



John (So That You Might Believe) (Week 7/12) Healing the Blind Man

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect: *What reminds you each day that Jesus is with you and wants to be with you?*

Warm-Up

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you were blind to something right in front of you?
2. From a heart level, has there ever been a time in which you were blind to who Jesus is?

Read John 9:1-5

3. What do the disciples ask Jesus when they first see the blind man? Why do you think they ask this?
4. In what way are the disciples connecting sin and suffering? Do we ever do that today? How can it nurture self-righteousness and a lack of compassion?
5. Are sin and suffering connected? Why does Jesus (in effect) caution connecting them too quickly?
6. How do the eastern ideas of *karma* and *reincarnation* connect suffering with personal fault? How is Christianity radically distinct to this?
7. How does Jesus answer the question? What does he mean by this?
8. What does it mean when Jesus refers to himself as *the light of the world*? How is this good news?

Read John 9:6-12

9. Throughout this chapter, how many times does John remind us that the man was blind *from birth*?
10. Why is this such an important point to reiterate? How shared was the knowledge about the man?
11. Who heals the man? How does Jesus heal the man? What would this have been like to witness?
12. As Jesus heals the blind man, how does this point to the gravity of his identity?
13. What steps did the blind man take in recognising Jesus? What does it mean to worship Jesus?

Read John 9:30-41

14. How do the Pharisees respond to the healing of the man? How many people do they question?
15. Why—in the face of so much evidence—do you think the Pharisees still refuse to believe?
16. How is spiritual blindness such a precarious situation? Are you ever in danger of this?
17. How is being *blind to our blindness* an even more dangerous situation? Have you ever seen this?
18. What do you think causes spiritual blindness? What helps us to see clearly?
19. What is the greatest healing that occurs in this chapter? In what way does every person start blind?
20. What has helped you to see who Jesus is clearly? How does God continue to do that with you?

Apply *The blind man moves from knowing very little about Jesus to worshipping him. What step might help you grow in seeing and trusting Jesus more clearly this week?*

Pray *Gracious Father, thank you that you revealed your glory to us through your Son. Please give us eyes to see and hearts ready to believe. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

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On Your Front Line this Week

Do you spend much time planning how to live purposefully in God's creation? Get practical tips with Jo Knight at the Equipping the Saints Conference (Saturday March 21).

For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* "A Blind Man" by Glenn Nesbitt:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/a-blind-man/#sermons>
- *Listen (sermon):* "The Man Born Blind" by Tim Keller:
<https://gospelinlife.com/sermon/the-man-born-blind/>
- *Watch (video):* "Persecution is not the end of the story" by Farshid Fathi and Sara Akhavan:
<https://lausanne.org/video/persecution-is-not-the-end-of-the-story>

Series Resources

- *Read:* "John: An Expository Commentary" by R C Sproul.
- *Read:* "The Gospel According to John" by Don Carson.
- *Read:* "The Message of John" by Bruce Milne. 
- *Read:* "The Gospel According to John" by Leon Morris.
- *Read:* "John for Everyone: Part 1" by Tom Wright. 
- *Read:* "Can We Trust the Gospels?" by Peter Williams. 
- *Read:* "Signs of the Messiah: An Introduction to John's Gospel" by Andreas Köstenberger
- *Watch:* "John" by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-john/>
- *Previous Series* from St Bart's (including Children's Resources):
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/jesus-is>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/i-am>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/truth-glory>

 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)

Week 7/12 “Healing the Man Born Blind”

by the Rev'd Adam Lowe (15/03/2026)

날 때부터 맹인 된 사람을 치유하심 | Rään eë dhiëth kē cīi Cōör cōk Dēem |
耶穌医治生来失明的人 | பிறவி குருடனை குணமாக்குதல்

Bible Passage: John 9:1-41

*Gracious Father, thank you that you revealed your glory to us through your Son.
Please give us eyes to see and hearts ready to believe. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Whenever I go to the Supermarket one of my primary goals is to be in—and—out—of—there *as soon as possible*. I have a list. The list is in order. And I *usually* know the precise location of every item.

