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# JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

## *BENEFITS FROM BLINDNESS*

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A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter  
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on November 26, 2017

### INTRODUCTION

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Most people usually do not enjoy talking about or even admitting their weaknesses. "Ask me about what I can do, not what I cannot." However, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is only good news to those who realize that they are helplessly weak. The beauty of the Gospel is also the offense of it. In this message, we shall observe Jesus healing a man born blind, and we shall consider the intended metaphor for spiritual eyes. May God grant us grace to admit our blindness, and may He give us new eyes to see.

### **JOHN 9:1-41 (ESV)**

1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "*Rabbi, **who sinned**, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*"

3 Jesus answered, "*It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, **but that the works of God might be displayed in him.** 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*"

6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "*Go, wash in the pool of Siloam*" (which means Sent).

**So he went and washed and came back seeing.** 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "*Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?*"

9 Some said, "*It is he.*" Others said, "*No, but he is like him.*" **He kept saying, "I am the man."**

10 So they said to him, "*Then **how** were your eyes opened?*"

11 He answered, "***The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight.***"

12 They said to him, "*Where is he?*" He said, "*I do not know.*" 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

14 Now **it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.** 15 So the Pharisees **again asked him how** he had received his sight. And he said to them, "***He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.***"

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "***This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.***" But others said, "*How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?*" And there was a division among them.

17 So they said again to the blind man, "*What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?*" He said, "***He is a prophet.***"

18 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 19 and asked them, "*Is this your son, who you say was born blind? **How** then does he now see?*"

20 His parents answered, "*We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. **21 But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.***" 22 (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)

23 Therefore his parents said, "***He is of age; ask him.***"

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "***Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.***"

25 He answered, "*Whether he is a sinner I do not know. **One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.***"

26 They said to him, "*What did he do to you? **How did he open your eyes?***"

27 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?***"

28 And they reviled him, saying, "***You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.*** 29 *We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.*"

30 The man answered, "*Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet **he opened my eyes...***"

31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 **If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.**

34 They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And **they cast him out.**

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and **having found him** he said, “**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**” 36 He answered, “**And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?**”

37 Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and **it is he who is speaking to you.**”

38 He said, “**Lord, I believe,**” and he worshiped him.

39 Jesus said, “**For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.**”

40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “*Are we also blind?*”

41 Jesus said to them, “**If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.**”

## THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

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**All humans (including us) are spiritually blind, and only Christ can give us eyes to see.**

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

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- (1) THE THEME OF ‘BLINDNESS’**
- (2) THREE OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TEXT**
- (3) A TRUTH WE MAY LEARN TO BELIEVE**
- (4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?**

## (1) THE THEME OF 'BLINDNESS'

- **The Need for Spiritual Sight**

- Jesus called His disciples by saying, "*Come and see...*" (Jn. 1:39), and Jesus told them, "*You will see heaven opened...*" (Jn. 1:51).
- Jesus told Nicodemus that one cannot "*see the kingdom of God*" unless or until he/she is "*born again*" (Jn. 3:3).
- Further, we are told, "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life,*" but the one who does not believe/obey the Son "*shall not see life*" (Jn. 3:36).
- When the woman at the well believes in Jesus, she calls out to her fellow Samaritans, "*Come, see a man...*" (Jn. 4:29). She wants them to "*see*" Jesus as she does.
- The crowd who ate of Jesus' miraculously multiplied bread wanted Him to repeat the miracle, so they asked Jesus to do a "*sign*" so that they might "*see and believe*" (Jn. 6:30).

- **The reality of Spiritual Blindness**

- John (quoting Isaiah 6:10) said that the reason many disbelieve Jesus is because their eyes are "*blind*" and their hearts are "*hard*" (Jn. 12:40)
- Here in John 9, we are given a metaphorical demonstration...

Summary: **Sinners desperately need to see Jesus for who He is!**

(Segue) **But sinners are not naturally willing to admit their blindness...**

## (2) THREE OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TEXT

### 1. The Blind man is Condemned by Everyone

- Jesus' *disciples* condemn him
  - They asked Jesus, "*Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind*" (v2).

