

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 9.1-12



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 9.1-12
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Introduction to *John 9.1-12*

On His way out of town, Jesus left a calling card for the people of Jerusalem, a simple work of grace revealing that He is God, just as He claimed at the Feast of Tabernacle.

The healing of the man born blind presents many important lessons about being a witness for the Lord, both by doing the works of God, and by sharing our experience of those works with others.

This miracle sums up and vindicates Jesus' claims made during the disputation of chapters 7 and 8. He is Who He claimed to be, and He can use even little people like us to stir up big interest in Himself.

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1 Cause and Effect?

Read and meditate on John 9.1, 2.

The disciples knew that many things in the world were not the way they were supposed to be. As they observed the sad plight of this beggar, their minds immediately tried to understand why such a thing should be. Good for them.

¹As Jesus went His way, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. ²And then began His followers to ask Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, such that to him blindness should occur?”

- John 9.1, 2

Reflect

1. The Pool of Siloam is in Jerusalem. Even though the Jews were seeking to destroy Jesus – they’d already sent one posse to arrest Him, and had just tried to stone Him – Jesus took His time departing the city. Wasn’t this a bit risky? Was Jesus being reckless here? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You took risks out of love for those who were lost and suffering. From Your example, I see that I...*
2. Why would the disciples naturally have thought that this sad situation might be a result of someone’s sin? Is that ever the case? Explain. *When I sin, Lord, I expect You to...*
3. Meditate on Genesis 3. How much of God’s creation was affected by the entrance of sin? In what ways? Do we see such consequences in the world yet today? Should we fault the disciples for making the connection between this man’s blindness and someone’s sin? Explain. *Teach me to hate sin, Lord (Ps. 97.10), so that I might...*
4. We may consider sin from three perspectives. Certainly, sin can take the form of an *action*. It can also be a *disposition of the soul* – thoughts, affections, or values. Sin is also a *condition* inherent in the world (cf. Rom. 8.20-22), a cosmic consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve, as we see in Genesis 3. Of which of these were the disciples thinking? On the other hand, given Jesus’ comment in verse 3, which aspect of sin are we seeing in this man’s condition? Explain. Do we see examples of this today? How should such situations lead us to respond? In judgment? *Lord, keep me passing judgment on others. Give me a sympathetic heart, so that...*
5. Kudos to the disciples for being alert and sensitive in this situation. Sure, they got it wrong, but you can see in them a growing sensitivity both to others and the effects of sin. This is a sign that they are growing into Jesus. How can we become more sensitive to and compassionate about the ravages of sin in our world? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“There was a certain philosophy among the ancients that troubles came from sin because they were confident that God was not responsible for any evil. The notion that people suffer as an exercise so

that they might perceive the power of God at last—this was not well known at all because they would rather have God give good rewards to the just then and there and not prolong suffering any longer for the sake of eternal life. Since he was a blind man from birth, it occurred to the disciples to ask. Since no one can sin before his birth, they ventured a guess that the parents were to blame. For they knew that children may suffer in order to bring grief to the parents. But the Lord said that the blindness did not occur because of any sin but for the sake of the glory of God that was about to take place as the power of God would be revealed through his unexpected recovery of sight.”

Apollinaris of Laodicea (310-392 AD)

Sin is never without effects. But we can't or shouldn't always try to assign *blame* to people in whom sin's effects are evident. It may not be their fault. It may be no one's fault. But any time we see the evidence of sin, we have an opportunity to shine the light of grace. Apply this to your Personal Mission Field.

Closing Prayer

The fool has said in his heart,

“*There is no God.*”

They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity;

There is none who does good.

God looks down from heaven upon the children of men,

To see if there are *any* who understand, who seek God.

Every one of them has turned aside;

They have together become corrupt;

There is none who does good,

No, not one.

Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge,

Who eat up my people as they eat bread,

And do not call upon God?

There they are in great fear

Where no fear was,

For God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you;

You have put *them* to shame,

Because God has despised them.

