

March 2, 2014

# Lesson 21: Light of the World



## John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used

to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

## Spiritual Blindness

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.'



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John 9:1-41

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**The Big Story Truth:** Real sight is the gift of being able to see God revealed in Jesus. True blindness, the real cause of sin, is refusing to see God's work in Jesus.

**About This Scripture Passage:** This passage continues to show the divide between Jesus and the religious leaders. The religious leaders are originally upset because Jesus healed the blind man on the Sabbath. Kneading was an activity specifically prohibited on the day of rest. When Jesus made the mud to put on the man's eyes, he kneaded it. This was the evidence the religious leaders needed to declare that he was a sinner. Their definition of sin was keeping all the laws that had been given to Moses in the Old Testament. They also discounted the blind man's testimony on the basis that he too was a sinner. (At that time sickness and suffering were commonly thought to be the result of a person or their parents' sin in not following all the laws correctly.)

This story, though, shows how Jesus redefines sin. For John, sin isn't about keeping the law. Sin is about refusing the Light of the World when he stands in front of you. Everything about this healing gave both the man and the religious leaders the opportunity to see that God was working in a new way... the man's saw both physically and spiritually. His sight, though, exposes the true spiritual blindness of the religious leaders.

**Making the Connection:** Kids are often in a position of being taught. Their parents give directions; their teachers give instructions. They are often on the receiving end. Just like the man in this story, they are subject to many authorities. But in this story, the authorities get it wrong. The teachers/authorities belittle the man and accuse him. The man's parents are too afraid to speak the truth. The young man, however, is bold and speaks the truth. He is the one who "gets" who Jesus really is. He is the one who speaks up. And after it gets him in trouble, he is the one that Jesus goes looking for. When it comes to faith, adults and teachers don't always have the advantage over children. Faith, trust in Jesus, can be found at any age. This story should be one that empowers our kids to testify boldly about who Jesus is... knowing that God loves them and has given them the voice that may just be the one to help give sight to the world!

**Where in the World Are We?** Jesus told the man to go and to wash in the Pool of Siloam. (We've heard about this pool before, haven't we!)

## For Your Reflection:

*What examples have you seen of great faith in a child?*

*What can you learn this week from the children in your life about who Jesus is and what a relationship with God should be?*



