

“BLIND, BUT NOW I SEE!”
John 9:1-41

Lessons By The Lake Summer Series
July 22, 2012
Pastor Nathan J. Thompson

(Man speaks) Hi, I'm the man who was born blind. I want to tell all of you about the greatest day in my life. I was blind from birth and had faced all the ridicule and abuse that goes with having a permanent disability. In fact, many of the religious people think that any physical problem is the result of the sin of that person or their parents. Just think of the guilt and pain that people and families often feel.

But then one day a man by the name of Jesus came by. He formed a lot of saliva in his mouth, spit on the ground, made some mud and spread it on my eyes. What a strange feeling and sensation it was to have him touch my eyes since most people stayed a long way from me since I was different from them.

I guess some people must think they might catch the disability themselves. You just can't imagine how painful it is to have a disability and have people walk far away from you. Or feel that they are staring at you like a freak. Even though some think they are disguising their feelings about those who are different you have no idea of how much it hurts to be avoided, to be stared at, to be treated as less than human.

And yet this man, Jesus, touched my eyes. He spread mud on them. And then he told me to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And when I did I was able to see. My eyes were opened for the first time. I could see the sun, the sky, the people, the landscape. I was so excited? Can you imagine what it was like to see everything for the first time?

And then people started to argue whether or not I was really the blind beggar they had seen or not. Some even thought I was someone who simply looked like this beggar. But all I could say was that Jesus spread mud on my eyes and told me to wash it off, and now I can see.

And yet rather than celebrating with me over this unbelievable miracle in my life many wanted to find and question Jesus. Why is it that so many people don't want to believe in miracles? Why do some have such a hard time celebrating the good things in another person's life? Why do some resent Jesus?

(Pharisee) Hi, I am a Pharisee. I was brought in to investigate this story by the man who says he was blind but can now see. In fact, that is one of the important responsibilities of being a Pharisee. Our job is to question people about their claims concerning miracles, or about being prophets, or about any new interpretations concerning God's Word the Bible.

Being highly trained experts in the Torah, the law of God, and being people who follow the 613 Mosaic laws to perfection, I mean who could be better or more qualified in preserving the truth?

And to protect the Jewish faith we can't have anyone questioning or tampering with our traditions. And we can't have anyone riling up the people with new ideas or with superstitious stories about miracles.

Now in the case of this man who claims that his blindness has been cured there are some hard questions and concerns we need answers for. I mean first of all, everyone knows this man, Jesus, is a sinner. He does not even keep the Sabbath which is a major violation. In fact, he has been known to minister to and help people on the Sabbath. How can a sinner perform miraculous signs?

And then there is the case of his parents. How do we know for sure that they didn't make up this story in the first place that he was born blind? How can we trust they aren't trying to pull something over on us? They are pretty evasive. I mean, they just keep telling us to talk directly to their son saying he is of age. I just wonder what they are trying to hide?

And then to question this beggar, talk about rude. I mean, he told us he didn't care if this man, Jesus, is a sinner. He even had the gall to try and lecture us about God and how God works. Talk about arrogance. We have studied under the great teachers while this man knows nothing. He is just a sinner. The nerve of him to make such statements.

(Man) I just don't know why it is so difficult for all these people. The facts are so simple. I was born blind but now I am able to see. Jesus told me to wash off the mud and my eyes were opened. Why can't they celebrate with me this joy in my life? Why do they keep avoiding what has happened to me and keep focusing on other things?

Who cares if Jesus doesn't follow the Sabbath laws to perfection? And why is it so threatening and scary to them when I told them that I believe that Jesus is a prophet from God? All I know and care about is that I was blind and now I see. How it happened doesn't matter. Whether it makes sense intellectually who cares? That's why they call it a miracle.

(Pharisee) Well, our Pharisee group has met, and even though there was lots of debate, we have concluded that this man's claims are not true. The truth, as we see it, is that he probably made the whole story up. You know, these disciples of this man, Jesus, will do anything to get people to believe in him. You can't trust any of them.

In fact, some of these followers of Jesus even claim that Jesus loves them, and forgives them, and will save them for all eternity. And even some claim he is God's very own Son and that he shows people a new law based on love, and faith, that sets people free. Can you think of anything more ludicrous? These people are so naïve and emotional.

We need to stand firm on this one, folks. We need to preserve the traditions for change is the enemy. I mean, what would happen to this world if people actually believed in miracles? And this Jesus, well we need to watch this guy carefully. His subtle tricks and claims that are turning the crowds away from the traditions cannot be tolerated.

In fact, some of us Pharisees have been talking and the suggestion has come up that if this Jesus keeps gaining followers and keeps on filling them with these alternative ideas that we are going to have to take some drastic action. In fact, some are talking about possible ways of having him put to death. His radical ideas and changes will not last. We'll just see who is really blind and who can see!

(Man) Why, I ask you, do these religious leaders not want to hear the truth? I was blind from birth but now I see. It's not really that hard to figure out; unless perhaps they are threatened by this truth and power of Jesus. Maybe they are afraid of letting go of their past traditions and of facing the wonder of new revelations of God. Perhaps their focus is more on preserving their own security than in looking to God in faith.

And yet it now makes sense what Jesus said to me. For he said that there are some who are able to see and yet who become blind because they allow their sins and doubts to get in the way. Jesus said that there are many who even when a miracle happens right in front of them they will refuse to see and acknowledge it.

Even when someone witnesses to them of the love and caring of Jesus there are some who choose to close their eyes to this truth. There are some who would rather accuse the one witnessing of being duped by religious emotions, would rather pick apart another person's testimony, than to open their eyes by faith. Jesus is right, there are many who choose to remain blind in their sins.

And yet Jesus opened my eyes and I can see. And if he can open my eyes, being physically blind from birth, he can open your spiritual eyes, too. For whatever is blocking your vision Jesus can remove that from your eyes. Whether it be doubts, or fear of letting go of the past, or being focused on misplaced priorities, or wanting to have complete control of our own lives, Jesus can take these away and help you to see.

He can open your eyes and help you to see his wonders and miracles all around you. He can open your eyes to see your special gifts and talents, and the wonderful ways you can use them in Christ's service. He can open your eyes to see all the new and exciting possibilities for his church as you stay focused on his mission. He can open your eyes if you simply receive this gift by faith. Commit your life to him, and he will help you to see life as it is meant to be.

I was blind but now I see. May each one of you hear and believe my testimony this day. And may you, through faith in Jesus, be able to truly see with the eyes of faith.