

March 22, 2020
John 9:1-7
"Blind but now I see"

10 years ago, I used to have 20-20 vision. Then I became far-sighted and needed glasses. As time went on my eyes got worse. I moved up to bifocals. Then progressive bifocals. It seems that each time I go to the eye doctor, he has to crank up my prescription. But I am thankful for one thing today. I still can see.

This morning, we're going to see how Jesus healed a man that was born blind. And as we look at this story, it's going to become clear that this is also your story because Jesus has healed you too, but from a different kind of blindness.

Jesus literally changed the way this man saw the world, and Jesus has done the same thing for you and me. So consider our sermon theme for today, "Blind But Now I See!"

Jesus and his disciples were walking along, and they saw a blind man begging on the side of the street. They didn't have welfare or OHIP back then and so if you were unable to work, you were often forced into the street to beg.

This guy wasn't like some blind people who lose their site when they get older. No this guy was blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus a common question when they saw the blind man-"Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

It was a very common belief back then, that if someone was born with a disability, it was a punishment from God. But Jesus makes it clear that this blindness was no one's fault. It was not the man's fault nor his parent's fault. Jesus says, "This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

Sometimes God allows bad things to happen to someone, so that he can reveal his glory through that person's situation. A Christian man goes into a hospital with a terminal illness, and while he is there, he is calm, he prays, he talks about his faith to others, he keeps his spirits up. Maybe he even surprises the doctors and gets better- God is glorified in his illness.

Or maybe he dies, after a long drawn out illness-even there God is glorified, as the doctors, nurses, and friends watch him deal with death in a graceful way, sharing his faith and trusting Christ.

God uses bad situations in people's lives so that the work of God might be revealed to others. Notice how Jesus connects this situation with his outlook on life:

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work." In other words, Jesus was telling his disciples that he wasn't going to procrastinate when it came to doing the work of the Heavenly Father.

The time to deal with this blind man and to reveal the glory of God was right now – they weren't going to go out to lunch, and afterwards have a meeting to decide what to do about that blind man.

The time to act was right now. Jesus told his disciples, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Jesus here is giving a hint of what he's going to do for that blind man.

"I am the light of the world. For those living in darkness, for those that are blind - I'm going to do something for them – I'm going to be their light." Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go, he told him, wash in the Pool of Siloam. So the man went and washed, and came home seeing."

Just imagine what it was like for that man. Never in his whole life had he ever been able to see before. And now, a whole new world was opened before him. Now he could see colors and people and trees and the sky and everything.

But there was something else Jesus wanted to do for this man. You see, the eyes on his face were now opened. But the eyes of this man's soul were still shut tight. But not for long. The Bible goes on to describe how the religious leaders of that day were spiritually blind.

The eyes on their face were working. But the eyes of their soul were shut tight. Those religious leaders interviewed the man who had been healed by Jesus, and the interview did not go well.

They didn't think Jesus could be connected to God, because he had healed on the Sabbath. They asked the man what he thought, and the man said, I think he is from God: "He is a prophet," the man said.

We didn't include the entire story here, but the Bible tells us that they also interviewed the man's parents. They still couldn't see it. They interviewed the man again, and the man held firm to his belief that Jesus was somehow connected to God.

The Pharisees were so spiritually blind that they finally said to the man, "You were steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out, probably out of the synagogue.

They literally "kicked him out of church," you could say. And now we see Jesus perform the big miracle here – he opens the eyes of this man's soul. Jesus found the man and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. "Tell me who he is," the man said. Jesus said, "You're looking at him."

And then look at verse 38 – here's the real miracle of this story – "Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him." The man became a believer. In contrast to the spiritually blind Pharisees, the eyes of that man's soul were opened wide by Jesus.

And when he saw Jesus, he didn't see just a prophet, or a man of God. With his brand new eyes of faith, he saw Jesus for who he really was – the Son of God, the Savior of the world. And that's when he bowed down and worshiped him.

After Jesus healed the man, he said that this is why he had come into the world – so that the blind will see – in other words, so that he could give eyes of faith to those whose souls are spiritually blind.

