

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: In the healing of the man who was born blind, Jesus revealed that He is the light who has come into the world to remove darkness.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: John 9

Color blindness is a condition that limits the range of color that some people see. Reds and greens may be indistinguishable, for example, or purples may appear only as blues. Some color-blind people may not be able to see up to ninety percent of the various shades of color, resulting in a perspective dominated by browns and blacks.¹

Recently, technology has been developed to help most color-blind people see a fuller range of the color spectrum. This tech has come in the form of special sunglasses, and people have been sharing their videos of trying these glasses on for the first time. The depth of color these people can now see is matched, it seems, by the depth of emotion that soon colors their faces.

? Are you or someone you know color blind? How have they spoken of their experience? If you aren't color blind, what would you miss the most if you were?

Group Time

Point 1: Jesus came to be light in the darkness (John 9:1-7).

¹ As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

In Jesus’ day, and somewhat in ours, the thought prevailed that all suffering was the punishment of someone’s sin. So the disciples wanted to know who messed up: Had the man sinned in the womb or did his parents sin so that he was born blind? In a general sense, the disciples were not wrong for thinking this way. All brokenness and suffering in the world is certainly a result of sin, and sin always has consequences, but people had extended this principle too far. A specific sin hadn’t caused this blindness, but its purpose was about to come to fruition.



Why are we prone to connect all suffering to a person’s sins?

The disciples asked about the specific cause of the man’s blindness, but Jesus answered in terms of its purpose—this man was blind so Jesus could reveal Himself as the light of the world and do the works of God in healing this man of his lifelong blindness. Jesus broke through the man’s physical blindness; similarly, Jesus’ light breaks through our spiritual blindness so that we may see Him in faith, be saved from our sin, and join Him in the work He is doing.

Voices from the Church

“Suffering is not necessarily the result of sin. Jesus taught that suffering is sometimes necessary so that the power of God can be seen through us.”²

—Africa Study Bible

Point 2: Jesus came to do the works of God (John 9:29-33).

²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰ The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

According to the man who was formerly blind, no one had ever heard of anyone restoring sight to someone born blind. In fact, there is no story in the Old Testament of the blind receiving sight (aside from Elisha’s enemies in 2 Kings 6:13-20, but that was a special case). This healing is unique because Jesus is unique. He does what no other man could do, and He does what only God can do:

- Throughout the Bible, the act of giving sight to the blind is something only God is capable of (see Ex. 4:11; Ps. 146:8).
- Giving sight to the blind was also a sign of the age to come when God would restore all things (see Isa. 29:18-19; 42:5-8; see also Luke 4:18-21).



What are some ways Jesus supersedes the greatness of people throughout history?

The Pharisees said they didn’t know where Jesus was from (they knew He was from Galilee; see John 7:52). They wanted to belittle Him, as if He weren’t important enough to know things about. But the healed man claimed they should be able to tell that Jesus is from God because of what He had done. It wasn’t the mud or the pool of Siloam that opened his eyes—it was Jesus, and if Jesus did that, it was because God did it through Him. He reasoned that healing comes from God, so Jesus must be from God. How ironic that this unlearned man who had been blind had to teach the Pharisees on good theology!



What are some attitudes and works that reveal our relationship with the Father through faith in Jesus?

Point 3: Jesus came to confront spiritual blindness (John 9:35-41).

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

The Pharisees responded to the man’s testimony by throwing him out of the synagogue (John 9:34), so Jesus sought him out. Now that he was cut off from all spiritual connection to his family and people, what would he do? Would he blame the Man who had healed him? No. In fact, upon learning that the Man was the Son of Man, the promised Messiah, he responded with faith and worship. This was the work of God in his heart.



What are some ways we can worship our Lord and Savior for the healing from sin that He gives to us?

Unlike the man who had been healed of his physical blindness, the Pharisees were spiritually blind. They made confident yet woefully wrong assertions that Jesus was not the Messiah. They rejected the true light of the world and thereby confirmed that they were in spiritual darkness. Jesus told us why—they thought they were without sin; they thought they could see—so they remained enslaved to sin.

Enslaved to Sin: Human beings are enslaved to sin, continually living with the propensity to _____ God’s commandments whenever possible. It isn’t until one experiences _____ through the work of Christ that he or she is able to overcome sin’s enslavement through the _____ of the Holy Spirit.

Daily Study

Day 1: Read John 9:1-7

Jesus' answer to the disciples' question about the man who was blind wasn't what they expected. They asked Him for a cause, but Jesus responded in terms of purpose—this man had been blind all of his life so that the works of God would be displayed in him. God used the healing of this blind man to reveal that Jesus is the light of the world, to confront the Pharisees in their blindness, and to bring the man born blind to salvation.

Christians aren't promised freedom from suffering in the world, nor are we often given a reason for our suffering. But we do have the hope and assurance that for the believer, our suffering has purpose in the hands of a sovereign God. As Romans 8:28 reminds us, all things, good and terrible, are being worked together by a gracious Father for our good and for His glory.



