

See the Son. Believe for Life. The Light is Shining

John 9:1-41

When I was in elementary school, I remember going shopping each fall for school and there was always that exciting moment when you would get to the box of crayons that would be yours for the year. The question was, how extravagant would we be this year? Would we save money and go with the box of 8 or 16 color crayons or would we go hog wild and get the box of 64 different colors? Of course I need crayons with names like Salmon, Raw Sienna, and Purple Mountain Majesty. You want me to get All A's don't you?

64 Colors is a lot, but it doesn't even begin to hold a candle to the total number of colors the human eye can perceive in the world around us. Some estimate that the actual number of colors is in the neighborhood of 10 million. Of course, this doesn't take into account the different lighting levels in which we see colors, the way in which surrounding colors form our perception of color, and the possibility that each person on earth sees colors in a slightly unique way. In reality, the total number of color possibilities is infinite.

Take a moment to pause and appreciate just how magnificent the God is who created a world with this much variety and beauty. Now, imagine for a moment that you had never seen a single one of these colors because you were born blind. Only darkness. Blackness from the moment of birth. No idea what a color is or what the perception of these 10 million colors does to your brain. No ability to experience them. We'll meet a man today who has his life turned upside down by Jesus and his complete and total darkness is radically changed to 10 million colors in a moment. But this work of Jesus isn't just about his power to give physical sight. As we'll see in John 9 this miracle teaches us about spiritual blindness and what happens when the light of the world shines into the darkness. So, today we are going to see **3 Results When the Light of the World Shines.**

1. Blindness Confronted (vv. 1-7)

As we get into chapter 9, keep in mind that this chapter is connected to the Feast of Tabernacles and the proclamations of Jesus concerning living water and the light of the world. We don't know exactly how much later this occurred, but it was within the next couple of months and may have been while Jesus was on his way

out of the temple. Look at verse 1. The issue is front and center here. This man was born blind. He's never seen a thing. Now, as we've studied John we've come to see how these miracles often point beyond themselves to spiritual truths. This detail, that the man has been blind from birth, is absolutely meant to point to the way in which every human is born spiritually blind because of sin. Other passages in Scripture call this spiritual death. (Eph. 2:1-3) We are physically born into this spiritual reality and just like this man, we cannot give ourselves spiritual sight.

As they walk by the disciples ask Jesus about this man and how his blindness came about. Look at verse 2. This was a common assumption at this time that you could tie a serious physical problem or struggle to a specific sin. Now, it is true that generally speaking, sin causes maladies like blindness, but it's never right for us, as limited human beings to try and connect specific sins to something like this.

Jesus places this man's blindness within God's sovereign purposes. Look at verse 3. Notice that Jesus uses the word displayed here. We could also say revealed and the use of this word fits nicely in this chapter dealing with blindness and sight. God has a purpose for this man's blindness to manifest or reveal to others God's works. Jesus continues explaining in verses 4-5.

Jesus is clearly talking about His incarnation here and the very bright way His light shines while He's on earth. Of course, this statement in verse 5 ties this miracle back to Jesus' statement in 8:12. It frames the whole chapter as one answering the question, what happens when the light shines? The light reveals, guides, and manifests the glory of God. Look at verses 6-7.

Why does Jesus spit on the ground and form mud to place on the man's eyes? We can't say for sure but I suspect this alludes back to the creation of man in the garden when God formed man from the dust of the ground. In other words, Jesus is presenting this as an act of new creation. God brought life and light out of nothing at the moment of creation and Jesus brings new creational life and light. John makes a point here to give us the name of the pool the man goes to and to define it in verse 7. Why?

This pool received this name because the water that flowed into it was sent from a spring in the Kidron Valley into the pool. The man received spiritual sight by going to the pool called "sent" just as we receive spiritual sight by going to the "sent One", the Savior.

You can see at the end of verse 7 that the man born blind came back seeing. He's completely made new. What happens when the light of the world shines? Blindness is confronted. This man's blindness was a result of the world being broken by sin but the light shines into the darkness of the world and confronts spiritual blindness. It creates new spiritual life and gives the ability to see the 10 million colors God has created.

Now, at this point in the story Jesus drops out for a bit. Of course, he's the subject of discussion, but He won't be actively a part again until verse 35. And this brings us to our next result when the light shines; blindness is displayed. The light opens the eyes of some and blinds some.

2. Blindness Displayed (vv. 8-34)

We are going to move quickly through this section of the story because I want you to feel the narrative flow of it but let me make a couple of observations to help you see what's happening. First, the man healed physically changes in his spiritual grasp of Jesus throughout the chapter. It's like the light helps him to see Jesus' identity clearly and ultimately to believe in Him. Second, there's an increasing hostility from the religious leaders and they become more and more entrenched in their accusations against Jesus and their hatred for him. It's like they are blind and are thrashing around angry in their darkness.

