



JESUS' DEITY REVEALED • JESUS RESTORES SIGHT TO A BLIND MAN •

JOHN 9:1-41 • 03/11/2018

MAIN POINT

When the power of Jesus brings light to dark places, the healed have the opportunity to share what they've experienced with others.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the darkest place you've ever been? How did the glow of even the slightest amount of light change your perception?

In what way(s) is light an appropriate metaphor to describe Jesus?

One of the very first things mentioned about Jesus in John's Gospel was the metaphor of His being the light of men. John used the dynamic of light versus darkness repeatedly

throughout his Gospel to emphasize the stark difference between being shrouded by sin and the glorious deliverance available only through Christ. In today's passages, Jesus used a sign of healing to demonstrate how the Light overcomes blindness/darkness. In doing so, the one healed of blindness unreservedly told of the One who had healed him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:12 AND JOHN 9:1-12.

John communicated in the physical realm concurrently with the spiritual realm. With that in mind, what does the man born blind indicate about the world apart from Christ?

The man, once healed, was transformed so significantly that his neighbors struggled to recognize him. What are some ways you've noticed Jesus' transforming your friends and family? Have you told them you've noticed?

When reading John's Gospel, it's important to note how John addressed both the spiritual and physical realm concurrently. When Jesus referred to Himself as the Light of the World in John 8:12, He was making a proclamation of His salvific purpose in the world. Repeating the identification in John 9:5 links the healing of the man blind from birth with Jesus' proclamation of His salvific work. In other words, Jesus used the sign of the healing of the man born blind to physically demonstrate His eternal power over spiritual darkness and blindness.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 9:13-34.

Why do you think the Pharisees were incapable of refuting the healed man's story? What does that indicate about the power of your own experience with Jesus?

What are the high points, so to speak, of your experience with Jesus? What are the pivotal moments that you would make sure to communicate?

The healed man, who had understandably become frustrated with the incessant badgering from the Pharisees, concluded his exchange with them with a notable observation: “This is an amazing thing....You don’t know where He is from, yet He opened my eyes! We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to them. Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He wouldn’t be able to do anything.” His spiritual eyes had been opened as well as his physical eyes, so his clear insight confounded the Pharisees.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 9:35-41.

What were the circumstances through which Jesus initiated His relationship with you? Why is that important to understand when telling of your experience with Jesus?

What are some attitudes or dispositions that we experience that can threaten our ability to “see”?

The Pharisees in this passage were blinded by their own sense of righteousness that came from knowing the right things, doing the right things, going the right places, and so on. The reality, Jesus said, was that because they were prideful in their own spiritual knowledge, they were blind to the things of God. Their knowledge carried no corresponding action, no sign of transformation. As result, even with God Incarnate standing in front of them, they were oblivious to the truth.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What questions or topics give you the greatest sense of hesitation when sharing your experience with Jesus? How does the limited ability of the man born blind to answer questions about Jesus impact you?

What are some things that can threaten to make you prideful in your religious knowledge? Are those things inherently bad things? How does worship help weaken that threat?

What area(s) of your life are you prone to experience 'blindness' and in need of sight? What is one step you can take this week to begin to bringing healing to it?

PRAY

Thank God that He came into this darkness to save us. Pray that those in your group would be sensitive to the opportunities to share their experience with Jesus this week.

COMMENTARY

JOHN 8:12

Here we find the second of seven “I Am” passages in John’s Gospel. Like water (ch. 4) and bread (ch. 6), light is necessary for life. And the Lord wasted no time in explaining that spiritual light comes to those who willingly follow Him. Since light is one of John’s major themes, several assumptions arise from this verse. One is that the world needs light, something John has already told us in chapter 1. There are conditions for seeing and knowing the light—following Jesus. Finally, walking in the light can be permanent. The light of life can change a person so that he or she need never again walk in darkness.

Chapters five, six and seven of John’s Gospel have picked up three major Old Testament wilderness reminders of how God dealt with His people: the comparison between manna

and the bread of life in chapter 6; the comparison between water in the desert and the water of the Holy Spirit in chapter 7; and here in chapter 8 a comparison with the pillar of fire which led the people through the wilderness and Jesus, the light of the world.

