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“Sight for the Blind”

**John 9**

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There are plenty of people who have physical sight but are spiritually blind. In other words, they can see things with the natural eye, but they are blind to the things of God and who Jesus is. In today's study from John 9, Jesus heals a man born blind who also later receives the miracle of spiritual sight. Jesus opens the eyes of his heart to understand who He is. We all need that miracle—but beware, there will be people who will not share your joy of knowing Jesus. Some will reject you, disown you, or dismiss you, but none of that matters. Jesus accepts you, loves you, and died to save you.

1. **John 9:1-34** – *“Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’ 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. 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. Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, ‘Is not this he who sat and begged?’ Some said, ‘This is he.’ Others said, ‘He is like him.’ He said, ‘I am he.’ Therefore they said to him, ‘How were your eyes opened?’ 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.’ Then they said to him, ‘Where is He?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’ They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 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.’ 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. They said to the blind man again, ‘What do you say*

*about Him because He opened your eyes?’ He said, ‘He is a prophet.’ 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. And they asked them, saying, ‘Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?’ His parents answered them and said, ‘We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 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. 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. Therefore his parents said, ‘He is of age; ask him.’ 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.’ 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.’ Then they said to him again, ‘What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?’ 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?’ Then they reviled him and said, ‘You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.’ 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! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.’ They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’ And they cast him out.”*

2. A blind man is given sight

- a. This was not the only blind man given his sight in Scripture, but he was the only one who was blind from birth
- b. This story is about a man who gained both physical and spiritual sight

3. The law of retribution

- a. When Jesus’ disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” they were reflecting common thinking of the time
- b. The law of retribution essentially meant that bad things happened to bad people; hardship was attributed to either the sins of the individual or the sins of the parents
- c. In the book of Job, Job’s friends ascribed to this way of thinking when they assumed that the tragedies in his life must be a result of sin
  - i. **Job 1:1** contradicts this mindset, telling us that Job “was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.”

- ii. Job was not sinless, but there was no direct sin that caused the tribulations he endured in the book of Job
- 4. Not every hardship is a result of personal sin
  - a. We can invite trouble
    - i. **Galatians 6:7** – *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”*
    - ii. **Proverbs 13:15b** – *“...the way of the unfaithful is hard.”*
  - b. Hardship can also simply be a by-product of living in a sinful world, unrelated to any personal sin
- 5. Jesus corrected the error in the disciples’ thinking
  - a. **John 9:3** – *“Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’”*
  - b. **John 9:3** – *“‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.’”* (1984 NIV)
  - c. Jesus debunked the myth that every misfortune was a result of the individual’s sin or the parents’ sin
    - i. Some people live with a constant sense of shame and punishment over difficulties that are completely unrelated to any sin in their lives
  - d. God desires to use these misfortunes to display His power and faithfulness in our lives
    - i. If everything were perfect, when would we ever have the opportunity to see God’s power and faithfulness?
- 6. An odd way to heal
  - a. **John 9:6** – *“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. 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.”*
  - b. Some scholars think Jesus used mud (dirt) to assert His divinity as God used dirt to create man
  - c. Another consideration is that God uses different methods to accomplish His purposes

- i. When you are desperate for God, you do not care what method or means He may use—you will not restrict Him or place parameters on how you think He should accomplish something
- ii. God's timing and God's terms are not our own

7. The man's neighbors did not recognize him

- a. **John 9:8** – *“Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, ‘Is not this he who sat and begged?’”*
- b. Two reasons
  - i. The man appeared out of the context in which the neighbors were accustomed to seeing him
    - 1. He was no longer blind or begging for money
  - ii. The people were so used to seeing him, they likely no longer noticed him and therefore did not know what he looked like
    - 1. Sometimes we do not recognize people around us who need Jesus because we have grown used to their presence
- c. Sometimes people will not recognize you after you have had an encounter with Jesus because they cannot reconcile that Jesus can radically change people – not everyone will see you as a new person; some will still judge you by your past

8. The man's parents distanced themselves

- a. **John 9:22** – “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.”
- b. The parents knew that the religious leaders did not accept Jesus and would excommunicate them if they chose to accept Jesus
- c. Instead of celebrating the miracle of their son seeing their faces for the first time, they distanced themselves
- d. **Matthew 10:34-36** – “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;’ and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’”
- e. Not everyone will be happy for you when you choose to follow Jesus

9. The Pharisees did not believe

- a. They interpreted Jesus' miracle as work and believed He was breaking the Sabbath
- b. They were focused on the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law; the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath—any beneficial thing that could happen to humanity on the Sabbath is a fulfillment of the law, not a violation
- c. They rejected the man and excommunicated him
- d. They could not comprehend that someone could be transformed by the power of Jesus Christ
- e. Not everyone will believe that Jesus saves

10. Jesus went and found the man

- a. **John 9:35-41** – *“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?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him. 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.’ Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, “We see.” Therefore your sin remains.”*
- b. Jesus granted the man both physical sight and spiritual sight, but the Pharisees' hearts were blinded
- c. We all need the eyes of our hearts to be opened so that we can receive Jesus as Savior
- d. **John 9:39** – *“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.”*

Discussion Questions

- 1. Read **John 9:1-34** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
- 2. What is “the law of retribution?” (See #3 above)

3. Although we can willfully invite trouble into our lives, what else can cause hardship? (See #4b above)
4. Read **John 9:3** in the NKJV and the 1984 NIV. Why did God allow the man in the story to endure blindness? (See #5 above)
5. Jesus used spit and mud to heal the man. What does the man's response to this method of healing reveal about his heart? (See #6a and #6c above)
6. Have you ever struggled with how God chooses to operate in your life? What do our responses to God's methods reveal about our own hearts?
7. How did the man's neighbors respond to his healing? Have people in your life ever judged you by your past? Do you ever judge others by their pasts? (See #7c above)
8. Why did the man's parents distance themselves? Will everyone celebrate when you come to Jesus? (See #8 above)
9. Why were the Pharisees unable to rejoice in the miracle that Jesus performed? (See #9 above)
10. Read **John 9:35-41**. Discuss the importance of spiritual sight. How should we approach those who are spiritually blinded?
11. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)