

John 9:1-41 NIV

Seeing is NOT Necessarily Believing!

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 30, 2014 at 8:00 & 10:45

During Lent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Most have the great blessing of physical sight – *there is so much to see!* But most are so focused on the physical *that they are blind to the spiritual.* Today, *as we study Jesus' healing of the man born blind,* may the Holy Spirit enable us to ♦proceed with purpose, ♦believe God's miracles, ♦distinguish between man's laws and God's truth, ♦live without fear, ♦boldly confess God's truth, and ♦change our focus from *the physical to the spiritual!*

1. **Everything Jesus Said or Did Had a Purpose:** ¹ As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. // Purpose – *Jesus had a reason for everything!* He looked at the man—*so He could teach His disciples about physical suffering;* then He healed the man—*so that others might receive spiritual sight!* So now, *while we are alive,* God is calling us to live with purpose—*with His purpose!*
2. **For Some Neighbors, Seeing the Results Wasn't Enough:** ⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." ¹⁰ "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded. ¹¹ He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and

then I could see." ¹² "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said. // Imagine being blind—from birth! You have never seen anything; then, *after hearing Jesus ♦explain your blindness to His disciples and ♦identify Himself as the "light of the world,"* He puts mud on your eyes and tells you to go and wash! Then *you do and you see!* **Wow!** No matter how much others disbelieve, *you are rejoicing!* Even when people doubt that we have God's gift of eternal life, *let us believe and rejoice!*

3. **Did Jesus Break God's Law?** ¹³ They [his neighbors] brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others [other Pharisees] asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided. ¹⁷ Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." // The two groups of Pharisees could, *in a sense,* represent all unbelievers: ☹Some unbelievers are constantly looking for a reason to reject Jesus and God's eternal blessings—*they condemn themselves!* ☹But other unbelievers are more open minded; for example: "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" In John 10, Jesus said these words to Jews who wanted to stone Him: "Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. **But if I do it,** even though you do not believe me, **believe the miracles,** that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (John 10:37-38 NIV) Did Jesus break God's Law? *No!* The Sabbath Law was for the *spiritual benefit* of people—to *stop physical work and focus on spiritual life,* but it did *not* prohibit *helping someone in need!*
4. **Are You Controlled by Fear or by Truth?** ¹⁸ The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" ²⁰ "We know he is our son," the parents

answered, “and we know he was born blind.”²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.”²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.²³ That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” // The man’s parents feared excommunication, *which would have cut them off from virtually everyone*—except the lowest class of people. *So they chose to be controlled by fear!* Now, think about Martin Luther: He was not only threatened with excommunication, *but with burning at the stake!* Yet he said: **Here I stand! God help me!** “...we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, *but of those who believe and are saved.*” (Heb. 10:39 NIV)

5. **The Healed Man Boldly Told the Truth:**²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God,” they said [*in other words, tell us the exact truth*]. “We know this man is a sinner.”²⁵ He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”²⁶ Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?”²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses!²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”³⁰ The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.”³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out. // Has YOUR faith ever been challenged? What did (would) you do? Knowing we **were** lost and dead, and now, knowing we **are** found and saved through Jesus, *let us boldly confess God’s work in our lives!* Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “This unlearned man could argue with much more exactness and

power than [the Pharisees], because he had the truth on his side. In the same way the simplest Christian, by adhering strictly to the truth of Scriptures, is able to confound the keenest and cleverest unbelievers...” (NT 1:465)

6. **What Kind of Sight is More Important?**³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”³⁸ Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?”⁴¹ Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.” // The man born blind had his faith in the coming Messiah; then, *when Jesus identified Himself to the man*, he confessed: “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. By God’s grace, *we also believe and worship Him!* But what about others? They are blind to their sin (Rev. 3:17: *...you say, “I am rich, and have need of nothing,” and you do...)*, “...therefore, they, and all that follow their foolish example, are struck by the judgment of God, according to which His gracious search for them is finally abandoned, and they are left to the fate which they have deliberately preferred to the mercy of the Savior.” (Ibid.)

Some Ways for Us to Respond: Help me fill in the blanks:

1. Since Jesus lived with purpose, let us do the s_____!
2. Many desire miracles, but God’s t_____ makes us free!
3. Like Jesus, let us practice the law of l_____!
4. God calls us to f_____ Him and speak the t_____ in l_____!
5. Since we have eternal life thru Jesus, let us boldly c_____ Him!
6. Let’s always emphasize s_____ things over p_____ things!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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