The Feast of Tabernacles was also known as the Feast of Lights because of the many ceremonies that involved various kinds of lighting. From the earliest verses of the first chapter in this Gospel, John has been fascinated with the link between light and life. Here, however, we do not have a statement about everyone participating in the light, but the exclusion of all who do not follow the true light.

Some interpreters have suggested that Jesus may have drawn His illustration from the great candlestick (Menorah) which cast its light over the room in which He was teaching. Everyone there knew the Menorah would be extinguished after the feast. But Jesus indicated that His light would remain forever.

JOHN 9:1-41

9:1-41. Jesus' identity as "the light of the world" was illustrated in His sixth and penultimate "sign" recorded in John's Gospel—the healing of a man born blind. As in chapter 5, Jesus healed on the Sabbath and thus suffered persecution from the Jewish leaders. But in contrast to the lame man of chapter 5, who showed no faith and reported Jesus to the authorities, the formerly blind man showed a progression of faith and ended up worshiping Jesus (9:38). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their spiritual blindness (vv. 40-41).

9:2. The disciples' question reflected the assumption, customary in ancient Judaism, that suffering could be traced to specific sins (cp. Job 4:7). The underlying concern of this assumption is to clear God of wrongdoing against innocent people (Ex 20:5; Num 14:18; Dt 5:9). Yet the NT makes it clear that suffering is not always a direct result of a person's sin (Lk 13:2-3; 2Co 12:7; Gal 4:13). We should not speculate about the cause of a person's suffering but realize that even evil can contribute to the greater glory of God (esp. the crucifixion; cp. Jn 12:28,37-41; 17:1,5).

9:7. Jesus' sending the man to wash in the pool of Siloam is reminiscent of Elijah's sending Naaman to wash in the Jordan River (2Ki 5:10-13). The words which means "Sent" may echo the messianic reference in Gen 49:10 (cp. Isa 8:6). After 9:7, Jesus is not heard from again until verse 35.

9:14. The mention of the Sabbath here (cp. 5:9) resumes the earlier Sabbath controversy in chapter 5. Jesus had moistened clay with His saliva and then kneaded it to make mud. Kneading dough, and by analogy kneading clay, was included among the 39 classes of work forbidden on the Sabbath by Jewish rabbinic tradition (m. Shabb.7:2).

9:16. The division among the Pharisees follows the differing ways of reasoning observed by the schools of Shammai and Hillel. The former argued from foundational principles (“anyone who breaks the law is a sinner”), the latter from the established facts of a case (“Jesus has performed a good work”).

9:24. The Pharisees’ exhortation to the healed man, Give glory to God, was a solemn warning for him to tell the truth (Jos 7:19; 2Ch 30:8; Jer 13:16).

9:28. The Pharisees’ claim of being Moses’ disciples was undermined by their failure to listen to the One of whom Moses wrote.

9:29. The Pharisees’ assertion, We know that God has spoken to Moses, harks back to God’s giving Moses the law at Mount Sinai (Ex 33:11; Num 12:2-8; cp. Jn 1:17).

9:31-33. The healed man’s major premise, that God doesn’t listen to sinners, is borne out by the OT (Ps 34:15; 66:20; 109:7; 145:19). His minor premise, that there was no precedent for opening the eyes of a person born blind, is also confirmed by the absence of such instances cited in OT or extrabiblical sources. The man’s conclusion, If this man were not from God, He wouldn’t be able to do anything (cp. 3:2), fit with the common Jewish view that miracles were performed in answer to prayer.

9:34. The Pharisees’ charge against the healed man may allude to Ps 51:5. Threw him out refers to expulsion from the synagogue. The way this was done suggests an impulsive action rather than excommunication based on a formal procedure.

9:39-41. Giving sight to the righteous blind (Ps 146:8; Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7,18) and blinding unrighteous persons who can see (Isa 6:10; 42:19; Jer 5:21; cp. Mt 13:13-15; Jn 12:40) are common OT themes. Elsewhere, Jesus called the Pharisees “blind guides” (Mt 23:16; cp. 15:14; 23:26).

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

John 11:1-44