



# THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

APRIL 9 - MAY 24

## (4) "The Man Born Blind"

### HIGHLIGHT: *John 9:1-41 NLT*

H

*Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.*

**1** As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. **2** "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

**3** "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. **4** We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. **5** But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

**6** Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. **7** He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

**8** His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" **9** Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"  
But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

**10** They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?" **11** He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!" **12** "Where is he now?" they asked. "I don't know," he replied.

**13** Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, **14** because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. **15** The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!"

**16** Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

**17** Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?" The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet."

**18** The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. **19** They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

**20** His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, **21** but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." **22** His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. **23** That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

**24** So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

**25** "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

**26** "But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?"

**27** "Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

**28** Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! **29** We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

**30** "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? **31** We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. **32** Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. **33** If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

**34** "You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.

**35** When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

**36** The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

**37** "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

**38** "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

39 Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."

40 Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?"

41 "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."

## EXPLAIN

E

*The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.*

John 9 happened on a Sabbath day sometime after the Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus' opposition was white-hot (see John 8:59). It could have been a few days or even weeks after His escape that He returned to Jerusalem knowing that those who were most willing to "cancel the word of God in order to hand down their own tradition" (Mark 7:13) would be watching every move He made and listening with critical ears to every word He spoke. Jesus writes His own death warrant in this chapter.

The passage breaks naturally into three sections: (1) The Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1-12); (2) The Pharisees' Investigation (9:13-34); (3) The Deeper Healing (9:35-41).

### The Healing

**vv.1-5** While many of us have conditioned ourselves to *not* see the pain and suffering that surrounds us, Jesus never did. The **man blind from birth** just blended into the landscape that the people of Jerusalem saw day-in-and-day-out. But Jesus had a quick eye. Maybe he stopped—and that got the attention of the **disciples**. Still they didn't see the tragedy of this man's life—they saw a theological problem needing an answer. Where does the blame lie? **Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins that this man was born blind?** Jesus quickly cut off all speculation: "You are all wrong. **This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.**" It is so easy to start going down rabbit trails that lead nowhere except brambles and thorns. That is a dead end for the church because we rob God of the opportunity to show Himself and receive praise. So we need to be about the *Father's business* now!—**before the night comes and no one can work.**

**vv.6-7** In the ancient world curative powers were attributed to **saliva** for diseases of the eyes, but not for blindness. In faith that was more than "I believe," the man responded to Jesus by **going and washing**. The result: he **came back seeing**. Disobedience will not do that!

**vv.8-12** In the ancient world there was hardly anything a **blind** man could do but **sit and beg**. Two groups of people are introduced here: the blind man's **neighbors**—those who lived near him, and **others who knew him as a blind beggar**. They could hardly believe what they were seeing. **Is this the man we are used to seeing?** The answers were varied. **But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"**

He answered all their questions as best as he could with his limited knowledge. But when he couldn't satisfactorily answer, **"Where is [this Jesus] now?"** they took him to the Pharisees.

### Pharisees' Investigation

**vv.13-17** There first investigation was with **the man who had been blind because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him.** Jesus had broken the Sabbath law in two ways: He administered a cure when life was not endangered, and He **made the mud** which could be called kneading (a form of work). So some of the Pharisees concluded that **this man Jesus is not from God.** It was a **divided** house. **Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?"** When the blind man was asked his **opinion about the man who healed him** we see that his understanding of the situation was growing. The man they call Jesus (v.11) he now considers **a prophet.** His faith grows as he thinks about the miracle he had experienced. He would not be intimidated by the hostility of the Pharisees.

**vv.18-23** The next phase of the investigation involved the blind man's **parents** who told the Pharisees that the man in question was **their son and had been born blind.** But they professed ignorance about **how he could see or who healed him.** At the threat of being **expelled from the synagogue** ("One thus put out of the synagogue was as one dead; a burial ceremony was used"—J. W. Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels*), they decided to leave the matter in the hands of their son. **"He is old enough to speak for himself."**

**vv.24-34** The Pharisees, still puzzled as over the manner and the cause of the blind man's cure, **called the man back for a second time.** They try to browbeat him by saying, **"We know this man Jesus is a sinner."** The sentence, **God should get the glory for this,** was a formula for a full confession. They were putting him under an oath to tell the truth—implying that he had not been completely honest. He did not back down. He did not try to answer whether Jesus is a sinner or not, but rested his case on, **"I know this: I was blind, and now I can see! If this man were not from God, He couldn't have done it."** Totally frustrated that they had been out-argued and could not tear the man's conviction from him, **they threw him out of the synagogue.** Whether Martin Luther said it or not when at the Diet of Worms he refused to recant his beliefs, followers of Jesus should be willing to say it: "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen."

**vv.35-41** When the doors of the synagogue closed against the man born blind, the doors of the Kingdom of God opened to him. **Jesus found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"** Jesus is always searching for us. He found the man when he was blind; he finds him again when he is as *dead* (excommunicated from the synagogue). No one is beyond the searching eyes of Jesus. God is "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (1 Peter 3:9). Imagine what it was like to see the One who gave him the ability to see. **And he worshiped Jesus.** The worst thing in the world is to have so much pride that I cannot admit that I am blind. **You remain guilty because you claim you can see.** "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

**A****APPLY**

*Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.*

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. Right away, Jesus makes clear that not *all* suffering is a result of some specific sin. With the man born blind, Jesus says, "'It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins,' Jesus answered. 'This happened so the power of God could be seen in him'" (John 9:3). Why is it important that we get this right?
3. We should pause at the fact that Jesus "saw" the blind man. How often do we choose to ignore those with needs, even when we directly walk near them? We certainly can't heal every aspect of creation, like Jesus can, but what can we learn from Jesus here?
4. Discuss the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus. What stands out to you about their interactions with the man who was healed?
5. The text crescendos in verses 35-41. Jesus is not just a prophet or a healer, he is "the Son of Man"—he not only has authority to heal physically, but spiritually. Jesus alone can make us right with God. What is the significance of Jesus being the "Son of Man"?

**R****RESPOND**

*The purpose of this section is to take action with the truths you're learning. Answer honestly. Find someone who will hold you accountable to living out your response to Scripture.*

1. The blind manhood been healed by Jesus. This healing drove him to praise Jesus for his power to heal and ultimately surrender his life to following Jesus. What "blindness" has Jesus healed you from?  
How can you praise God for his healing in your life? How are you following Jesus now that you've been healed?
2. The text crescendos in verses 35-41. Jesus is not just a prophet or a healer, he is "the Son of Man"—he not only has authority to heal physically, but spiritually. Jesus alone can make us right with God. What is the significance of Jesus being the "Son of Man" for you personally?  
  
How can you share this significance with others you know? Who do you know who needs to hear of this significance?