I always find it a bit disorientating when I go to a different store and everything is in a slightly different place. But what truly throws me is when I have to go searching for something that I don't usually buy. In fact, I can just about guarantee that when Bettrys gives me extra items to pick up, there's almost always one thing that I have never bought before. I go to the aisle where I think it will be. I scan the shelves from left to right, up and down, furiously looking to locate this elusive product. And almost each and every time, I reach a point where I'm hopelessly staring at the shelf in defeat, thinking: I know it *must be here*. AND — *to make matters worse, I know that as soon as I ask for help, they're going to casually pick it out from the precise spot I have been looking at.*

Occasionally, I'm vindicated that the item is not where it ought to be or is out of stock.

But more-often-than-not, I'm simply blind to what is right before my very eyes. /

- **There's nothing** wrong with my eyes. *I can't blame them.*
But there is something wrong with my sight. /
- We can have perfect vision yet still be blind. *Have you experienced that?*
- *Not just shopping. Not just when you're trying to find a missing puzzle piece that is staring at you. But we can be blind to our situation. We can be blind to someone else's perspective.*
- Whilst our physical sight can lack in all sorts of ways, Jesus warns that there is a far more serious condition, which relates to how we see and respond to him.

- As frustrating as it is for me not being able to locate an item at the supermarket. There is a type of blindness that is far more precarious.
- Our spiritual SIGHT should be of the utmost concern.

As we've been tracking through the Gospel of John, the miracles are racking up.

- The signs are there to help us to see the glory of Jesus *in order that we would believe in him.*
- But that's not the only effect they're having. /
- For some, yes: *the signs DO open their eyes: they see who Jesus is AND believe in him.* But: For others: *the signs reveal their blindness, harden their hearts, & grow their resolve to reject him.*
- *They are the responses we see here in chapter 9.*

The *actual* incident of the healing of the man born blind is only about six verses! But the response and interrogation to that event consumes the rest of the chapter.

- So we've got a bit of territory to cover!
- But as we do, we see three things about Jesus:

Jesus is the Light of the World;
Jesus Gives Sight to the Blind; and
Jesus Exposes the Spiritually Blind.

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD | VERSES 1-5

예수님은 세상의 빛 | Yēcu ēē V̄ēr dē P̄īnyhōm | 耶穌是世界的光 | இயேசுவே உலகத்தின் வெளிச்சம்

First, we see that **Jesus is the Light of the World.** Chapter 9, verse 1....

¹ As [Jesus] 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 works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works 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.*”

It's fascinating—*perhaps even a little peculiar to us*—that as the disciples and Jesus walk along, that their natural inclination, their first response when encountering this man born blind, *is to ask a theological question: who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*

- Considering that this man was *BORN blind*, it's initially hard to appreciate *how the disciples thought that the man's sin could have caused his blindness.*
- *Maybe they were road-testing some of the latest theological ideas bouncing around at the time.*
- Like that the consequence for this man's future sin had been brought forward... Or — *as some rabbis taught* — that it was possible to sin even in the womb. *Maybe that was it.*
- *We don't know what they were thinking.* But, big picture: *they're wrestling with the problem of suffering. And their gut response is to make a connection between this man's suffering and his sin.*
- We might think that sounds a bit insensitive, or even primitive.

- But actually that's the position of almost every other religion aside from Christianity.
The idea of karma: that they must have done something bad. They got what they deserve.
Or the idea of reincarnation: well, they must have been really bad in a previous life, so that's why they're in the situation that THEY find *themselves in*. It's their own fault. //
- But you know, I suspect we're not immune from that way of thinking.
Those ideas can kind of weave their way into our own narratives.
When things are going well for us: we can find ourselves feeling self-righteous, that we deserve it.
When we are not getting everything we want then we might just need to morally perform better.
And when things are going poorly for others: we can feel excused from any compassion.
Even looking down on the other. /
- But almost as soon as the disciples try to make the connection between the man's own sin and his suffering, Jesus closes the door on that way of thinking. /
- That's not to say that *our* sin can't hurt other people and ourselves. *Of course it can.*
It's of course also not dismissing that a larger cosmic scale, that sin is the root cause of all the brokenness we see and we experience.
- But Jesus is warning the disciples, and of course us:
not to draw a straight line—too quickly—*between an individual's sin and their suffering.*
- Not only is that potentially a *misattribution*,
but we might be missing the bigger picture.

Who sinned? What does Jesus say? *Neither this man NOR his parents.*
But this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

- This doesn't mean that God manufactures problems in order to swoop in and be the hero.
- It means we *can* have hope:
That God *can* use suffering for good.
That even amidst the context of our brokenness God's goodness is revealed.
And that our ultimate restoration and redemption is found in him. /
- But it also means that we need to see what this all tells us about Jesus.
- I love how Tom Wright puts it:

The chaos and misery of this present world is, it seems,
the raw material out of which the loving, wise, and just God is making his new creation.