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

When God brings back the captivity of His people,

Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Psalm 53

Psalm 53 (*Leoni: The God of Abraham Praise*)

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God at all!”

Corrupt are they in whole and part, unjust and small.

Not one of them does good; God sees their wicked ways.

None understands the Word of God, or gives Him praise.

Have all these wicked men no knowledge of God's grace?

The Church they hate with passion and seek not God's face.

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Lord, strike their hearts with fear, where fear was not before.
And scatter all who camp so near Your holy door.

The wicked flee in shame; their ways our God rejects.
Renew Your people in Your Name with great effects.
Let great rejoicing sound once we renewed have been,
And let salvation's Word resound from us again!

2 The Work of God

Read and meditate on John 9.3.

Even the saddest, most desperate situation is fraught with potential for the glory of God, and to send a message of hope.

”³*But Jesus said,
“Not him, and not his parents sinned; instead,
this man is blind so that in him the works
of God should be revealed.”*

- John 9.3

Reflect

1. Jesus dismissed the notion that this man’s suffering was due to any *personal* sin. But it was certainly the result of sin. Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, all around us are people suffering because of sin, and not necessarily their own. Give me a heart of compassion to...*
2. Jesus said that the works of God would be manifest *in* this blind man. In what way? How would it be evident that this was a work of God? *You have worked in my life, Lord, in many ways, and I give you thanks for...*
3. In another sense, we could say that the works of God would be manifest *on* this blind man. Explain. *You have redeemed me for good works, Lord, so today, help me to...*
4. Let’s keep the larger scene in mind. Jesus had been called a deceiver. The religious leaders tried to make Him out to be a heretic. Yet He continued to make lofty claims, culminating in His claim to be “I AM.” Jesus was now on His way out of town, but He left a “calling card” for the city of Jerusalem. Why did it seem important to Jesus to do this good work? Can we expect to be effective as witnesses for Christ without good words *and* good works? Explain. *Make me a more consistent witness, Lord. Today, show me...*
5. This blind man was symbolic of the people of Jerusalem who opposed Jesus (cf. Jn. 8.12). Thus, by performing this work, Jesus sent a message of hope to the people who had heard Him in Jerusalem during and after the Feast of Tabernacles. Explain. What are the implications of this for the good works we are called to do? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Here again is another difficulty if [it is true that] it was not possible that the glory of God should be shown without this man’s punishment. Certainly it was not impossible, for it was possible. But it happened so “that [God’s glory] might be made evident even in this man.” One might ask, however, Did he suffer wrong for the glory of God? Tell me what he did wrong. For what if God had never willed to make him at all? But I assert that he even received benefit from his blindness. Because he recovered the sight of the eyes within. What were the Jews profited by their eyes? They incurred the heavier punishment, being blinded even while they saw. And what injury did this man have because

of his blindness? For through his blindness he recovered his sight. As, then, the evils of the present life are not evils, so neither are the good things good. Sin alone is an evil, but blindness is not an evil. And he who had brought this man from not being into being also had power to leave him as he was.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Jesus might have “wiped the dust” of Jerusalem off His feet, and left the people there with the charges and threats of their leaders ringing in their ears. Instead, He left the city with a work of glory and hope. What can we learn from this about being witnesses to this Lord?

Closing Prayer

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
And His greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.
Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.
All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,
And talk of Your power,
To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.

Psalm 145.1-12

Psalm 145.1-12 (*Brother James' Air: The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

I will extol You, God, my King, and ever praise Your Name!
I bless You, Lord, for everything each day, and e'er the same!
Great are You, Lord, my praise I bring; unsearchable Your fame!

To ev'ry generation we Your wondrous works shall tell.
The splendor of Your majesty we contemplate full well.
We speak of all Your mighty deeds and all Your greatness tell!

Then shall we all the glorious fame of Your great goodness sing –

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Your righteousness, Your gracious Name, Your mercy: praise we bring!
Your steadfast love remains the same, mercy our covering.

