

May 13, 2018 ~ John 9:13-41, Spiritual Blindness!

Last week, we studied how Jesus came across a man who had been blind since birth. Jesus made some mud with His spit and some dirt and placed it on the man's eyes, telling him to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash. The man obeyed and was then able to see.

Read John 9:13-16... Some of the friends of this man who had been blind, brought him before the Pharisees, to see if they could explain what had happened.

The Pharisees ask the man what happened and he tells them, "He put mud [clay] on my eyes, then I washed and now I see."

We are told that Jesus healed the man on a Sabbath; the Pharisees use that fact to say this man [Jesus] is not from God (**John 9:16a**), for He didn't keep the Sabbath. But the truth is, Jesus didn't break any biblical commands concerning the Sabbath; He did however, invalidate certain rabbinical teachings by His actions, e.g., the religious rulers allowed medical assistance to be being given to a person on a Sabbath, only if that person's life was in immediate jeopardy.

Jesus often violated manmade Sabbath rules: once He healed a man with a withered hand (Matthew 12:9-13), another time an invalid (John 5:1-9), both on a Sabbath.

Jesus made it very clear (**Mark 2:27**), "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath was intended to be a day for honoring God, not for bring attention to yourself through legalistic rule keeping. After all, Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.

The people question (**John 9:16b**), if this man [Jesus] is a sinner how can He man do such miracles? This seems to cause a division among the people.

Read 9:17-23... The Pharisees turn to the former blind man, asking what he has to say about the one who healed him. "He is a prophet," the man said. Although the former blind man didn't see Jesus and doesn't know who He is, it would appear that he is beginning to realize the special nature of this man named Jesus.

The Jews question (**verse 18**) whether this man was ever blind; they do not believe him, so they call his parents in to testify.

The Pharisees are relentless, "is this your son who was blind? How is it that he can see?" The parents don't want to get on the wrong side of the Pharisees, for they (**verse 22**) had the authority to put them out of the synagogue [meaning, to cut them off from all social and religious life in Israel, to excommunicate them].

The parents tell them yes, their son was born blind, and he now can see, but they don't know how this happened. Ask him yourself, he is an adult and can answer for himself (it seems the former blind man is not there when his parents are questioned, cf. **verse 24**).

Read John 9:24-30... So, the Jews call the former blind man to again stand before them and they continue their inquisition. They challenge him to say Jesus didn't heal him, that Jesus is a sinner, and is not from God!

The man's response is incredible, think about it, this man has been in the dark, at the mercy of others, all his life; you would think that might make you somewhat timid and compliant and yet, when the Pharisees call Jesus a sinner and command this man to speak against Him, his response seems to imply, "you are the wise ones and you can't figure it out, all I can tell you is, I was blind and now I can see!"

The Jews escalate their interrogation, "What did He do to you? How did He heal you?" The former blind guy is tired of these bullies, and their badmouthing of the guy who healed him, "I told you already, didn't you hear me? Do you want to become His disciples?"

Wow! Now he poked the hornet's nest, the Pharisees proclaim their authority is through Moses, "God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this fellow comes from, He is a nobody" (they never say Jesus' name).

The former blind guy takes it to the next level, saying, "this is amazing, you religious elite don't know who this miracle performing man is or where He comes from? Look, I was blind and now I see, you guys have always had your sight, but you are blind and ignorant of God's ways and God's servants!"

John 9:31-34... The ex-blind guy continues to give the Jews a tongue lashing, saying, "look, even I know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if a man fears God and does God's will [speaking of Jesus], God not only hears Him, but does great things through Him. Since the very beginning of time no one has ever healed a man who was born blind. If this man [Jesus] is not from God, He could not do this miracle."

The Pharisees let lose their vehemence, "you were born in sin, you are steeped in sin and you dare to scold us? At this, they through him out of the synagogue excommunicating him from Jewish life.

