

“Witnesses to the Light”

July 20, 2014

Text: John 9:8-12

As we have seen, the Apostle John contemplated the events of Jesus’ life for 60 long years before he wrote his Gospel.

During those 60 years he must have recognized a number of patterns in Jesus’ ministry, that others hadn’t seen.

* E.g. he realized that Christ’s raising Lazarus from the dead was intended (at least in part) to explain and illustrate what He had just told Lazarus’ sister=>

*“I am the resurrection and the **life**; he who believes in Me will **live** even if he **dies**” (Jn 11:25).*

Jesus’ raising Lazarus was both an explanation and an exclamation mark to that statement.

* John also saw Christ’s healing of the man born blind as an illustration of what Jesus had just said in Jn 9:5=>

*“I am the **Light** of the world.”*

He then brought light into the blind man’s world by healing his eyes.

John’s 60 years of contemplating Jesus’ life/ministry, had taught him to see things on 2 levels=> an historical level, but also a theological/spiritual level that lay behind the historical facts, and explained their significance.

Last Sunday we considered the historical specifics of Jesus’ healing that blind man.

This morning we'll see it as a beautiful illustration/analogy of what takes place when God calls/draws a person to Christ's, saving his soul.

From birth, every such person is just as blind spiritually as the beggar in John 9 was blind physically.

II Cor 4:4=> *“The god of this world [Satan] has **blinded** the **minds** of the unbelieving so that they might not **see the light** of the **gospel** of the **glory** of **Christ**.”*

Being spiritually blind, a sinner can no more see the soul-saving truth about Jesus, than the blind man could see Jesus' face.

Unless Christ focuses His own attention on a spiritually blind person he'll never come to Christ for his salvation.

But Jn 9:1 says that when Jesus “*saw*” the blind man (looked at him, took note of him, focused on him).

He then worked a miracle by which the man received his eyesight.

Jesus does the same thing on a spiritual level today.

Those who are lost in sin have no capacity to recognize Christ as the Savior sent by God, nor to seek/find Him on their own.

Rom 3:11=> *“There is **none** who understands, there is **none** who seeks for God.”*

If God didn't first reach out to spiritually blind sinners, no one would ever become born again.

As Jesus said in John 6=> *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him”* (6:44).

Israel had many blind people living w/i her borders, but Jesus focused on this one man, taking stock of him.

He is still doing that this morning, reading people’s hearts in churches like this, considering what He’ll make of them.

His intentions are full of mercy/grace, as He sets His loving heart on them, to heal the spiritual blindness Satan has inflicted/imposed upon them, & to enlighten them so they can see the light of the gospel of Christ’s glory.

I wonder if there is anyone sitting here today on whom Jesus has set His eye like that—maybe, even you.

The blind beggar prob. placed little value on eyesight, having been blind all his life.

People who lose their eyesight after having once enjoyed it really understand how great a loss they have suffered.

But those who are blind from birth can have little notion of what it is they’re missing.

The person Jesus might be looking for among us would have no experience at all of true spiritual sight/light/life.

He has never really seen/lived, so he is completely ignorant of spiritual life/insight, & is unable to perceive the misery of his own soul’s sightless existence.

He may look at the words on a page of Scripture, and read every one.

But he doesn't really "see" what their saying.

In a sense, you could say he's content w/ his blindness, never having known anything else.

He has yet to feel the delight of Christ's illuminating his heart/soul, giving him spiritual insight.

But the Creator, who said, "*Let there be light,*" knows the glory which awaits this person, if he'll just open his heart to Christ.

Jesus knows the joy that will flood his heart, when what Paul said to the Corinthians, becomes true of him too=>

** *"God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"* (II Cor 4:6).

In today's text, the man whom Jesus healed of lifelong blindness becomes a witness to the Light of Christ.

Those whom Jesus has saved are also to witness to the Light of Christ, & the blind man Jesus healed shows us how=>

- 1) Be who Jesus has saved us to be
- 2) Explain what Jesus has done for us
- 3) Direct people to Jesus.