Your works shall thank You; all Your saints shall bless and praise You, Lord.
Your reign we bless without restraint; Your power fills our words.
Our children we shall educate in all Your splendor, Lord.

3 While It Is Day

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Read and meditate on John 9.4, 5.

Jesus made it clear that following Him requires work. God has prepared works for us, just as He did for Jesus, so that He might be revealed in them, and be glorified by them. As Paul wrote, Christians are supposed to be zealous for good works (Tit. 2.11-14).

⁴“We ought to work the works of Him Who sent Me while we can, while it is day. The night comes, and no man can work then. ⁵And as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

- John 9.4, 5

Reflect

1. Jesus was emphatic that those who associate with Him are expected to work (the Greek has *We* where the NKJV has *I* in verse 4). Given Jesus' comment in verse 3, what should be the purpose of the works we do? Complete this prayer: *Today, Lord, lead me into many good works, with the people right around me, so that...*
2. Recall John 1.5, and meditate on 1 John 2.8. What did Jesus mean by “it is day”? Is it still “day”? Explain. *Let Your light shine in me today, Lord, so that the daylight of salvation may...*
3. Jesus was sent to the world to do works, and He was about to do another of those works that both revealed God and showed Him to be God. Meditate on John 20.21, and Psalm 90.12, 16, 17. How can these passages guide you in preparing for each day? *Lord, show the works I must do, and empower me to do them, and let Your light shine in me in such a way as that...*
4. Jesus said, “night is coming.” Keeping in mind John 1.5 and 1 John 2.8, what “night” must Jesus have had in mind (peek ahead to the quote from Augustine)? Why will no one work when that night finally comes? *Lord, I know you will judge the works of all men, and that even my useless works will come under scrutiny. That being the case...*
5. Jesus' comment in verse 5 appears to have a double meaning, one for the time of Jesus' incarnation, and one for after His return to the Father. From the time Jesus began His ministry, as we have seen, the day has dawned and the light is increasing. How does Jesus remain “in the world” after having departed from it (cf. Jn. 16.5-11)? How does this relate to John 14.12? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“After the resurrection of the living and the dead, when he will say to those placed at his right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom,’ and to those at his left, ‘Depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,’ then shall be the night when no one can work

but only get back what he has previously done. There is a time for working, another for receiving; for the Lord shall render to every one according to his works. While you live, do something if you are to be doing anything at all. For then that appalling night shall come to envelop the wicked it its folds. But even now every unbeliever, when he dies, is received within that night: there is no work to be done there. In that night was the rich man burning and asking a drop of water from the beggar's finger. ... Unhappy man! When you were living, that was the time for working. Now you are already in the night in which no one can work." *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

The true followers of Jesus Christ can be recognized by their works (Matt. 7.20; Jn. 15.16). Paul says God has redeemed and saved us for good works, and that He has ordained from of old which works we should do (Eph. 4.8-10). Where should we look to learn those works? How can believers encourage each other to love and good works (Heb. 10.24)?

Closing Prayer

I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.
I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.
This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*,
And saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.
Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Psalm 34.1-8

Psalm 34.1-9, 3 (*Alleluia [Lowe]: Mighty God, While Angels Bless You*)

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!
My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!
Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

When I sought the Lord, He answered, and from fear delivered me.
Those who look to Him are radiant; shamed their face shall never be.
Magnify the Name of Jesus!
Let us lift His Name in praise!

When I cried to God, He heard me, and from trouble rescued me.
'Round their camp His angel lingers that they may delivered be.
Magnify the Name of Jesus!

Let us lift His Name in praise!

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.

None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e'er confide.

Magnify the Name of Jesus!

Let us lift His Name in praise!

4 Mud and Miracle

Read and meditate on John 9.6, 7.

Among Jesus' many miracles, the healing of the man born blind has some unique and important features, and these combine to instruct us in doing the work of God.

