

Healing the Blind (John 9)

1. Jesus Heals the Blind Man (Verses 1-12)

- Verse 1 - “As He passed by” → Jesus took advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. His selflessness is shown not only in His stopping to help the man, but also in His doing so after having just fled the murderous religious leaders.
- The rabbis of the day had a difficult time reconciling the aspects of justice: man is to be punished for his own sin, but natural consequences result from sin. This was based on the assumption that all suffering was the result of some sin. (Which, to some extent, it is, but not necessarily of the individual.)
- Verse 3 - Jesus does not even get into the discussion, but turns their attention to the most significant truth: broken things allow God to be glorified in their mending!
- Verses 4-5 - Jesus taught His disciples to do what they could to serve God while there remained time to do so. No work can be done after death. While Jesus is in the world, He is the light—so what about when He left? Where does the light come from? Why would Jesus then include His disciples by saying, “We must work”?
- Verses 6-7 - Why would Jesus choose to heal Him this way? What healing powers are in mud? Why would he have to “Go, wash,” first? Jesus took what in itself had no power and gave it power to restore, contingent upon genuine faith that motivated someone to act. What might the blind man have been thinking? How difficult would it have been to get out to the pool to wash, blindly stumbling, looking foolish with mud on his face?
- Verses 8-9 - Those who knew him noticed a difference, so much so that they questioned whether he was even the same person anymore. Imagine the man now walking with purpose, direction, and confidence, excitedly interacting rather than pitifully begging on the side of the road.
- Verse 10 - Change itself prompts people to ask how it happened.
- Verse 11 - The man says who healed him and what happened, but technically not how (in the sense that he could not explain the power at work in him)—he spoke from what he knew.
- Verse 12 - Is the fact that the man could not point to Jesus and identify him an acceptable reason to dismiss his explanation of how he was healed?

2. Man Questioned by Pharisees (Verses 13-17)

- Verse 14 - Jesus restores and gives rest on the day of rest. “We must work...”—yes! The works of God, always, even if we are taking a break from the physical labor of this life. Do we ever take vacation from working for the Lord?
- Verse 16 - They accused God of sinning because He failed to observe the day He instituted. How often does man “find fault” with God because He “fails” to “live up to” man’s standards? Prejudice can easily trump reason! How many times does man ignore obvious evidence because it does not match what he expects?
- Verse 17 - The man knew enough to match evidence with reason and reach a conclusion that was at least on the right track.

3. Man’s Parents Questioned by Pharisees (Verses 18-23)

- Verse 18 - The only alternative to denying the healing power is to deny the sickness itself.
- Verses 20-23 - The man's parents refuse to defend their child who was being interrogated and insulted and harassed. They, too, "speak what they know," but not *all* they know. If their son knew someone name Jesus healed him, and how, and thought He was a prophet, then surely the parents knew, too. The parents allowed their fear of men and being excluded or ostracized to deter them from speaking openly and confidently like their son. How many times do I do that?

4. Debating the Identity of Jesus (Verses 24-34)

- Verse 24 - "Give glory to God." How ironic is this statement? Jesus did just that through His healing, but they failed to by their denial. How did they *know* Jesus was a sinner? Based on whose law? God's? Who commanded the keeping of the Sabbath *and* the loving of one's neighbor as oneself? Which one of them had ever noticed or attempted to help this man?
- Verse 25 - The man let Jesus' actions speak. He based his opinions off of the evidence, rather than basing his accepting of the evidence in light of his predetermined opinions.
- Verses 26-27 - They ask the right question with the wrong motivation.
- Verses 28-29 - They ignorantly claimed Moses. (John 5:39-47; 8:39-47) The Jews trusted in God, Abraham, and Moses—all of whom pointed to Jesus! It is ironic that they say *surely* Moses, but not *this* man, as if "this Man" is not the very one Moses wrote about. (It is like saying Paul, but not Jesus; or the loving teachings of Christ, but not submission and obedience.)
- Verse 30 - The man is nearly speechless at how they "could not see" the obvious truth—who is truly blind, here?
- Verse 31-33 - He states an understood principle, something commonly believed: God does not arbitrarily give power to do supernatural works to sinners, it is a miracle to do what Jesus did, miracles require God's power to do supernatural works, thus Jesus must have had God-given authority and power.
- Verse 34 - They fail to refute the argument, and instead commit two logical fallacies—ad hominem and ad baculum—they attack the character of the person making the argument and threaten him. They never even challenged the argument's conclusion or its premises.

5. True Meaning of "Seeing" and "Blind" (Verses 35-41)

- Verse 35 - Jesus could have left the man after he was put out of the temple, but Jesus found him. He did not rest in the fact that He had "just" healed the man. "Do *you* believe in the Son of Man?" Jesus contrasts the seeing man with the unbelieving Pharisees.
- Verse 36 - The man asked the right question with the right motive. ("Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"—Not slander or kill.)
- Verse 37 - "You have...seen Him."— Not just now, but before as well. How did he "see" Jesus before?
- Verse 38 - This is the proper response of someone who "sees" Jesus and believes.
- Verse 39 - Jesus came both to heal and reveal.

- Verse 40 - Again, they ask the right question, but with the wrong heart.
- Verse 41 - Jesus emphasizes the critical nature of knowing one's need; playing it cool is of no benefit to anyone when they are dying.

Lessons to Learn:

1. Like Jesus, help those who are in need, to the glory of God.
2. Like the blind man, trust, obey, and hold onto the truth about the power of the Gospel that has been manifested in your healing.
3. Unlike the parents, realize when your fear and conflicting priorities are going against reason and keeping you from standing for the truth.
4. Unlike the Pharisees, do not allow pride and preconceived notions to keep you from submitting to God.