**“I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE” – PART 2**

This morning we’re going to finish John Ch 9, picking up where we left off (verse 24). Jesus is in Jerusalem with His disciples. He comes across a blind man (blind from birth, v 1) who is sitting down and begging at the temple entrance. [conversation with disciples where Jesus obliterates their erroneous theology]. Jesus goes up to the man. There is no recorded conversation at all with the man. Jesus makes a muddy paste from the dirt on the ground, mixes it with His own spit and then places this wad of mud over the man’s eyes. Jesus then instructs the man to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man complies with Jesus’ instructions. He goes down to the Pool of Siloam, washes and by the time he returns, he can see. For the first time in his entire life this blind beggar can see! This is a truly amazing miracle of God! In fact it is so amazing that many of the people who know the man (described as “the neighbors,” v 8) can’t believe that THIS is the same guy. But the man convinces them that he is, in fact, the same guy they’ve known all these years. When they ask him, “how were your eyes opened?” he answers honestly… READ John 9:11-12.

The man tells his neighbors what he knows. He gives them his personal testimony. Well, this miracle raises some serious questions with the people (who are split in their opinions about Jesus) – some believe He’s the Messiah as He claims and some do not. So they take this miracle man into the Temple to the Pharisees, to their religious leaders. They need some clarification about Jesus. The Pharisees have made their feelings about Jesus very clear. They have said that Jesus is not from God because He heals on the Sabbath and nobody who violates the Sabbath can be from God. And here is yet another case of that – we are told that Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath (v 14). On the other hand it’s widely understood that nobody could do the many signs and wonders Jesus did unless He were from God (it is what Nicodemus voiced in John 3:2). And here is another of those signs – a man, blind from birth, has had his sight restored by Jesus. So the people are confused about Jesus. Is He from God or not? They need their religious leaders to help them figure this out.

Well, after listening to the testimony of the eye witnesses involved in this latest miracle (the neighbors as well as the man himself) the Pharisees conclude that they are all lying and they call in the man’s parents. The man’s parents aren’t much help because they’re afraid of what the Pharisees will do to them if they tell what they know. So instead they plead ignorance and tell the Pharisees, “He is of age, he’s a full grown adult, ask him yourself.” So the Pharisees bring the man who was healed of his blindness back in for a second round of questioning.

One quick observation I want to make: By the end of John Chapter 9 the man who was born blind, the once blind beggar who can now see, will have a more complete understanding of Jesus and closer relationship with God than the religious leaders of Israel, than those men who have been schooled in all the O.T. scriptures and have heard the teachings of Jesus and been aware of many of His miracles. We’ll see that as we go thru the rest of the chapter.

READ John 9:24-25

“Give glory to God!” is an expression meaning “Confess the truth” (it’s what Joshua told Achan in Joshua 7:19 after Achan’s sin had been exposed). The man refuses to get into a theological discussion about Jesus with the Pharisees. He has already expressed his opinion about Jesus, that Jesus is a prophet, that He is from God (v 17). So, rather than debate, he simply tells the Pharisees what he knows: that once he was blind, but now he can see.

READ John 9:26

They know from the man’s previous testimony that it was Jesus who had healed him. So they ask the man what Jesus did and how He did it. Knowing what we know about the Pharisees, their motivation for asking these questions is not to arrive at the truth. They’ve already showed their true colors when they dismissed this man’s testimony previously. The Pharisees are spiritually blind. They are willfully blind due to the hardness of their hearts, their prejudice and hatred of Jesus. They are also blinded by Satan. “The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Cor 4:4). Spiritually blind - nothing that Jesus says or does, nothing anyone else says or does, including this man, no new facts being introduced, nothing is going to change their view of Jesus. Even now, standing face-to-face with an obvious miracle from God, a man who was born blind who can now see (overwhelming evidence), the Pharisees do NOT believe in Jesus. Nothing has changed.

READ John 9:27

I love this guy! He knows the Pharisees pretty well and he knows how they feel about Jesus. You can sense a little bit of his frustration with the Pharisees here as with a bit of sarcasm he asks them, “Do you want to become His disciples?” Of course we all know the answer to that.

READ John 9:28-29

The Pharisees are so proud. They are especially proud of their spiritual heritage. In Chapter 8 as they talked to Jesus we saw them play the “Abraham” card – “Abraham is our father!” (8:39). Now they play the “Moses” card – “We are disciples of Moses!” Hmmm, interesting they should bring up Moses. Back in John Ch 5 Jesus said this to these very same Pharisees: “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” [Deut 18:15 – “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers--it is to him you shall listen.”] All throughout the Gospel of John we have been able to piece together thru the testimony of Jesus and others that Jesus is in fact THAT prophet who Moses spoke about, God’s Promised One, the Messiah.

So now the Pharisees once again show their ignorance about Jesus. He’s already told them who He is and where He came from and in this passage they show they have not been listening. They certainly don’t believe what He has told them even if they heard it.

The man who was formerly blind now speaks up. He’s bold. He is going to explain to these Pharisees what he knows about Jesus. What he does is shoot them right between the eyes, metaphorically speaking. Listen to his words… the words of a man that just a day or two before had been a blind beggar sitting outside the temple entrance.