⁶And when
He said these things, He spat upon the ground,
and made some clay, which He then spread around
and on his eyes ⁷And then He said to him,
"Go to the pool called Sent (Siloam). In
it, wash your eyes." And so the blind man went
and washed, and came back seeing.

- John 9.6, 7

Reflect

1. The first unique feature of this healing is that the blind man apparently indicated no awareness of Jesus' presence and, hence, no desire to be healed. Jesus simply came to him in his blindness to work the work of God. Here is a witness to the workings of grace. Explain. What does this suggest to us about doing the works of God? Complete this prayer: *Lord, thank You, that when I was blind, You...*
2. A second unique feature of this healing is that Jesus employed a *healing agent* – the mud which He made from His own spittle. Compare this with the miracles we have previously seen (cf. Jn. 2.1-9; 4.46-53; 5.1-9; 6.1-14; 6.15-21). Since Jesus did not hesitate to use a material agent in the work of God, neither should we. What possibilities for doing the work of God does this open to us? What resources has He entrusted to you for doing good? *Lord, You have entrusted many material blessings into my care. Help me to use them all to...*
3. A third unique feature of this healing is that the blind man had to carry out an act of obedience before his healing was accomplished. How does this instruct us about *participating* in works that reveal God? *Help me always to obey You, Lord, so that...*
4. Finally, the blind man seems to have felt a sense of responsibility in returning to Jesus – not unlike the Samaritan leper whom Jesus healed in Luke 17.11-16. Why do you think this man, now healed of his blindness, "came back" to Jesus? How does this instruct us, who daily benefit from the Lord's work in our lives? *Help me to be more aware of the many ways You do good to me, Lord, and...*
5. Jesus said, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day..." The healing of the man born blind gives us many helpful insights into how we may do just what Jesus said we must. Grace, agency, responsibility, accountability: Put these together into a single sentence explaining how you might be more consistent in working the works of God. Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

"He healed others by a word.... But the Lord bestowed sight on the one who was blind from

birth—not by a word, but by an outward action. He did this neither casually nor simply because this was how it happened. He did it this way in order to show it was the same hand of God here that had also formed man at the beginning. And therefore when his disciples asked him why he had been born blind, whether by his own fault or his parents', Jesus said, 'Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him.' The work of God is, after all, the forming of man. He did this by an outward action, as Scripture says, 'And the Lord took clay from earth, and formed man.' Notice here too how the Lord spit on the earth, and made clay and smeared it on his eyes, showing how the ancient creation was made. He was making clear to those who can understand, that this was the [same] hand of God through which man was formed from clay."

Irenaeus of Lyons (135-202 AD)

As Irenaeus pointed out, Jesus used this healing to back up His claim of being I AM. He did the works of God because He *is* God. And yet He said, "*We* must do the works" of God, presumably, with Him. When we do the works of God, are we *re*creating the world, as Jesus did with the man born blind? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Praise the LORD!

For *it is* good to sing praises to our God;

For it is pleasant, *and* praise is beautiful.

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted

And binds up their wounds.

He counts the number of the stars;

He calls them all by name.

Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power;

His understanding is infinite.

The LORD lifts up the humble;

He casts the wicked down to the ground.

Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;

Sing praises on the harp to our God,

Who covers the heavens with clouds,

Who prepares rain for the earth,

Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

He gives to the beast its food,

And to the young ravens that cry.

He does not delight in the strength of the horse;

He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,

In those who hope in His mercy.

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

Psalm 147.1-12

Psalm 147.1-13 (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!
With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.
The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

The stars He counts, He knows the name of every chosen soul;
His pow'r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.
Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

He brings refreshing rain to earth and feeds the beasts so dear.
He puts in man's strength naught of worth, but loves those who God fear.

O praise your God, Jerusalem, O Zion, praise the Lord!
He strengthens those who trust in Him with blessings from His Word.

5 Who's This?

Read and meditate on John 9.8, 9.

