

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 26)
John 9:1-34 CSB
“Believing is Seeing”**

Introduction

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him, and you rejoice with inexpressible joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. **1 Peter 1:8-9**

I simply love how *The Bible* so often illustrates truths by contrasts. For example, the narrative in **1 Samuel** shows us the difference between Saul, a king who lived to honor himself, and David, a man who longed to honor God. Neither man was sinless, but we can clearly see for ourselves the difference between their hearts. Another example is that of Joseph and his brothers. One clearly had God directing his affairs while the rest were guided by their ever changing passions.

There are many other examples that I could name; the rich young ruler in **Mark 10**, who was afraid to give up his personal wealth in order to follow Jesus, and the disciples who followed The Savior to Jerusalem, even in spite of their fears (**Mark 10:32**). The list is endless.

In the eight and ninth chapters of John's Gospel, we see yet another such comparison. The Pharisees who were perfectly able to see physically, and yet, were living in spiritual blindness. And a man who was born blind, who received both his physical and spiritual sight. It is one of the best contrast and comparison stories in all scripture. And I suppose it is because the very ones who should have been able to see Jesus could not, and the one who could not even see at all, recognized Him for Who He was, is what makes this story so very appealing to sinners such as myself.

There is only one hero in this text, and it is The LORD Jesus Himself. He sought out the blind beggar for healing. Everyone else may have had their opinions about him, but only Jesus cared enough to reach out and change his life forever. He was the kind of man that most people try to pretend isn't there. For to acknowledge Him was to have compassion upon his soul and try to do something to help him. No doubt, he stood outside the Temple every day begging alms, for being blind from birth he had no other way to sustain himself. How many must have walked by him every day just hoping he wouldn't still be there when they made the return trip.

We all do it. When we see intense suffering all around us, and our first reaction is to look away or change the channel. But instead, what if we loved like Christ loved? How many lives would be changed if we just started caring a little bit more? No, we shall never remove every last vestige of suffering in this wretched world. But we could all try a bit harder to alleviate some of it as we go along. Could we not?

I once heard a story about a beach where thousands of starfish lay dying because they had been dumped there by the tides. Everyone was just staring at all those poor dying creatures as they lay helpless in the sand. To everyone's surprise a little boy ran out on the beach and began throwing starfish back into the sea one at a time. And older man, seeing the boy's feeble efforts to help, walked up to the young man, and said, "Son, just look at the thousands of dying starfish all around your feet, and you are just throwing in one at a time! You're not making any difference." The little boy didn't even look up at the man. He just continued throwing the little creatures back into the receding tide. But as he threw back each starfish, the old man heard him say, "Makes a difference to this one, makes a difference to this one..." When Jesus saw the blind man begging outside the Temple, He said something that every believer should use as motivation in this world.

“We must do the works of Him Who sent Me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work.” **John 9:4**

Now THOSE are words to live by! As Christians, we need to be about making a difference, one lost starfish at a time. So, let us not turn our gaze away from this poor man, who sat begging outside the temple gates. Let us stop and consider Him and see, His *Predicament, Perception, Persecution*, and finally, his *Preaching*.

Predicament (vs. 1-9)

As he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him. We must do the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." After He said these things He spit on the ground, made some mud from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. "Go." He told him, "wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he left, washed, and came back seeing. His neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit begging?" Some said, "He's the one." Others were saying, "No, but he looks like him." He kept saying, "I'm the one." John 9:1-9

The man had been blind from birth. He had never seen the light of day, nor any of the beauty of creation. He was living in a world of perpetual darkness. As we look at his predicament, it is important to notice the parallels between his physical blindness and those who are spiritually blind as well. The first thing we should notice is that he was a beggar outside of the Temple. Those who are spiritually blind are also outside the house of God. And just as this man was born physically blind, we are born into spiritual blindness. It is the natural condition of fallen mankind. Just as this man wasn't included, those who are lost have a similar disconnect with the God Who created them.

The man was also a beggar. He had no means, in and of himself, to improve his own situation. We, too, were unable to help ourselves in order to escape the spiritual blindness into which we are born. In order for us to find salvation, we are completely dependent upon outside intervention. Christ must come and find us, or we are destined to wander in darkness forever.

He was also beyond any human help. No-one, no doctor, religious leader or even his own family could change his life's course. He needed divine help, and he did not even seek it out for himself. His situation was hopeless, not even knowing there was One Who could come to his rescue. He didn't seek Jesus out. Jesus went looking for him! This is exactly how a lost person is brought from darkness to Light. It is a complete act of grace from God. He had nothing to offer Jesus, and He didn't even know to seek Jesus. He did not find The LORD. The LORD found him!