- The light of the world, the one who spoke the very light into existence,
didn't just enter into the darkness of our world and our lives,
but he has come to take all of that darkness onto himself that we might be freed.
- That's what Jesus is pointing to when he says:
the night is coming.
- *He's talking about the cross.*

In recent weeks with the war in Iran raging on, I've been reflecting on some of the stories that I heard from some remarkable Iranian Christians when I was at the Lausanne Conference in Korea at the end of 2024. As I heard something of their of perseverance and relentless pursuit to serve God amidst serious persecution and suffering, what struck me was that the primary focus of their prayer was not to escape the difficulties — even though we can and should pray that — but that:

that their work of proclamation would go on unhindered; and
the Lord would be revealed to those who do not yet believe.

They said that they could serve in and amidst the mess, because they knew that because of Jesus:
God's victory is assured and that persecution — suffering — was not the end of the story.

But of course the darkness of this world isn't just something far removed from us.

The shadows fall much closer to home.

The darkness is all around us.

We can even feel it on the *inside of us*.

- That's why we need to hear, be reminded, proclaim, and point to the greatest news of all:
from the very opening of John: The light has come — and the darkness will not overcome it. /
- As the man comes to see — that's what we can begin to glimpse!
- *Jesus' light gives us vision to see.*

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND | VERSES 6-12

예수께서 맹인을 보게하심 | Yēcu ēē Rää cū Cōr cōk Yin | 耶穌使盲人重見光明 | இயேசு குருடனை காணச்செய்கிறார்

Jesus gives sight to the blind. *Verse 6...*

⁶ After saying 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.

John wants us to be left without a doubt that this man was *really blind from birth*.

- Verse 1: *Jesus* saw a man blind from birth.
Verse 2: the *disciples* knew the man was born blind.
Verse 8: the *man's neighbours* and *acquaintances* are shocked that he can see.
Verse 20: the man's *parents* attest that their son was born this way.
Verse 32: and *the man himself* confirms it directly to the Pharisees.
- The community knows this man.
They can't deny what has happened.
Yet nobody has ever heard of something like this before.
- Everybody knows just how significant this is.
Do you know what this must mean? *About who Jesus is?*

Just as John wants us to be left without a doubt that the man was born blind, he also wants us to be left without a doubt that the man was healed by Jesus.

- John tells us that over-and-over again, (up to eight times depending on how you count it): not only WHO did it, but *how HE DID IT*.
- Jesus *MADE mud with his saliva*, Jesus *PUT the mud on the man's eyes*, and Jesus *SENT the man to the pool of Siloam to wash*.
- Just think about this: The man still has not yet seen Jesus! He barely knows who the man putting mud on his eyes is.
- But he went and washed and came home seeing: I went and washed and came home seeing. / I was blind but now I see! /
- Can you imagine that? Can you imagine witnessing that? There wasn't just witnesses who knew him before and after, but there must have been people who helped the blind man with mud on his eyes, navigate through the streets and the stairs to make it to the pool.
- They would have been watching this before their very eyes. They would have been able to see the man's reaction when he opened his eyes.
- Imagine as the mud comes away, what the expression on his face must have been like.

- People must have been astounded.
- As they see the blind gain his sight, the question which dawns is not: *How did Jesus do this? But do you know what this MUST mean?*

Is Jesus the Messiah?

- Opening the eyes of the blind, was one of the key expectations for God's coming King.
- The reason why everyone wants to know *who did this*, *was not just because Jesus did it on the Sabbath*, *but because they know the implication of who this is!*
- It's why the blind man's parents are cagey when interrogated by the Pharisees. *They know WHAT the Pharisees do to those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah. //*
- It is absolutely wonderful that the man could see, but it's even greater that he comes to see *who Jesus is*. And the amazing news is that God still loves opening the eyes of the blind today, *so that we might see the beauty and truth of Jesus is, and believe in him. //*

[There's a number of people right now preparing for baptism and one of the common threads of their stories is that it's like a light has been switched on. Formerly they were blind to who Jesus is. Dismissing him. Misunderstanding him. But with a clarity of sight, their hearts were convicted. Incredibly, the light doesn't just come on, but over a lifetime of following Jesus we can come to see him with a growing vision.]