*** Be Who Jesus Has Saved You to Be**

The blind man whom Jesus had healed wasn't yet born again.

That won't happen until the end of this chapter when Christ asks him, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" (9:35).

The man will answer, "*Lord, I believe,*" Jesus will save his soul, and he will worship his newfound Savior on the spot.

But even in our own text, before the man had become a believer, he was witnessing to the light of Christ by just allowing others to see what Jesus had done in his body, by healing his eyes.

That should encourage us as well, to witness to Christ's light by letting people see what He has done in our souls;

I.e., by simply being the Christians Jesus has saved us to be;

By living out our new identity in Him who has made all things new w/i us (II Cor 5:17).

We see the blind man witnessing to the light of Christ in=>

[John 9:8-9]=> "*Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him [the blind man] as a beggar, were saying, 'Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?' / Others were saying, 'This is he,' still others were saying, 'No, but he is like him.'* He kept saying, '*I am the one.*'"

Jesus had given this man a whole new identity that was so different, his neighbors could hardly recognize him.

They had always known and thought of him, as a beggar.

That was his role w/i the community.

Those who had seen him previously, had constantly gawked at him as a conspicuous public figure and an object of pity.

He was among the poorest of the poor.

Being blind, he had no means of earning a livelihood but to beg.

The man's neighbors—those who lived near to him—were now amazed at the change which had occurred in him.

Some of them simply couldn't believe this was actually the same man they had watched every day, awkwardly making his slow/uncertain way to the place where he always sat/begged—prob. at the Temple gates.

Their whole view of this man had changed.

Now they hardly knew how they should relate to him.

In a similar way, Jesus completely changes the life/character of one who believes in Him.

He becomes a new creature in Christ, w/ a new outlook, new values, new goals, new hopes, new lifestyle, new liberty and new loyalties.

It becomes obvious to those who know him that he is now a new person in Christ Jesus.

Such a profound life-change is nothing the person himself could have brought about.

* As a carnal man, he'd known nothing about spiritual things.

* As a spiritually dead man, he knew nothing about real life
(eternal life).

He could not conceive what spiritual sight/insight was all
about, because he'd been spiritually blind from birth.

If Jesus had never healed the blind man, a tolerably happy beggar
is what he would prob. have remained, the rest of his life.

That was the life—the only life—he was familiar with.

But a person who has become born again could never remain
content in this world's spiritual darkness.

Christ has opened his eyes, & now he sees there's nothing
for him but hopelessness, unless Jesus, the Light of
life, the Light of the world, comes/remains in his life.

He realized that, the moment Jesus opened his spiritual
eyes, even before he'd even believed on Him.

If you're thinking about inviting Christ into your heart, know
this=>

Still today, He is able/willing to do His miracle of mercy by
giving you too the spiritual sight by which to

“see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”

He will make you a new creature in Him.

Then it will be both your duty & your privilege to live out
the blessed changes He has brought about in you.

I.e., to be the child of God He has saved you to be,
and thus to witness to Him as the Light.

* Explain What Jesus Has Done for You

This is the 2nd principle the healed blind man's example

teaches us, about witnessing to the Light of Christ.

It's not technical/theological, so anyone who is truly born again, can do it.

It's just telling others who ask about the reformation they see in us, how Jesus has changed our life.

Or as Peter put it, it's being ready to give an account to everyone who asks about the hope w/i us (I Pet 3:15).

That's what the man did whose blindness Jesus had healed.

[Verses 10-11]=> *“So they were saying to him, ‘How then were your eyes opened?’ / He answered, ‘The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash”; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.’”*

Asked how he had gained his eyesight, the man simply recited the details of what we've already read in verses 6 & 7.

It's a simple/unvarnished narrative of the facts as he knew them.

No opinions—just objective/undeniable facts.