When work that reveals God is accomplished, things change, and people notice.

*⁸So then, when the people who had known him saw this, they inquired, "Is this not he who sat and begged?"
⁹Some said, "It is." But others said, "No, he is merely like him. He said, "I am he."*

- John 9.8, 9

Reflect

1. Why were people confused about this man? Complete the following prayer: *Lord, when You work in my life, I change, and when I change...*

2. We see people trying to account for something new, wonderful, and strange. Some said one thing, some said another. They all seemed perplexed. How should we expect people today to respond to seeing God's work done in the life of someone they know? Have you experienced this in your life? Explain. *Lord, You are making all things new, and this can be a little confusing to people. This is why we need to...*

3. Bless his heart, the man who had been healed from blindness could only say one thing (v. 9). Nothing theological, nothing apologetical or polemical, not even a clear witness to Jesus. But why should we commend him here, and what can we learn from him? *Lord, sometimes all I can say to people is...*

4. Why do you suppose that today we don't see people puzzling among themselves about the changes they see in folks they know who have been touched by Jesus? Meditate on 1 Peter 3.15. How should we expect our *hope* to be evident in our lives? *Lord, let Your light shine in me today, and my hope in You and Your glory be...*

5. Jesus brought a new Kingdom to earth – a Kingdom of light to overcome the darkness, life to bring victory over death, and newness to liberate us from our old, sinful ways. Jesus healed a blind man, bringing all the newness of that Kingdom to bear on him, and the blind man owned up to fact. How does this instruct us as those who are called to be witnesses for Jesus? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

"The strangeness of the miracle made people incredulous. The neighbors and those who had seen that he was blind said, 'Is this now the man who used to sit and beg?' What wonderful clemency and condescension of God! With such great kindness he even heals the beggars. In this way he shuts up the mouths of the Jews, because he made, not the great, illustrious and noble, but the poorest and meanest, the objects of his providence. Indeed, he had come for the salvation of all." *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Where Jesus brings the Kingdom, newness ensues. We may not understand how our daily doing the works of God can accomplish this, but it can, and does. How will you seek the Kingdom of healing and newness today? How will you work the works of God?

Closing Prayer

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the Lord our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham...

Psalm 105.1-9a

Psalm 105.1-11 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgment speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

6 How Could This Be?

Read and meditate on John 9.10-12.

Time for a little Q and A. Good questions, but the answers left people wanting to know more. Which is not a bad thing.

¹⁰They asked, “But how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He replied, “A Man called Jesus made for me some clay, and put it on my eyes. And then He sent me to Siloam to wash. I went and washed, and I received my sight.” ¹²They said, “Where is He then?” “I do not know,” he said.

- John 9.10-12

Reflect

1. The curiosity this man’s healing created is palpable. Having ascertained that he was indeed the beggar, formerly blind, they wanted to “How?” Why was that a logical first question? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, if someone asks me “How” I came to be a new person, I...*

2. The healed man had no clue as to the physiology of his healing. But what he knew, he told (v. 11). Using this man’s answer as an outline, write your own testimony of what Jesus has done for you, being as concise as this blind man. *I thank You, Lord, that though I was once a blind beggar, You...*

3. The man healed from blindness pointed to Jesus, to whom, as we saw, he had “come back” (v. 7). So the natural follow-up question was, “So where is He?” Not *Who* is He, but *where*. What does this question indicate on the part of those asking it? Does your life make others want to seek Jesus? Explain. *Lord, let my life point others to You! Even today, Lord, help me...*

4. Evidently Jesus left the scene before the blind man returned. So he answered their question the only way he could (v. 12). Is there a place for saying “I don’t know” when people ask us about Jesus? Explain. *Lord, I don’t know all the answers to people’s questions, so let me not pretend to. Instead...*

5. One of the best things we can do in piquing people’s curiosity about Jesus is to encourage them to ask questions. What kinds of questions might we expect? Why is it a good thing when people are asking questions about our faith? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“See how he became a herald of grace. See how he preaches the gospel. See how, once he is endowed with sight, he becomes a witness. That blind man testified, and the ungodly were troubled in their hearts because they did not have in their own hearts what they saw in him.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

We don’t have to know all the answers, or be able to explain everything perfectly in order to be faithful and effective witnesses for Christ. Explain.