The religious leaders had all the evidence they needed right in front of them, and yet their spiritually dead hearts, spiritually deaf ears and spiritually blind eyes, were unwilling and therefore incapable of acknowledging Jesus Christ as their Messiah!

Paul could have been speaking of the Pharisees when he said (**1Corinthians 2:14**), "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Read John 9:35-38... Jesus goes looking for the man He had healed of blindness; this poor guy had been questioned by his friends and neighbors, interrogated by the Pharisees, forsaken by his parents, excommunicated from all religious and social life in Israel.

The Lord finds him, and asks, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" This title, Son of Man, is a reference to the Messiah, the one to whom belongs all power, authority and dominion, for ever and ever. Matthew's gospel uses this title for Jesus 30 times (cf. Daniel 7:13-14).

The former blind man doesn't know who the Son of Man is, and remember, He didn't see Jesus until now and doesn't know He is the one who healed him; but as we read already in **John 9:17**, he said Jesus must be a prophet, and in **verse 33** he said that Jesus must be from God.

With all that has happened to this blind man who now has his sight, he is ready (**verse 36**) to believe, but he doesn't yet know who the Messiah is, so he asks Jesus to tell him.

Jesus tells the man that he has already seen the Son of Man, and is now talking with Him, to which the man responds, "Lord, I believe," after which he worships the Lord. Jesus had healed the man's congenital blindness and now He heals the man of his terminal illness, sin:

Romans 5:12, "sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned," (**17-18**), "death reigned through that one man [Adam], how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act [Jesus death for our sins] resulted in justification [forgiveness] and [eternal] life for all people."

John 9:39-41... No one uses rhetoric like Jesus. The Pharisees considered themselves righteous, wise in their own eyes, yet they remain spiritually blind and dead in their sins, unforgiven.

In Matthew 15 and 23 Jesus calls the religious leaders "blind guides," saying "If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit." Jesus called them "sons of hell."

Jesus tells these Pharisees they remain guilty before God, for they are unwilling to receive God's forgiveness in Christ; they are lovers of darkness rather than light.

The blind beggar in John 9 received new eyes, but much more than that, the eyes of his heart were opened, and he believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, Jesus didn't just heal his eyes, He healed his soul, granting him forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus brings this man from darkness into light forever (**John 8:12**), "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness [sin & death], but will have the light of life [forgiveness & eternal life]."

2Corinthians 4:4, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel."

2Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

2Corinthians 5:17-18, " Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ." **20-21**, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

Herbert Spencer was a non-Christian scientist who died in 1903. He was one of the principal proponents of evolutionary theory in the mid nineteenth century, and his reputation at the time rivaled that of Charles Darwin. His greatest achievement was his discovery and proclamation of the five categories in which anything and everything can be placed, they are: time, force, action, space, matter.

Atheists are spiritually blind and self-righteous people, like these Pharisees, they are spiritually dead because they reject the salvation and eternal life that comes only through Jesus Christ: crucified, resurrected, coming again.

Like most people who reject God's existence and God's clear imprint on all that has been made, they think much more of themselves than they ought. Herbert Spencer actually thought he was the one who came up with the five categories of time, force, action, space, matter.

Please turn to **Genesis 1:1**... "In the beginning" (that's time)... "God" (that's force)... "created" (that's action)... "the heavens" (that's space)... "the earth" (that's matter). Everything Herbert Spencer "discovered," is found in the very first verse of the Bible, written by the God who Herbert didn't believe in.

You know, Herbert Spencer wasn't that much different from the Pharisees, both were spiritually blind, even though they were aware of so much evidence and irrefutable proof that God exists and He has revealed Himself to us in the person of Jesus, born to Mary, for the purpose of taking our punishment upon Himself, in order to provide forgiveness and eternal life to all who repent of their sins and believe in God's Son as Savior and Lord (cf. **Romans 10:9-10, 13**).

Pastor Mike

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