His account of what had happened included 3 basic points=>

- 1) What Jesus did=> made clay, anointed my eyes, and commanded me to *“Go to Siloam and wash.”*
- 2) What I did=> went away and washed.
- 3) What happened to me=> I received my eyesight.

How can we apply this to Jesus' miracle of saving our souls?

That too has 3 parts=>

- 1) Christ opened our spiritual eyes & told us to believe in Him.
- 2) We responded to His command w/ the obedience of faith.
- 3) We received His blessings—spiritual sight & eternal life.

The key Player in all this is Christ, so all the honor belongs to Him.

That's what this man who was healed would have said as he worshiped Jesus at the end of this incident.

That's also what all who truly become saved will tell you.

If you/I are to be saved, Christ must become the brilliant

Light that shines w/i our hearts, flooding our souls and causing us to fix our inward gaze upon Him.

Anyone who feels he must get some share of the glory for himself, will never see Christ's light, nor become saved, until he's ready to give all the honor to Jesus, who alone deserves it.

The man who had been healed of blindness said that Jesus began by spitting on the ground, and mixing His saliva w/ dirt, to form clay.

Modern critics despise Jesus' gospel just as they despise His method of healing the blind man w/ spit/dust.

1st, they say they're both strange/eccentric/foolish.

The worldly-wise dismiss Christ's healing method as a farce/joke.

They also dismiss the notion of salvation through faith in Him—inventing instead a host of alternative methods all of which make salvation a human achievement.

But Scripture says, *“Since in the wisdom of God the world thru its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the [gospel] message preached to save those who believe”*
(I Cor 1:21).

2nd, they object that both Christ's healing methodology & His plan of salvation are offensive, tasteless & humiliating to man.

It turns their delicate stomachs, to think of Him spitting.

But that saliva was the Son of God's saliva.

If He sees fit to spit on the ground or to spit in my face, I will gratefully/humbly receive it as a precious/gracious gift from my beloved Creator/Savior/Master.

Like every true believer I have surrendered my heart/life to His will—whatever that may be.

So if He says I can only receive my soul's salvation from Him as a gracious/undeserved gift that forever puts me in His debt and humbles my pride, & He leaves me no room to glorify myself, I'll praise Him & receive His gift w/ gratitude/love.

I'll be thankful He's willing to offer it on those terms, or on any other terms.

3rd, they object that Jesus' methods are crude/commonplace.

They argue that the healing of a blind man, or the salvation of a soul, should be adorned w/ beauty/dignity/ceremony—not spit/blood/mud.

What these folks really want is a clean/intellectual/antiseptic salvation that doesn't dig too deeply into the corruption of their own hearts.

But the truth is that the wages of sin is death, and neither sin/death leave any room for bloodless niceties.

Solving man's sin-problem was no tea-party.

When a surgeon goes in to cut out a cancer, he makes you take off your clothes, & then he gets right down to the nitty-gritty of your medical problem.

And when God saves souls thru Jesus' death, He too removes your robes of self-righteousness, & gets right down to the sin issue in your heart.

It's analogous to Jesus' smearing mud on the blind man's eyes, then having him wash it off, discovering as he did so, that he could now see, for the 1st time.

Jesus' command to the blind man also teaches us something about what sort of response He expects from those who believe.

1st, it was very specific—“*Go to Siloam and wash.*”

The blind man obeyed Christ's command precisely, and in his obedience found sight for his eyes.

He could have said, "I have an idea, Lord. How 'bout I go & wash in the Jordan River, as Naaman did when he was healed of his leprosy?"

If the blind man had obeyed Christ's command only partially like that, his washing would have been useless.

God's command to us is equally specific— "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved*" (Acts 16:31).

It's not "Believe in Jesus & do 15 good works," nor is it "Believe on Jesus a/w/a a human priest."

It's just, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus*"—period.

2nd, Jesus' command gave the blind man a way to respond to Him with an obedient act of faith=> "*Go and wash.*"

The man didn't argue "No, Lord, You can do better than that. Heal me while I just sit here, as a passive recipient of Your grace."