In what ways have you seen God at work in your suffering, past and present?



Voices from Church History

"We should maintain and believe that since God is the fountain of all righteousness, God will neither do nor determine anything whatsoever in human affairs or in those of the rest of creation that is unbecoming to God or differs at all from the true righteousness of justice."⁴

—Cyril of Alexandria
(c. 378-444)

Day 2: Read John 9:8-12

The neighbors of this man who now could see couldn't believe their own eyes. They wondered if this man with sight was really the same man they knew to be blind or if he were just someone who looked a lot like him. The encounter with Jesus had so drastically changed the man born blind that those around him couldn't help but notice. The general witness of the Gospels is that those who had a supernatural encounter with Jesus usually left the interaction significantly changed.

Following Jesus by faith will produce indelible changes in our lives that others should notice. The way we live, the way we speak, and how we interact with others will all be affected as we follow Christ. And as others wonder at the changes in our lives, we're able to share about the One who changed our lives.



What is one way your life has been different since following Jesus?

Day 3: Read John 9:13-28

The Pharisees were trying to get to the bottom of this miracle in the man who had been blind. They interrogated him about what happened. They asked him who he thought Jesus was, but they didn't like his answer, so they interrogated his parents next. Afraid, his mother and father deflected to their son, so the Pharisees went again to ask the man what really happened. His response was simple: "I was blind, now I see" (v. 25). At that, they began to ridicule him.

This man wasn't well versed in theology, nor could he tell you much about Jesus. What he did know was what Jesus had done and how that had changed him. This is at the heart of what it means to witness to others about Jesus. Though answers are helpful to have, we ultimately don't need all of them. What we need is a testimony about how Jesus has changed our lives.



How would you answer someone who asked you what Jesus has done for you?

Day 4: Read John 9:29-34

Things seemed to be going in the right direction for the man who had been born blind because he wasn't blind anymore! After a lifetime of hearing people talk about sight but never experiencing it himself, he now could see what his parents looked like, the majestic rise of trees, and the synagogue he worshiped in. This was probably the best day of his life.

Then the religious leaders excommunicated him from the synagogue because he said Jesus had come from God. This man's young faith brought rejection from his neighbors, his leaders, and perhaps even his parents. God doesn't promise that following Jesus means life gets easier. Often it means it gets harder. Jesus is the light of the world who brought love, grace, and healing, and yet, He was crucified, and His followers should expect the same hatred and persecution Jesus experienced from the world (John 15:18-21). You may be rejected in this life because of your faith, but God's promise is that there is joy and a future hope because Jesus was rejected for us.



What promises of God can you cling to when trials and suffering come?

Day 5: Read John 9:35-41

Upon hearing that the man He healed had been thrown out of the synagogue, Jesus went and found the man so that He could reveal Himself as the Messiah. Jesus was on a divine mission, seeking out the redemption of the world through His impending death and resurrection, and yet, He went back to this man who had been cut off religiously and socially. The same Jesus who healed the man without prompting now sought him out and gave him true spiritual sight to see Jesus for who He really is. Jesus doesn't just care about performing miracles; He cares that people see Him as true light.

Our true need isn't just physical needs being met. Our true need is a spiritual need—to see Jesus rightly and worship Him. We mustn't neglect physical needs, but as we work to alleviate suffering and meet the needs of those around us, we ought always to point people to Jesus.



In what ways can you meet the physical needs of the people you are sharing the gospel with?

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Jesus was born to die—a jarring statement indeed, but one that is quite true.

Christmas and Easter are fused together, linked hand-in-hand in such a way that each is dependent on the other for its meaning. The theology of such a statement is solid but incomplete, for Jesus was not born to die immediately but rather some thirty years later. Jesus' life, then, was not utilitarian—existing just so it could be taken away and picked up again—it had greater meaning and purpose. What Jesus did during those thirty years of walking the earth mattered; He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. He satisfied the demands of righteousness that we could not so He might take away our sin when we trust in Him and so His righteousness might be credited to us, making us fully pleasing to the Father (2 Cor. 5:21).

In this volume we delve deeper into the marvelous truth of the incarnation to see still further glimpses of Christ's glory on earth. His righteousness did not occur in a vacuum but rather among people, ordinary people like you and me. In each unit of this volume, we will look at Jesus' interactions with people as through a prism, making slight turns to see different yet equally brilliant perspectives of Jesus' works. In Unit 22, we will see Jesus' power to heal coupled with His deep compassion for people, even those who were marginalized in society. In Unit 23, we will see Jesus' riveting teachings empowered by His divine authority. And finally, in Unit 24, we will see Jesus' miraculous power over nature, revealing His identity as Creator God.

Each ray of light we will see points to the same truth: that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God given for our salvation. Jesus was indeed born to die, but He lived so that we too might live.

UNIT 22**SESSION 1**

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2. J. C. Ryle, "What It Costs to Be a True Christian," December 4, 2019, www.the-highway.com/cost_Ryle.html.

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2. John Onwuchekwa, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 43.

SESSION 4

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