Let's pick up the story in verses 8-9. The only way for the man formerly blind to make a living was to beg. What else could he do? So, people who lived near him saw him every single day and had seen for a long time begging. Now he can suddenly see and they can't make sense of it. To the point where they are willing to believe that the blind man has disappeared and someone who looks just like him has shown up. When he insists it's him, they want details. Look at verses 10-12. Notice that he calls Jesus "the man" here. Of course, he's never seen Jesus before and only knows what people have called him.

The neighbors can't make sense of this miracle and so they do what naturally comes next, they seek out an authority to help them figure it out. I don't think there's any hostility in them here. They are genuinely amazed and are trying to understand. Look at verses 13-14. We get the detail now that it was the Sabbath when this took place. Of course, this takes us back to the healing of the lame man on the Sabbath and we know what trouble that caused. The Pharisees begin to

formally question the man born blind. Look at verses 15-17. They listen and end up disagreeing among themselves. So they ask the man healed what he thinks because it's almost like they are out of answers. This man probably knows the story of Elisha healing Naaman by having him wash in the Jordan so it makes sense to him that Jesus is a prophet.

The authorities are not happy with his answer and in verses 18-23 we move into another phase of their investigation to try and prove that this whole thing is a farce. Look at verses 18-19. They call his parents in to try and expose what they see as a lie. Oops. Look at verses 20-21. These words establish that a miracle has happened. His parents publicly testify that he was born blind and now sees. But they are also terrified of the reaction of the authorities, which is why they sort of punt back to their son. Look at verses 22-23.

So, the Pharisees now go back to the man born blind and put their hostility and spiritual blindness on full display. Look at verse 24. When they say "give glory to God", what they are saying is, "Admit the truth about your situation. There's something you are hiding and we know it because we KNOW Jesus is a sinner. So tell us."

I love the man's response in verse 25. The facts are there and indisputable. There's a reason many Christians have claimed these words over the years as a simple proclamation of faith. I know I was blind and I know I can see the glory of Christ now. He has changed me and my desires are new from the inside out. I've been given spiritual life. But spiritual blindness is a stubborn thing. Look at verse 26. It's at this point that man gets a little snarky in his response. He's been questioned so many times and they even sought out his parents to try and expose him as a fraud. Look at verse 27. Here's the real issue. They aren't listening. This word means more than just audibly hearing the words. To listen means to hear and respond appropriately. They won't do it. They aren't fans of this. Verses 28-29.

They cling to their beliefs about Moses and failure to see that Moses ultimately points to Jesus as we learned in John 5:45-47. The man responds to their reviling with growing confidence and faith in Jesus. Look at verses 30-33. Verse 33 is really the key point and the Pharisees utterly reject this in verse 34. Their point is to accuse him of being born blind because of some specific sin of his parents or his

and to be incapable of saying anything to him. This whole section has seen the dawning spiritual light of the blind man and the increasing hostility and blindness of the Pharisees. Now Jesus reenters the story and puts the pieces together for us.

3. True Sight is Revealed (vv. 35-41)

Let me show you first what true spiritual sight looks like. Verses 35-38. Jesus identifies himself with this phrase “Son of Man” as the expected one of Daniel 7:13-14. True sight is faith and true faith results in the worship of Jesus as this man does. Let me connect the light Jesus brings with faith. When you enter a dark room, you turn the light on so you can see where the furniture is and assess what’s in front of you. The light illuminates the reality in front of you. Jesus comes as the light and faith lets Jesus’ words and works illuminate our sin, the situation of the world and ourselves so that we can truly see.

Faith trusts God’s perspective of reality and bases life on it. So, in Hebrews 11:3 we read this. Faith takes God’s Word on this and acts as if it were true. Jesus comes into the world and shines a light on our spiritual situation, our relationship to God. Faith allows that light to illuminate things for us and lives according to the light. When we trust the light and what it reveals, we end up in a place of worship because of what the light has shone us. This brings us to Jesus’ explanation of this whole miracle and the way the religious leaders have responded. Look at verses 39-41.

The light shines and if you acknowledge your blindness and that you cannot see, you receive spiritual sight. If you deny your blindness, you cannot receive the light because you do not think you need it.

This is why the Beatitudes begin with these words “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit.” Humility is the distinct and necessary Christian virtue. It’s the foundation of the Christian life. This man knew He was blind. The Pharisees don’t. They are arrogant and self-confident. They reject the possibility that they may need spiritual help.

One author commented on Matthew 5:3 and the poor in spirit with these words:

"Membership in the kingdom of heaven and God's blessing are supposed to belong to the spiritually wealthy, the spiritually together, the righteous, the rich, and the beautiful. Here the blessings of God are promised to the spiritually poor, the

wretched, the wayward, those who come to Jesus in perpetual need because they are empty and they know it." - J. De Waal Dryden

Here are some questions to finish with today:

- Do you recognize your perpetual need for Jesus? Today? This week?
- Are you humble enough to accept by faith God's view of reality?
- Do you regularly recognize the shocking reality that you have been brought from blindness to sight and does this recognition produce worship of Christ in you?