healing a blind man on the Sabbath.
 - (3). In other words, you can show grace and mercy to your oxen on the Sabbath, but not to your physically or visually impaired neighbor.
- 3. As the controversy heated up, even some of the Pharisees began disagreeing with one another.
 - a. Some called Jesus a sinner.
 - b. While others argued, "*How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?*"
- 4. All this poor blind man knew is that a man named Jesus had healed him, and in his mind this Jesus was at the very least a prophet of God.

B. Since the Lord's adversaries couldn't deny this man is now able to see, they drag his parents into the controversy and demand answers from them.

1. **John 9:18-22** – *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."*

- a. Clearly, the parents felt intimidated by this cross-examination.
- b. It was so obvious to everyone that a miracle had been performed by this man called Jesus – no one could deny that.
- c. The parents admitted this was, in fact, their son, and that he had, in fact, been born blind.
- d. But now he could see! A miracle!

2. But to avoid incriminating themselves, the man's parents take the fifth in trying to explain all this – and for a good reason!

- a. **John 9:22-23** – *His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

C. So, once again, the outraged Pharisees do everything they can to discredit this former blind man and get him to perjure himself.

- 1. **John 9:24-25** – *So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." 25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."*

- a. There was simply no way to deny a miracle had occurred.
- b. But these Pharisees refused to give any credit whatsoever to Jesus, the sinning Sabbath-breaker.
- c. Therefore, they commanded the former blind man to *"Give glory to God"* – not Jesus. He's a sinner.
- d. But this raises an important question. If God was to be given the glory for healing this blind man on the Sabbath, does that make God a sinner too?

2. Whether Jesus was a sinner or not – all the blind man knew
"though I was blind, now I see."
3. So, in their frustration these Pharisees now demand that they be told what Jesus did to heal him.
 - a. **John 9:26-27** – *Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"*
 - b. You have to appreciate the cutting humor of this former blind man - *I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"*
- D. When someone is clearly shown that their whole belief system is theologically and doctrinally wrong, they come to the same crossroads as these Pharisees.
 1. There was simply no way these Pharisees could deny that Jesus had performed this and other miracles.
 2. Therefore, they were left with only two choices.
 - a. One, they could acknowledge that Jesus is truly the "Son of God," "the Bread of Life," "the Light of the World," and the "I AM."

- b. Or two, they could blatantly refuse to believe the evidence and do all they can to undermine the credibility of anyone who does.
 - c. Sadly, they chose the latter.
- 3. **John 9:28-34** – *Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.*
 - a. There you have it. If you can't defend yourself against the truth, then attack the one who teaches the truth.
 - b. In the twisted minds of these Pharisees, Jesus was a sinner – but not just Jesus.

- c. They managed to convince themselves that anything this formed blind man had to say was not worth their time – after all, in their minds this man had been born in sin because he had been born blind.
- d. Therefore, they threw him out.

IV. Even though the Pharisees had cast this man out of the temple, the Lord seeks Him out.

A. And at that moment, this former blind man comes face-to-face with "The Light of the World."

1. **John 9:35-38** – *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" 36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." 38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.*
2. This man's eyes had been opened in more ways than one.
 - a. Jesus had not only opened his physical eyes so that he could see for the first time in his life.

- b. Jesus also opened his spiritual eyes to see the truth – to see beyond any doubt whatsoever that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
 - c. And who wouldn't want to worship the Lord after having their spiritual blindness healed?
3. It's at this point that Jesus reveals the purpose behind His miracles – and it isn't just the former blind man who heard these comments.
- a. **John 9:39-41** – *And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." 40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."*

B. There are two important truths Jesus revealed here.

- 1. Jesus came into this world to force people to make a choice.
 - a. Those who are spiritually blind – those whose lives are cloaked in the blackness of sin – they can be healed of that blindness by admitting their blindness and by coming to Jesus Christ to receive sight.

- b. But for others who have deluded themselves into thinking they are spiritually enlightened, and yet are spiritually blind – they will most likely refuse to admit their blindness and will, sadly, remain in their sin.
 - c. In other words, we bring the Lord's judgment upon ourselves by the choices we make.
- 2. Sin is the result of hearing the truth, but refusing to obey it.
 - a. The sin of the Pharisees was not that they were somehow born in sin – no one is born in sin.
 - b. The sin of the Pharisees was that they refused to admit they were sinners and in need of God's grace and mercy.
 - c. Physical blindness is not an indication of sin – but spiritual blindness is.

CONCLUSION:

- I. What about you?
 - A. Have you somehow deluded yourself into believing that you have no need to come to Christ in faith and obedience to be healed of your spiritual blindness?

1. Are you too prideful to admit that you – just like the rest of us here this morning – are a sinner in need of the saving power of Jesus Christ?
 2. If you were there on that day, which side would you have taken?
 - a. Would you have sided with the blind man who believed in and worshipped Jesus?
 - b. Or would you have sided with the Pharisees who refused to admit their sin, and who refused to believe in and give glory to Jesus Christ, despite all the evidence?
- B. The choice you make now will be an indication of which side you would have taken on that day.
1. For example, you can do what the blind man did and obey the Lord's command.
 - a. The blind man was told to go wash in the pool of Siloam.
 - b. You can come to Him in faith and have your sins washed away through baptism.
 - c. Or you can come back to Him and have your sins forgiven by simply repenting of and confessing your sins.
 2. Or, you can be like the Pharisees and reject Jesus.
 - a. You can callously and deliberately choose to remain in your sins.

3. The choice is yours.
 - a. The same Jesus that healed a blind man some two thousand years ago is the same Jesus who stands ready to heal you from your blindness, and bring you into the light of God's grace and love.