READ John 9:30-33

“I don’t know much about theology and I may not have all the answers about Jesus but let me tell you what I do know.” I was blind and this man gave me my sight. Not one case was ever recorded in the O.T. or in Jewish history where a man blind from birth received his sight. Bottom line – Jesus has to be from God to perform this miracle. If He had not been from God He could not have done what He did! HE IS FROM GOD!!

 READ John 9:34

The Pharisees become so enraged that they throw this man out of the Temple. The Pharisees have apparently forgotten the explicit promises of God in their own Scripture that sight would be restored in the age of the Messiah. Isaiah 29, “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.” Isaiah 35, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” Isaiah 42, “I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon.” Opening the eyes of the blind is something that the Jew’s Messiah would do when He finally came. Jesus had said, “I am the light of the world,” quoting from Isaiah 42. Then, in order to prove that He is the light of the world, Jesus has made a blind man see! But they ignore all that.

Remember before in John 5 Jesus had told the Pharisees that they do not have the love of God in them. And here we see this exposed in their treatment of the man who had previously been blind. They say to the man, “You in sins were born entirely and you are teaching us? You’re teaching US?” There is something fundamentally self-righteous in their thinking as they link this man's sinfulness from birth with his physical defect without including themselves under the status “sinful from birth.” The reality is that we are all sinful from birth! Not just this man. Them too. In fact, the great king David, one of their heroes in Psalm 51:5 said, “In sin my mother conceived me.”

Unbelief, hostility, a lack of love, self-righteousness. These are some of the characteristics we can see of the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ day. But our story doesn’t end there. The best part comes next. Jesus finds the man. Back in verse 1 Jesus had found Him the first time, went to him and gave him physical sight, something he had never had before. Now Jesus finds the man yet again…

READ John 9:35-38

The man believes that God is going to one day send a Messiah, a Savior, the “Son of Man,” a Messianic reference from Daniel Ch 7. The man believes. But he doesn’t know exactly who this person is or will be. He wants to believe what God has promised is true, but he doesn’t know who to believe in. So, Jesus points the man in the right direction. He points him to Himself. This reminds me of the woman at the well in John ch 4: “The woman said to [Jesus], ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’ “I am the Messiah.” That’s what He told the woman at the well and that’s what He tells this guy. The result is that the man believes (without argument or hesitation) and he worships Jesus. True faith believes what Jesus says.

Contrast between the man born blind in Ch 9 with the man who had been lame for 38 years in Ch 5. Both men were recipients of divine grace when Jesus took the initiative and went to them and healed them. But when it came to their spiritual condition they reacted differently. This man we are told believed and worshiped Jesus. He was saved. The other man we are told after Jesus found him later in the temple and warned him reacted differently. John 5:15 says the man went away. One worshiped while one went away. We don’t really know what happened to the man in John Ch 5. I like to believe that he at some point became a follower of Christ, but we don’t know. We DO know that the man here in John Ch 9 is a believer. How? By his outward profession of faith. By his testimony, “Lord, I believe.”

While Jesus is talking to the man outside the temple, some of the Pharisees overhear what He has been saying to the man.

READ John 9:39

Jesus is talking in a spiritually sense and undoubtedly has 2 different groups of people in mind. One group is represented by the man who Jesus has healed from his physical and spiritual blindness (“those who do not see may see”) and one group is represented by the Jewish religious leaders (“those who see may become blind”).

“For judgment I came into this world…” Later Jesus will tell His disciples, “I did not come to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:47). Jesus’ mission was to save the world from their sins, to provide eternal life to those who believe in Him. So why this talk about judgment? When does judgment come?

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:16-21) In other words when you come to faith in Christ it changes your whole life, what you believe and how you behave.

If you understand this basic theology that Jesus taught then it makes the last couple of verses in John 9 clear to understand

READ John 9:40-41

To receive Jesus is to receive the light of the world. To reject Him is to reject the light, to close one’s eyes to the truth and therefore become blind. The blindness of such people was incurable because they reject the only cure for their blindness which exists, that is, Jesus. How sad! Here you have a whole group of blind people. They are blind spiritually, and they don’t even realize that they’re blind! They can’t see that they have a problem. They think they’re OK.

In John 9 in the life of the man born blind we see a steady progression in his knowledge of Jesus and faith in Him – (1) v 12 didn’t know Jesus at all, (2) v 17, He is a prophet, He is from God, (3) v 25, He is one who can make blind men see, (4) v 33, He most definitely is from God, (5) v 36, I want to believe in Him in the Son of Man, (6) v 38 “Lord I believe.” And he worships Him. Meanwhile the Pharisees all throughout the Chapter continually reveal their ignorance of Jesus, their blind condition – (1) v 16, “This man is not from God, (2) v 24, “We know that this man is a sinner,” (3) v 29, “we don’t know where he comes from,” (4) v 40, “are we also blind?”

Do you realize that John Chapter 10 – chapter about God’s sovereignty and the security of our salvation in Christ, the great discourse about the Good Shepherd, Jesus’s wonderful message of hope and security in Him – do you realize that it flows out from a conversation He has with a handful of Pharisees outside the Temple? Why does Jesus even bother with these faithless, unloving people? They won’t listen to Him! They’re going to end up having Him killed! Why, Jesus, do You waste Your time with these guys?” Answer: Because – HE LOVES THEM!! Just like He loves you and me.