

How Men Come to Faith

John 9:1-41

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Psalm 146:8 The LORD opens *the eyes of the blind* The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous;

Isaiah 29:18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of *their* gloom and darkness the eyes of the **blind** will see.

Isaiah 42:16 "I will lead the **blind** by a way they do not know, In paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them and rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do, And I will not leave them undone."

The prophets spoke of a time when the blind would see, but the Old Testament does not record any healings of the blind. It was a settled belief that it would be a work of the Messiah when He came. John the Baptist, while in prison sent men to ask Jesus a very direct question. Jesus replied with a Scripture....

Luke 7:20-21 ²⁰ When the men came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'" ²¹ At that very time He cured many *people* of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many *who were* blind

Jesus replied with an appeal to believe the Scripture....

Luke 7:22-23 ²² He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: *the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.* ²³ "Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."

Totally blind men cannot see, anything. Light is unable to get to the brain of a totally blind man. Jesus chose to use such a man to give light of God's mercy to human hearts and minds. This chapter seethes with emotion, with faith and purposeful unbelief. It is a study in contrasts pulling back the curtain on the condition of man and the purpose of God. Come with me then to Israel 2000 years ago. Jesus has just proclaimed Himself to be God and the Jews were deeply enraged by His assertions.

John 8:52-59 ⁵³ "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out *to be?*"..... ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am.**" ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

Men throughout history have claimed not to understand Christ's claim to Deity here, but those of His day had no trouble whatsoever understanding what He was saying. Jesus is in "full revelation" mode here and, as we will see when Christ is revealed in His Glory,

man is revealed in his spiritual poverty. So.....can you see it in your mind? Jesus is hurrying through this bloodthirsty crowd which is intent on His death. As He rushes through the streets of Jerusalem, He sees one blind man out of many.

John 9:1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

There are lots of blind men in Israel and at this moment, the Jews are trying to kill Jesus. You can almost hear the internal question of His disciples, "Why are you stopping in front of **this** blind man at **this** moment?" But this is the perfect time to teach a timeless truth.

Consider what has just gone on in chapter eight. Jesus revealed grace to an adulterous women, something they would never do. [8:11] He then declares Himself the light of the World, a claim to Messiah-ship.

Isaiah 49:5-6 ⁵ And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength), ⁶ He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a **light** of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

He has said that He is from heaven while they are not, setting Himself apart.

John 8:23 ²³ And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

Finally....He has declared, without equivocation, that He is the Creator God. They are setting their hearts against Him even though the Scriptures [which they know], the signs which they saw and the Father whom they heard speak all testify that He is God.

This is the perfect time to consider a blind man who cannot see even when something is right in front of His eyes. This encounter teaches a truth that endures to this very hour.

John 9:2 ² And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

The disciples are just saying what everyone there was thinking. This must be the result of personal or inherited sin. Before we condemn them let me suggest that we are not all that different. We instinctively think that when something very very bad happens to someone or to us, that we did something wrong. When we face sickness, financial setback and death, don't you think that God is displeased with you? Bad things are only suppose to happen to bad people. Conversely...when we try to do good we expect God to spare us from trials. Jesus answers by immediately revealing that God has a purpose for this man's infirmity.

John 9:3 ³ Jesus answered, "*It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

There are three human responses to trials of this nature:

- “He must have done something wrong.” We are not having any such problems. This is the classic self-righteous response.
- “If there really was a God He would not let anything like this happen.” This is the classic accusation that God is unjust.
- “We do not know the why, but we do know God is righteous and merciful.” This is the classic believer’s response. Biblical belief is trust in God!

Jesus had chooses this man whom He has prepared before the foundation of the world for this very moment. I am not surprised that He would stop as He was escaping from a murderous crowd deal with one He had known from eternity past? I can almost hear Him say....”It is you! The one I have always known and loved. I have chosen you for this very moment in time. The “works of God” are intended to make you worship Him.

Psalm 66:1-4 Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; ² Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious. ³ Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. ⁴ "All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name."

Jesus is doing specific works for the purpose of revealing the Glory of God to men.

John 9:4-5 ⁴ "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

This is the prime directive. God is the greatest good in the universe. To know Him and to trust Him is therefore the greatest good of men. This is what Jesus is doing BUT....He is going to give this job to His Church.

Matthew 5:14-16 ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world, A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

It should concern you greatly if you have no compelling desire to carry out this charge. Every person who has seen the Light of the world in the face of Christ should want to shine before men.

Your knowledge of the Bible is the preparation and Your church is the arena God has prepared for you to fulfill your destiny.

John 9:6-7 ⁶ When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam " (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back* seeing.

There was never a time when this man could see. He has always been blind. He has no concept of light because he has never seen it. He lives in darkness. Jesus has chosen the perfect physical illustration for the spiritual condition of all men. When face to face with the living God this man can see absolutely nothing.

John 1:4-5 ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the **Light** of men. ⁵ The **Light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Men are not refusing to see when faced with the light of the world. They are blind. The sun shown that day on the temple mount, but this man did not see it. The Creator of the universe had stepped into human life and time but those present did not see Him. Were they perverse? Yes! Were they self-righteous? Absolutely yes! Did they really know what they were doing? No, they did not. Even Jesus acknowledges this from the cross. "Forgive them Father, they do not know what they are doing."

If you think men can see then you should judge them as obstinate and wicked. If you believe men are blind you should have compassion on them and pray unceasingly for them.

So Jesus stops in the middle of one of the most monumental moments in His ministry to fix His attention on this one blind man. The Blind man is expecting nothing. He is asking for nothing and he is certainly doing nothing. He is a beggar. He is destitute and utterly hopeless in this world. Spiritually....I am this man! We are were this man.

