



On Blindness and Sight

Message Notes, July 10, 2016

John 9

Pastor Keith walked us through chapter 9 of John, the story of Jesus' healing of a man blind since birth. It was a joyous miracle, at least for the man, but the joy was swallowed up by investigation and interrogation. The righteous religious leaders were blind to the miracle, blind to the man's value and dignity, blind to the Messiah in their midst.

Throughout the event, everyone was asking all the wrong questions ...

The disciples ask, not *why* is this man blind, but rather *who* sinned to cause it (him or his parents?) Yes, all sickness and brokenness in our world are ultimately the result of the fall in the garden, but the accepted thought in Jesus' day was that sicknesses were caused by specific sins. The disciples question was not unexpected, but Jesus' answer focuses on what is important:

"This has happened that the grace of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent me." In other words, "This is no time for analysis or philosophy. Here is a man who has never seen; let's get busy about the work of God's redemption in the world.

The neighbors' debate, "Is this really the man who used to sit and beg?" Once again, people are missing this man who can now see. The man answers passionately – "I am the man!"

The Pharisees ask the man, not who is this one who has done this marvelous thing, but rather *how* is it that you now see? Their question is not one of wonder and celebration, but one of judgment and accusation, reflected in their commentary: "This man [Jesus] is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath." Not, "Wow! Jesus has miraculously healed this blind man. What a joy! Who is this amazing man?" But rather, "Jesus has broken the Sabbath rules! Three in fact. This is completely unacceptable." Jesus had kneaded spit and dirt into mud, told the man to wash his eyes and healed in a situation that was not life or death; all three actions were forbidden on the Sabbath.

Some of the Pharisees actually asked a right question: "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" (Some were beginning to see.)

The Pharisees continue their interrogation with the man's parents. "Is this your son? Was he born blind? How is it he now sees?" They answer fearfully: "Yes he is our son, and yes he was born blind, but we do not know how he now sees. Ask him. He can speak for himself." (Fear of the Pharisees leads them to essentially abandon their son.)

They continue their interrogation by bringing the man back in. They grill him again, basically leading the witness, trying to get him to say, "Yes, this man is a sinner!" But the man holds his ground – "I don't know who he is, but I know he gave me sight, and it sure seems to me that one who can open eyes closed from birth must be from God."

The Pharisees, in arrogant frustration, declare, "Who are you to lecture us? You were steeped in sin from your birth." Then they put him out of the synagogue.

Jesus finds the man outside the synagogue and asks him the right question: "Do you believe in the Son of Man? . . . He is the one speaking to you." The man replies with full sight, "I believe," and he worshiped Him.



Then one last time, the Pharisees ask the wrong question, indicting themselves! “What? Are we blind, too?” Jesus’ answer confirms their guilt: “If you were [physically] blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim to see, your guilt remains.”

What a profound irony – that a man born blind moves steadily* from utter blindness to salvation and full sight, while the supposed enlightened Pharisees, who think they see all, persist in their spiritual blindness, missing the Light of the World before their very eyes.

*The man’s progressive spiritual sight of Jesus: From “a man called Jesus” to “a prophet” to “a man from God” to “The Son of Man” to “Lord.”

What are possible spiritual blindspots in your life? In humility and trust, you can bring these to the Lord who delights to give sight to the blind.