Or "You could do a really spectacular miracle and bring the pool here to me."

In the same way, although we receive faith from the H.S. by which to believe in Jesus, we embrace & act on that faith, making it our own obedient act of faith.

It's true that the faith which saves is faith apart from works.

But it's equally true that real saving faith does good works.

3rd, Jesus' command to the blind man was extremely simple.

And so is the gospel=> Believe in Jesus, trusting Him and relying/resting upon Him completely;

Accept His atoning work on the cross as the

full/substitutionary payment for your sin; & His imputed righteousness as the means of your gaining acceptance w/ God.

I.e., simply believe in Jesus.

4th, Jesus' command was extremely personal=> "*Go and wash.*"

He used a middle voice verb meaning, "Wash yourself," which is a very personal activity.

Even though there would be an element of inconvenience in this blind man's having to find his way to the pool, he himself had to go—he couldn't send anyone else.

In the same way, if you are to become saved, your faith too must be your own, not a relative's, or anyone else's.

5th, Jesus' command required immediate obedience.

If the blind man had said, "That's an interesting idea, Jesus. "I think I'll pray about it & give it serious thought," every moment he spent thinking/praying would have been another moment of bald-faced disobedience, and even defiance.

If he had argued w/ our Lord, saying, “I make my living as a blind beggar.

“Just let me do so one more day, and then I’ll let You heal me,” he’d have gone to his grave a blind beggar still.

A man had once said to Jesus=> *“Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father,”*
Jesus answered=> *“Follow Me [right now], and allow the dead to bury their own dead”*
(Mt 8:21-22).

In the same way, if you sense the H.S. drawing your heart to Jesus for your salvation, believe in Him right now. Again, the 2nd principle we learn from the blind man’s example about how to witness to Christ’s light, is simply that we are to explain to people what Jesus has done for us, & how He has changed our lives, giving us new hope/peace that we had never known before we believed in Him.

*** Direct People to Jesus**

Although we cannot point to the blind man as an example of this principle, we see it elsewhere in Scripture.

Unlike him, we can say w/ Isa 30:21=> *“This is the way, walk in it.”*

* On a physical level, the man in our text couldn’t have directed people to Jesus, because He didn’t know where He was, and he’d never seen His face.

When he first received his sight, he had walked away from his Healer, in obedience to His command to go/wash in the pool.

* On a spiritual level, he couldn't have directed others to Christ either because he hadn't yet come into a saving relationship w/ Him, and he won't, for another 26 verses.

The unsaved may know & even be able to convey to you, the facts of the gospel, but they can never explain them to you from personal experience.

[Verse 12]=> *"They said to him, 'Where is He?' He said, 'I do not know.'"*

Apparently, the man Christ had healed went home after washing in the Pool of Siloam, and gaining his sight; and he still hadn't seen Jesus yet.

The word "*neighbors*" back in verse 8 referred to people who lived near to him.

These "neighbors" were the ones who asked him where the Healer was, who had given him his sight.

They prob. just wanted to meet the Man who'd performed such a wonderful/astonishing miracle, on one for whom they had no hope that he'd ever be able to see.

But the healed man himself didn't know where Jesus was now.

Unlike the man born blind, we do know where Jesus has gone, ever since He ascended to the right hand of God; And we can tell others how to find Him.

- * We, by our very lives, & the change He has brought to them, can tell them (as John the Baptist did)=> “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (Jn 1:29).

I.e. we can bear witness to the Light of Christ by simply living the kind of lives He has regenerated/recreated us to live;

- * By working out our salvation with fear/trembling (Phil 2:12).

- * By fleeing from the wicked things of this world, pursuing instead righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness (I Tim 6:11).

- * We can also explain to them in very personal terms exactly what Jesus has done for us.

- * And we can tell them how to form a saving relationship w/ Him, by faith in His atoning death for sin.