- The **Pharisees** condemn him
  - They exclaim, “**You were born in utter sin...**” (v34).
- The **blind man’s parents** condemn him
  - First, the blind man was a “**beggar**” (v8).
    - If his parents had not condemned him, they would have kept him among the large-family household... Simply, he would not have been a beggar.
  - Second, they condemn the blind man to save themselves (v19-22).
    - They did not want to risk their position in the synagogue, so they lay the entire weight of the situation on their son.
      - “**He is of age,**” they said, “**ask him**” (v21).
- One might say, the **blind man condemns himself**
  - In his first appearance, he openly confesses, “**the man called Jesus** (v11)... **He is a prophet**” (v17).
    - He didn’t know much, but he staked his claim.
  - In his second appearance, he sarcastically instructs the Pharisees, “**Why, this is an amazing thing!**” (v30); “**If this man were not from God, He could do nothing**” (v33).
    - All of this got him the boot from the local synagogue (v34).
      - Those cast out of the synagogue were understood to be under God’s condemnation as well.
- Friends, this blind man was condemned by everyone, except for Jesus!
  - Do we sometimes condemn **people we don’t understand**?
  - Do we sometimes condemn **those who seem further from God** than we imagine ourselves to be?
  - Is anyone in this passage **worthy of God’s grace** in Christ?
  - If not, then why do we **foolishly assess people** according to **worldly wisdom**?
  - Doesn’t Jesus command us to **judge rightly**, and not by **appearances** (Jn. 7:24)?

## 2. The Pharisees' hatred stems (at least in part) from love of Traditions

- Look at verses 13-16 with me:
  - “13 **They** [the blind man’s neighbors] **brought to the Pharisees** the man who had formerly been blind [They wanted a declarative word on the matter... “*what does this mean?*”]. 14 Now it was a **Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud** and opened his eyes [John is warning us about the point of disagreement to come]. 15 So the Pharisees again asked him **how** he had received his sight [They are interested in the “how,” not in the WHO!]. And he said to them, ‘**He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.**’ 16 Some of the Pharisees said, ‘**This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.**’”
    - **The act of kneading** (like what you would do with dough) was something prohibited on the Sabbath in the Mishnah.
      - The **Mishnah** was the oral laws of the Jews, written down around 200 AD.
        - These laws were meant to provide some specific instructions for guarding the Mosaic laws (moral, civil, and ceremonial).
    - **God’s law was fenced by these many traditions**, and the traditions themselves became the “law” against which Jesus was judged as a guilty criminal.
      - Jesus is a sinner because He made mud on the Sabbath (Jn. 9:15-16).
      - Jesus is a sinner because He healed an invalid man on the Sabbath and then told the man to carry his bed mat away (Jn. 5:8, 18).
  - Friends, do we have any **traditions that we have raised to the level of God’s law?**
    - Is there anything that **you’ve learned** about God or Christ or church or Christian-living by simply **observing traditions?**
    - Are there **things you believe** or **things you do** (or don’t do) which have **no clear biblical command or teaching?**

- When you *see or hear others do differently* than you, do you *condemn them*, or do you *allow for differences*?
- Do you feel how *dangerous passionate traditions* can be?

### 3. Blindness is Beneficial

- Let's look again at verses 35-41, and listen to Jesus talk with the blind man.
  - 35 Jesus heard that *they* [the Pharisees] had cast *him* [the blind man] *out* [that is: out of the synagogue, the noted people of God], and *having found him* [Jesus went hunting the man] he said, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" [Now we are talking about spiritual things... belief in the Son of Man!] 36 He answered, "And *who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?*" [essentially, "*I believe/trust you... who do you say I should trust/believe?*"] 37 Jesus said to him, "*You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.*" [reminiscent of Jesus' exchange with the woman at the well... "*I am the Son of Man... and I am speaking to you.*"] 38 He said, "*Lord, I believe,*" and he worshiped him [his response was faith (*I believe*) and submission/repentance (*Lord*)]. 39 Jesus said, "*For judgment I came into this world* [not bringing final judgement (Jn. 3:17), but spiritual judgement (Jn. 3:19)], *that those who do not see may see* [Jesus brings light into a dark world (Jn. 1:9)... He is the gracious and truth-filled glory of God made visible (Jn. 1:14)... those who are born from above or born again see Him and love Him (Jn. 1:12-13, 3:3), *and those who see may become blind* [What?! Jesus came to make some people blind?!]." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "*Are we also blind?*" [i.e. "*Are we blind, in need of sight? Or are we seeing, and becoming blind?*"] 41 Jesus said to them, "*If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.* [Jesus essentially says, "You choose..." ]
    - *Argue* that *you* are *not blind*, and...
      - Be judged as 'blind' by Christ (v39)
      - Remain in your blindness (v39)
      - Remain guilty before God (v41)