The disciples wanted to know the reason for his predicament. Surely, this had to be the result of some sin. Was it this man's fault, or perhaps it was the sin of his parents that had caused his blindness? Jesus told them that it was neither. It was simply his condition from birth. Jesus didn't really wish to focus on the cause, but rather the cure. The only thing that mattered was that a Sovereign God had chosen to use this man's condition for His glory. God would show this man grace. We, like this man, were born into spiritual blindness. It is the condition of all fallen man. Since sin entered the world, we have no choice but to be born into sin. Shifting the blame will not cure our sinful condition. What we need is to accept the healing that is offered by The Son of God.

This man had no idea Who was speaking to Him. He had never seen Jesus! He simply obeyed what He told Him to do. Jesus, the Creator of all things, made clay and made this man brand new eyes to see with! He commanded Him to go to the pool of Siloam. The word means "sent". It was so named, because it was supplied by water "sent" from the Gihon Spring. The word is important in context, for Christ had been sent by God to bring Living Water to the sinner. And He sent this man on a mission of obedience and faith. The man could have refused to go. He could have refused to believe in the cure that Christ offered. But He obeyed in faith. He believed The Word of The LORD and was healed. This is the same way that we can be delivered from spiritual blindness. We believe The Word, and our eyes are opened!

Many were skeptical, when the man returned with his sight restored. They had a hard time believing such a thing was possible, but yet, there he was, forever changed. The man assured them that it really was him. How overjoyed he must have been when he washed the mud out of his eyes and saw everything around him for the very first time. How he must have longed to find the man Who had healed him and thank him in person!

Perception (vs 10-17)

So they asked him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The Man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So when I went and washed I received my sight.” “Where is He?” they asked. “I don’t know,” he said. They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees. The day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes was a Sabbath. Then the Pharisees asked him again how he received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” he told them. “I washed and I can see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because He doesn’t keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How can a sinful man perform such signs?” And there was a division among them. Again they asked the blind man, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” “He’s a prophet,” he said. John 9:10-17

It is important for us to understand that this man had still never seen Jesus. He had merely heard Him speak. He believed what Jesus said, obeyed His words, and received his sight. He had received physical healing, but he didn’t as of yet have a complete understanding of Who Jesus was. When he returned to his family and friends, Jesus was not there. I am absolutely fascinated at the progression of this man’s perception of Jesus. As you read the text, you can see his “spiritual” eyesight grow sharper and shaper as he comes to grips with the identity of the man Who healed him.

He began to share his story with those who knew him best. When they asked him Who had healed them, all he knew was His Name. He didn’t know where he had gone, and he certainly could not have picked Him out of a crowd, because he still had never actually “seen” Him! So the friends did what they thought was the right thing to do. Obviously a miracle had occurred, so the best place to go was to the Pharisees. After all, they were the experts on God. Surely they could explain what had happened. But as we all know, being religious, and knowing Christ, are two totally different things.

The Pharisees’ perspective was myopic to say the least. The only thing that they got out of the story was the healing had taken place on the Sabbath. The “healer” had actually stooped to the ground and made mud. This was considered “work”. Therefore, according to the logic of the Pharisees, this miracle could not have been from God, for God wouldn’t allow anyone to work on the Sabbath! Let that sink in for a moment. They were so focused upon the “rules” that they couldn’t have cared less about the man who was healed. That is what *religion* does. It is more interested in disqualifying and excluding than it is about healing! No wonder Jesus was so completely disgusted by these people. God wants to SAVE the World. That is why He sent a Savior.

Even the religious leaders began to quarrel with one another about the logic being put forth by the leadership. Surely a man Who could perform such a miracle must have been sent by God! As for the man who was healed, he had no doubt of this fact. He still didn’t completely understand Who Jesus was, but he was certain that it was God Who had sent Him. ***“He’s a prophet,” he said (John 9:17).*** His perception wasn’t quite there yet... but things were becoming much clearer!

Persecution (vs. 18-29)

The Jews did not believe this about him—that he was blind and received sight—until they summoned the parents of the one who had received his sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” “We know this is our son and that he was born blind,” his parents answered. “But we don’t know how he now sees, and we don’t know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he’s of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him as the Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue. This is why his parents said, “He’s of age; ask him.” So a second time they

summoned the man who had been blind and told him, "Give glory to God. We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether or not He's a sinner, I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!" Then they asked him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" "I already told you," he said, "and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become His disciples too, do you?" They ridiculed him: "You're that Man's disciple, but we're Moses's disciples. We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this Man—we don't know where He's from." **John 9:18-29**

The Pharisees were furious that this man was standing before them claiming that Jesus had been sent by God. They were convinced that this was some sort of trick. They basically accused the man of being part of an elaborate ruse; as if, Jesus had sent the real blind man away and had one of His followers pretend to be him. That had to be the case, they assumed. So they set out to expose these "lies" once and for all. They sent for the blind beggar's parents. So they would tell everyone this was not their son. Then the fraudulent scheme would be exposed!