Out of the blue.... the God of the universe stops everything else to behold one lost sinner out of millions and make him see. The light of the sun floods into his body and the light of the world sweeps over his soul. Paul describes what happens here this way....

2 Corinthians 4:6 ⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Salvation is about seeing Christ. Not doctrine, not prayers of repentance...not even obedience. All these come after ward and are a gift of spiritual life from our heavenly father and life giver. Salvation occurs when men see God through Christ. In our day it is done by the Holy Spirit but the object and result are the same...

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

John 9:8-9 ⁸ Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Others were saying, "This is he," *still* others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." ¹⁰ So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?"

Men have very different responses to the miracle of salvation. Some are incredulous. This could not have happened. How can a man like this suddenly see? I am not that gullible.....blind men don't suddenly see! Or to bring it forward into our day...."You are suddenly going to insist that God is real and Christ is His Son and that by trusting Christ He will forgive all your sins and take you to heaven? I have known you my entire life and all the sudden you justCHANGE!"

But the man insists, "It is me!" I can see!"

John 9:10 ¹⁰ So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?"

His response is basic and to the point.

John 9:11 ¹¹ He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight."

The neighbors respond by asking.....

John 9:12 ¹² "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

The man does not know. Who is He? The man does not know. This man, like all blind men who can suddenly see.... does not know much. But, notice, he is faithful to what little he knows. Such is the testimony of blind men who are caused to see.

John 9:15 And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." That is my story and I am sticking to it. This man made me see.

The judgment of the people was split just like today. While many did not believe,

John 9:16 ¹⁶ "others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

Unable to work it out amongst themselves they brought the man to the Pharisees. This is the same self-righteous crowd that tried to kill him for claiming to be God. Not much has changed in our day actually. Today they are the 'holier than thou' sect. They can find nothing gracious or merciful to say about anyone else. They criticize their dress, their speech, their children and if necessary even the Bible they read. The light has gone out in their souls. Actually, as Jesus said,

Matthew 6:22-23 ²² "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of **darkness**. If then the light that is in you is **darkness**, how great is the **darkness**?"

The Pharisee soul is blind to God. See their response:

- They say He is not of God because He broke one of our rules.

John 9:16 ¹⁶ Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

- They dismiss any testimony that contradicts the religious standard they have established. The fact that the man is standing right in front of them seeing does not affect their self-righteous fervor.

John 9:17-18 ¹⁷ So they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." ¹⁸ The Jews then did not

believe *it* of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight,

- They make up their own definitions of terms and assign virtue to them.

John 9:24 ²⁴ So a 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."

- They judge the hearts of men by their own criteria. They then feel free to assign whatever motive they please to the actions they observe. They did this to Christ and men still do it to one another today. Let me be perfectly clear here. No one know why people do the things they do. Only God!

John 9:31 ³¹ "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

- When all of their convoluted logic fails to carry the day they respond with rejection.

John 9:34 ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.

John 9:18-23 "they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, ¹⁹ and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how 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 how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. ²³ For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

His parents are uncaring cowards who had preferred the insane notion that it was their son that sinned and was therefore born blind. They disowned him and let him beg for a living rather than care for him. They were slaves to the peer pressure of the self-righteous like many Christians today who would rather keep silent while the self-righteous judge motives and condemn than to risk being condemned themselves. They would rather disown their own spiritually blind children than suffer the abuse the self-righteous can dish out.

While heaven is rejoicing, this man who has been reviled his entire life, has become the object of scorn by the self-righteous world from which he has been saved. How true to life is this? "A man made me see." "I was blind before, but now I see Jesus Christ." The world is quick to respond, "You are either a liar or a fool. Nothing really happened to you. Jesus is a mere man, the creation of your imagination. We know and you do not!"

In the end the man is abandon by all. His parents do not rejoice. The elders in his church throw him out. His friends and neighbors don't even think it is really him although he proclaims loudly that it is. Finally, he returns to his place. He is after all just a miserable beggar and sinner. How dare he rise to his feet and testify that a man made him see when

he had been blind. He is alone! This is a man who has the gall to say He has trusted Jesus to save him. But he now has new parents and a new family....

John 9:35 ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

The Son of Man is a specific title of the Messiah. It was well known. The question is....do you believe the Messiah will come?

John 9:36-38 ³⁶ He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." ³⁸ And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.

Jesus still saves men, one at a time. He knew you before the foundation of the world. He met you along the way at the exact moment designated. He always knew it would happen. He knew who you were while on the cross. He was dying for you there. You were never just a face in the crowd.

He is not too busy for you. He is the light of the world, but He reveals Himself to men, one at a time. Do you believe in the Son of Man? When The Spirit of God strips the blindness from our eyes and the deafness from our ears and we both see and hear and cannot fail to truly worship.

John 9:39-41 ³⁹ And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

There is no one so blind as the self-righteous. As long as you trust in your own goodness or knowledge you will never be saved. Until you see yourself as the hopeless blind man, you will remain like the Pharisees of Jesus' day. The unveiling of Christ to men is pivotal. You will worship or you will reject. Trust me when I say you may not ride the fence. This is not an option open to men.

Jesus Christ overturns the money tables in our lives. He dashes the status quo to pieces and pushes all men out of their comfort zone. He is the one who opens the eyes of the blind. I challenge you....Pray for the lost! Love those who cannot see and have compassion while praying....Lord... "Make them See"

Christ's conclusion is this: It would be better to be literally blind than to see and hear the Glory of Christ and withhold your heart's worship. When Christ returns men....

Isaiah 35:2-6 will see the glory of the LORD, The majesty of our God. ³ Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble. ⁴ Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶ Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.