We can show them the road to heaven—the one Jesus

Himself described in the Sermon on the Mount, the one entered through a gate that is narrow/small.

It’s the narrow gate that’s so tight, no one can pass through it & take with him any of his own self-righteousness intact—or his good works in tow.

It’s a gate that is entered with contrition for sin, and repentance for one’s deeds of darkness.

We receive these humble attitudes when Christ opens
our eyes spiritually, so that we see our sin for
what it is.

Although they are necessary attitudes they're not
burdensome.

In fact, they are unburdening, as we drop the sins from our
past, & the heavy weight of their guilt we've carried
around, in order to take on Christ's burden, which is
light, and His yoke, which is easy (Mt 11:30).

As we place our faith/trust in Jesus, He forgives our
sin, and takes away the burden of our guilt.

But equally important, we can assure the unsaved that,

“Jesus is looking upon you at this very moment.”

He is considering your case, reading your heart & your desires.

Are you praying for Him to save you?—He's listening.

He can remove the blindness from your heart, enable you to
see His glory, & flood your soul w/ His eternal
light/life.

He can take your life out of the darkness, & take the
darkness out of your soul.

Just cry to Him, “Jesus, give sight to the eyes of my heart,
forgive my sin, and enable me to see Your light!”

And as the Apostle Peter said, He will call you “*out of
darkness into His marvelous light*” (I Pet 2:9).

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July 20, 2014

TeChristt: John 9:8-12

1. Last Sunday we considered the historical specifics of Jesus’ healing a blind man; this morning we will see it as a beautiful illustration of what takes place when God calls and draws a person to Christ [14 saving] his soul.

Jn 11:25; II Cor 4:4; Jn 9:1; Rom 3:11; Jn 6:44

2. Jesus focused on this one man, taking stock of him; He is still doing that this morning reading people’s [14 hearts] in churches like this.

Gen 1:3; II Cor 4:6

Those whom Jesus has saved are to witness to the Light of Christ; the blind man Jesus healed shows us how...

*** Be Who Jesus Has Saved You to Be**

Jn 9:35

3. Even before the man had become a believer, he was witnessing to the light of Christ by allowing others to see what Jesus had done in his body by [18 healing] his eyes.

II Cor 5:17

[John 9:8-9]

4. Jesus had given this man a whole new identity that was so different his neighbors could hardly [20 recognize] him.

5. In a similar way Jesus completely changes the life and character of one who [18 believes] in Him.

*** EChristplain What Jesus Has Done for You**

6. The healed blind man’s eChristample teaches us about witnessing to the Light of Christ; it is just telling others how Jesus has [16 changed] our life.

I Pet 3:15

[Verses 10-11]

7. The key Player in all this is Christ, so all the [12 honor] belongs to Him.

Modern critics despise Jesus' gospel just as they despise His method of healing the blind man...

*8. They say they are both [16 strange], eccentric, and foolish.

I Cor 1:21

*9. They object that both Christ's healing and His salvation are offensive, [20 tasteless], and humiliating to man.

*10. They object that Jesus' methods are [12 crude] and commonplace.

Jesus' command to the blind man also teaches us what sort of response He expects from those who believe...

*11. It was very [18 specific].

Acts 16:31

*12. Jesus' command gave the blind man a way to respond to Him with an obedient act of [12 faith].

*13. Jesus' command was extremely [14 simple].

*14. Jesus' command was extremely [18 personal].

*15. Jesus' command required [20 immediate] obedience.

Mt 8:21-22

*** Direct People to Jesus**

Isa 30:21

[Verse 12]

16. Unlike the man born blind, we do know where Jesus has gone, and we can tell others [8 how] to find Him.

Jn 1:29; Phil 2:12; I Tim 6:11; Mt 11:30

17. Equally important, we can assure the unsaved that, "Jesus is looking upon you at this very moment, reading your [12 heart] and your desires."

I Pet 2:9