JESUS EXPOSES THE SPIRITUALLY BLIND | VERSES 35-41

예수께서 영적으로 눈 먼자들을 드러나게 하심 | Yēcu ēē Jāām nē Cōōr dē Wēi |
耶穌揭示屬灵盲人的真相 | இயேசு ஆன்மிக குருட்டாட்டத்தை வெளிப்படுத்த துகிறார்

Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus gives sight to the blind.

And finally, **Jesus exposes the spiritually blind.** Verse 38...

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.”

When the Pharisees first hear about the healing of the blind man *they are right to be sceptical.*

- It’s not everyday that a man born blind is healed.
Not only is it an extraordinary claim, *but it has extraordinary implications.*
- We *shouldn’t* believe everything! Else we might believe anything!
- So the Pharisees are divided. Who is this Jesus? Is he good or is he bad? *Is he the Messiah?* /
It’s almost like they’re drawing up two columns of: for and against Jesus.
In Column A: *This man can’t be from God, because he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.*
In Column B: But how can a sinner perform such signs?
- If you’re not sure what you think about Jesus, do you have a list like that?

- The Pharisees think that if they can disprove the miracle, *then everything would be resolved.*
- But the problem is, that as they hear the testimony of witness-after-witness, as the compelling evidence mounts up, *it exposes that the problem is not a lack of evidence, but that their hearts can’t bear to accept the reality to which everything points.*

Their refusal to believe, and their compulsion to reject Jesus, *reveals a much deeper problem.*

- It’s a problem of the heart.
- It’s not only that they are blind to what is before them, but actually they are blind to their blindness!
- It’s one thing to realise that something is wrong with your vision so you go to the doctor. But if you are blind to being blind then you are in a world of danger.

Some years ago, I remember George Savvides—the former CEO of Medibank Private and Chair of World Vision—sharing that a friend who was a heart surgeon said: that he can fix people’s hearts but he can’t change them. He can do the surgery, they can walk out well, but unless they want to change their lifestyles then they will continue to be in a world of trouble.

- The Pharisees *thought they knew best.*
They thought they were the ones with spiritual sight but it turns out they are blind.
And the blind man who they cast out is the one in fact who can see clearly.
- That’s what Jesus is pointing out to them when he says:

- *For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.*
- *What's worse than not being able to see, is not knowing that you can't BUT thinking that you can.*
- Every single one of us starts out blind to who Jesus is.
But the openness of your heart will dictate your potential to see him and so respond.
- The spirit wants you to be able to see Jesus clearly.
- Worship anything else then it will keep causing you to be blind.
Worship Jesus and you will find the only source of forgiveness and life. //

I wonder if you noticed that:

whilst the blind man was healed as soon as he washed that mud away,
it took some time for him to gain spiritual sight about Jesus.

- He starts by referring to Jesus as *"the man they call Jesus"*.
Afterwards he says that Jesus is a prophet.
Later on he says that Jesus is from God.
And finally, when he sees Jesus for the very first time,
he calls him Lord and worships him.
- I love that when the Pharisees call him back for questioning again,
he asks them: do you want to become disciples, too?

- He puts his life on the line and his reputation at risk.
Because the reality of who Jesus is has shone a light into his life.
- He's vision has been healed, but when he comes to worship Jesus:
he's seeing clearly for the very first time.

Some years ago now, one of our precious sisters in Christ, Margaret Cope, went home to the Lord at an advanced age. Margaret was born blind yet she had a clarity of Jesus like almost no one else I have ever known. She would love to sing about Jesus. She would constantly be recalling the Good News of Jesus. And often, where her conversation about Jesus would end, her prayer would begin. When I visited Margaret, she'd often be clutching a wooden cross at her side. She wanted to continually be reminded about the Lord to whom she clinged. She'd often remind me: Adam, you know I'm not worshipping this wooden cross. But I do worship the one to whom it points.

She'd say: I thank God that I was born blind, because HIS FACE is the first one I'll see.
She was blind — yet she had a clarity of sight like no one else.

- Do you want vision like that?
- I find it remarkable that Jesus *saw, came to, and healed the blind man,*
LONG BEFORE he would set his eyes on Jesus. That happens much later on.
- But actually, that's the way it always is!
- We all start blind in a way. But that hasn't stopped Jesus.
Jesus has seen us, come to us, and died for us *long before we turn our eyes to him.*
- *We can all be sure of the welcome we receive when we set our eyes on Jesus and worship him.*