- **Admit** that **you** are **blind**, and...
  - Be judged as 'seeing' by Christ (v39)
  - Be healed from your blindness (v39)
  - Be free from your guilt before God (v41)

Summary: There are great benefits, which emerge from our admission to our spiritual blindness.

(Segue) But this rubs hard against our pride and demands our ongoing humility.

### (3) A TRUTH WE MAY LEARN TO BELIEVE

- All humans (including us) are spiritually blind, and only Christ can give us eyes to see.
  - All humans (including us) are spiritually blind...
    - Paul tells us that “*unbelievers*” have “*blinded minds*” that “*keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ*” (2 Cor. 4:4).
    - John tells us that even if someone thinks they are a Christian, but they do not show sincere love for their brothers/sisters in Christ, then they prove themselves to be “*blind*” and in the “*dark*” (1 Jn. 2:11).
    - To the last and worst of seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation, Jesus says, “*I will spit [or vomit] you out of my mouth. For you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,’ not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked*” (Rev. 3:16–17).
      - Friends, do you know that **you are blind without Christ**?
      - Do you know that **you don’t just need directions**? Do you know **you need someone to make you see**?
      - Do you come to the Bible asking, “**How might God help me?**” or “**How might God transform me?**”

- Do you expect that your *participation in church family* will feel more like *a useful flashlight on a dark path* or like someone *opening the curtains to wake you up* in the morning?
- ...and only Christ can give us eyes to see.
  - Paul tells us that the same God who created by divine fiat, “*Let there be light*” (Gen. 1:3) gives blind sinners the “*light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor. 4:6).
  - Jesus’ counsel to the very church cited above from Revelation (*the wretched, naked, and blind church*) is to gain from Him... “*clothes*” to cover “*shame*” and healing for their “*blind eyes*” (Rev. 3:18).
  - Paul tells us elsewhere that “*faith*” (or seeing Christ for who He is) “*comes... through the word of Christ*” (Rom. 10:17).
    - Friends, *have you experienced the light of God* in the face of Christ?
    - Have *your eyes been opened* to the glory of the Savior?
    - Do you *see Christ as most desirable*, most *lovely*, most *precious*, most *satisfying*, most *rewarding*?
    - When you think about *your life right now*, would your closest friend or your spouse say, “*He/She has spiritual eyes to see... he/she recognizes Christ as most glorious!*”?
      - *If not*, then may God give you eyes to see today!
      - *If so*, then let’s consider how we may gain clearer sight.

#### (4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?

- Will you admit your natural blindness to the glory of Christ?
  - Non-Christian, will you humbly admit your weakness and ask Christ for eyes to see Him as He is?
  - Christian, will you humbly admit your weakness as well, and praise God that Christ has opened your eyes?

- **Will you stop living and acting like spiritual sight is natural to you?**
  - Who or what is your biggest influence right now?
  - Do you spend the bulk of your time watching the news or listening to talk radio?
  - Do you often distract yourself with television, movies, music, or sports?
  - Do you think you will gain spiritual wisdom and sight by the simple passage of time?
  
- **Will you look to Christ for new eyes?**
  - Will you make Christ's word a priority in your life?
  - Will you ponder on Christ's word/truth to gain deeper insights?
  - Will you pray for spiritual sight – both for yourself and for others?
  - Will you join with 1 or 2 or 3 other people and regularly talk about Christ's word?
  - Will you trust that Christ will give you eyes to see when you look to Him?

**Major Point:** All humans (including us) are spiritually blind, and only Christ can give us eyes to see.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

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*The Hopelessness of the Stubbornly Blind* by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-51/the-hopelessness-of-the-stubbornly-blind>

*Sight for Those Who See Not* by C.H. Spurgeon

<https://www.monergism.com/sight-those-who-see-not>

*Born Blind for the Glory of God* by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/born-blind-for-the-glory-of-god>