Jesus also came to cause some to become blind. In other words, for those who think they know everything and keep rejecting the Word of God over and over again – for them, Jesus has come to make them even more blind.

Do you see how this man's story is your story and my story? Did you know that you were born into this world with the eyes of your soul glued shut? You were born spiritually blind. You couldn't see who Jesus Christ was. And when you can't see Jesus, you can't really see who God is. And when you can't see God, lots of things don't make sense in this world.

Why am I here, on this planet? What is my purpose for existing? What am I doing here? And where am I going? And what will happen to me fifty or a hundred years from now, when I'm not here?

When you can't see Jesus Christ, you can't see the answers to these questions. Maybe for some of you, you can remember how that felt, to be wandering through life with the eyes of your soul glued shut – trying the best you can to find your way, but without any success.

A number of years ago in California, fierce winds from a dust storm triggered a massive freeway pileup. At least 14 people died and dozens more were injured as topsoil whipped by 50 mile-per-hour winds reduced visibility to zero.

The afternoon disaster left a three-mile trail of burning vehicles, some stacked on top of each other. The problem was, no one was able to see. Many of the motorists blindly drove ahead, right into the disaster.

Spiritually, this is how you're born. You can't see what you need to see. And unless someone intervenes, you're going to blindly drive your soul right into the disaster of hell, condemned and separated from God for an eternity.

But Jesus didn't let this happen to you, did he. Jesus intervened. What Jesus did for this man in this story, Jesus has also done for you. He came to you, and he opened the eyes of your soul. He didn't use mud.

For some of you, Jesus opened the eyes of your soul when he came to you in baptism. There, through water and the Word, Jesus gave you eyes of faith, so that you could see him, so that you could see God and understand and believe all these things that you had never seen or understood before.

For some of you, Jesus gave sight to your soul when you were older – and he came to you through the Word, and opened your eyes with the message of the Gospel.

With eyes of faith, you now can see that all of your sins have been taken away by the Lamb of God. With eyes of faith, you now can see that you have been completely and totally forgiven by God, for all the mistakes you have made in life.

With eyes of faith, you now can see that you are guaranteed eternal life. Now you can see that you have a God who works out all things for your good. Now you can see that even the bad things that happen in life, aren't punishments for sin – Jesus has already been punished for your sins.

No, those bad things in life are opportunities for God to display his glory, just as he did for this man in this story. Jesus has cured you of your spiritual blindness. Jesus has given to you a soul with 20/20 vision – a whole new world of faith has been opened up to you.

There is the story of a 51 year old man who was blind, but after a complicated operation, he could see, and it worked out for him. And this is how he talked - "I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow. I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow.

But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red. I can see the shape of the moon--and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail.

And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. I would never know how wonderful everything is if I wasn't able to see.

And so it is for you – “I never would have known that God was so forgiving. Jesus has opened my eyes. I am amazed that God would love me enough to send his Son, to take my sins away.

I could never picture that kind of love until now. I can see grace now – I couldn’t see it before. I never knew that God could be so wonderful, so good, so loving, so full of grace – but now I can see it all. Jesus has opened my eyes.”

I hope this story does a couple things for you. I hope it increases your faith, your love, and your appreciation for Jesus Christ, and what he has done for you in your life. I hope this also reminds you that there are people you know, that you love and care about and enjoy being around.

But the eyes of their souls are glued shut. They don’t see what you see. If only they would come into contact with Jesus Christ. In a few weeks from now is Easter. What better time than now, the present, to introduce someone to Jesus Christ?

He can open their eyes, so that they could see the grace of God, just like you can right now. Jesus can make that happen. And the time to do that, Jesus says, is right now – don’t procrastinate.

As long as it is day, as long as the world is still existing – now is the time to share your Savior with others. Night is coming, when the opportunity to do that will be over. All it takes is one visit with the light of the world, and someone’s eyes could be opened, just as was the case for that blind man. “Keep your eyes open” for those whose eyes haven’t been opened yet. And remember, we all were blind but now we see. Amen.