Only the parents did not do that. They were more than happy to deny any knowledge of The Savior, but they could not deny that the young man was in fact their son. He had been born blind, but now he could see. They claimed that they did not know how it happened. But in fact they did know! The reason they refused to tell the truth is because the Pharisees had threatened to ban from the faith anyone who professed Jesus to be the Messiah.

It is important to understand that to be banished from the traditional Jewish faith was to be an outcast among the people. No one could associate lawfully with such a one. So to be excluded from the faith was to lose all friends and possibly the ability to earn a living. After all, it is hard to buy, sell, or trade when no one is allowed to have interaction with you. This man's parents had counted the cost. They had assessed the risk and were willing to lie in order to maintain their lifestyle. So when they were questioned further by the Pharisees, they simply threw their son "under the bus", as it were. Saying: **"He is of age; ask him."** (vs. 23b).

Wow! Awesome parents. I am starting to understand why this man had been out on the street in the first place! The Pharisees turned their attention once more to the man who had been healed. "Give glory to God," they said to him. This doesn't mean what it sounds like. They are not asking the man to praise God for his healing. Rather, this was a commonly used invocation to tell the truth. They were calling the man a liar. They were admonishing him to "bring God glory" by telling them what really happened. The young man was immovable. He did not waiver in his testimony.

The Pharisees asked the man to re-tell his story. Most likely, in the hope that they could find an inconsistency to exploit. But the man turned it around on them!

"I already told you", he said, "and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become His disciples too, do you?" **John 9:27**

You can most definitely hear the sarcasm in that answer can you not? I would have loved to have seen the looks on their faces when he said that! They were furious! The word that the CSB translates "ridiculed" him, actually means "reviled or vilified". They did not like the message, so they despised the messenger. They tried to pressure him to agree with them by calling Jesus a sinner for doing a work on the Sabbath. The man's response was wondrous.

"Whether He is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!" **John 9:25**

He still hadn't put it all together, but he was far ahead of the Pharisees. And the more they talked, the more he realized that Jesus was a far better man than they! And he was willing to risk losing everything that pertained to his very own heritage, in order to take a stand for the Man Who had opened his eyes.

Preaching (vs. 30-34)

“This is an amazing thing!” the man told them. “You don’t know where He is from, and 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 him. 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.” “You were born entirely in sin,” they replied, “and are you trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out. **John 9:30-34**

As I said earlier, you can witness for yourself this man’s vision becoming clearer and clearer. He was astonished that the so called “religious experts” were having trouble even deciding whether or not that a man Who could restore sight to the blind was from God or not! To him, the answer was more than obvious. He may not, as of that moment, fully understood Who Jesus was, but He most certainly knew that only God could give Him the power to do what He had done.

At this point in the conversation, the man who had been blind uses the Word of God to preach to the Pharisees!

“We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, he listens to Him.” **John 9:31**

What is he doing here? He is preaching, that’s what! He knows what the Word of God says, even if the Pharisees had forgotten. There are several verses in The Holy Scriptures that say exactly what this man was telling them. God does not grant the requests of sinners. Therefore, a man who can restore sight must be empowered by God. Here are just a few verses that bear witness to this truth.

“If I had been aware of malice in my heart, The LORD would not have listened.”

Psalms 66:18

And **“The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”**

Proverbs 15:29

This man reminded the Pharisees that no one in history had ever been able to restore sight to someone who was born blind. Therefore, the One Who could perform such a miracle must have been sent from God Himself. The Pharisees had no intelligent response. They simply called the man a sinner and banished him from the Jewish faith. How dare he presume to preach to learned men such as themselves? But sadly, this former beggar knew more about God than they did.

I cannot help but think that The Holy Spirit had this story in mind, when He inspired David to write **Psalms 27**. If you want to see what I mean, simply read this story, and then read **Psalms 27** and highlight the relevant passages. I promise, you will be amazed.

This man had been healed, and as a result, his physical eyes had been opened. And as you read the story you can see his spiritual eyes as they began to receive sight as well. The Pharisees had thrown him out, but he was not destined to remain an outcast. The LORD Himself was coming to find him once more. And then, he would see The Truth with his own eyes. The Light Of The World was coming to dispel his darkness forever. He may have been cast out of the synagogue, but he was to become part of a royal priesthood, a living stone in the spiritual house of God (**1 Peter 2:5**). For Jesus was coming to save His soul!

As I am writing this, I cannot help but think of all the blinded people living in spiritual darkness. God sent His One and Only Son to save them, and just as he sent that blind beggar to the pool of Siloam, we have been sent into this darkened world to bring The Light to all who will see. So let us be about The Father’s business. For:

“WE must do the works of Him Who sent Me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work.” **John 9:4 (emphasis added)**

And let all those who have seen The Light say... TRUTH!!!