Closing Prayer

The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!
Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.
Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.
You who love the LORD, hate evil!
He preserves the souls of His saints;
He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 97.1-10

Psalm 97.1, 6, 9-12 (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King!*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King! O earth, lift up your voice;
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

The heav'ns above declare His glorious righteousness;
And tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

All you who love the Lord, despise sin's wicked ways!
Praise Him Who guides us by His Word through all our days.
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

7 Little Man, Big Stir

Read and meditate on John 9.1-12.

Jesus said He was the light of the world, and that He came to bring light and sight to those who were blind and in the dark. And in this miracle, He demonstrated that He meant business.

¹As Jesus went His way, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. ²And then began His followers to ask Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, such that to him blindness should occur?” ³But Jesus said, “Not him, and not his parents sinned; instead, this man is blind so that in him the works of God should be revealed. ⁴We ought to work the works of Him Who sent Me while we can, while it is day. The night comes, and no man can work then. ⁵And as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶And when He said these things, He spat upon the ground, and made some clay, which He then spread around and on his eyes ⁷And then He said to him, “Go to the pool called Sent (Siloam). In it, wash your eyes.” And so the blind man went and washed, and came back seeing. ⁸So then, when the people who had known him saw this, they inquired, “Is this not he who sat and begged?” ⁹Some said, “It is.” But others said, “No, he is merely like him. He said, “I am he.” ¹⁰They asked, “But how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He replied, “A Man called Jesus made for me some clay, and put it on my eyes. And then He sent me to Siloam to wash. I went and washed, and I received my sight.” ¹²They said, “Where is He then?” “I do not know,” he said.

- John 8.48-59

Reflect

1. Jesus was departing Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles. Review His teaching and disputation there, as we saw in in John 5 and 8. What are the main points Jesus made? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You alone are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help me today to...*

2. It is possible to see in the healing of this blind man, an exemplifying – and thus a vindication – of all Jesus’ teaching at the feast. Explain. *Lord, does my life exemplify the claims I make about You? Today, let me...*

3. Jesus came to earth to bring near the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom would begin to come in its fullness once Jesus had returned to heaven and poured out the Holy Spirit into the world. Jesus showed us that the Kingdom comes near when we proclaim Him and do the works of God. What does it mean to seek first the Kingdom and righteousness of God (Matt. 6.33)? *Lord, use me to bring Your Kingdom near to others today, by...*

4. Jesus' witness to Himself at the Feast of Tabernacles was profound, theological, thorough, and confrontational. This man's witness was simple, personal, incomplete, and cordial. How does this episode add to your growing understanding of what it means to be a witness for Jesus? *Fill me with Your Spirit, Lord, and help me to be Your witness today as I...*

5. The story about the healing of this blind man is just getting started. It gets more interesting as it goes on, and it shows us the power of Jesus to use little people to stir up big interest in Himself. How should this story encourage you in your witness for the Lord? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"Why didn't he have him wash immediately instead of sending him to Siloam?... For one thing, everyone would probably see him as he was leaving, having the clay spread upon his eyes. The strangeness of this spectacle would most likely focus the attention of everyone on him—both those who knew him and those who did not—everyone would be watching him closely. And, because it is not easy to recognize a blind man who has recovered his sight, Jesus first of all sends him this long distance so that he can be seen by many witnesses. This bizarre spectacle of a man walking with mud on his eyes would make these witnesses even more attentive so that no one could any longer say, 'This is not he.'" *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

How would you describe the nature, function, and effects of faith as we see them in this story? What does it mean to believe in Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
The LORD has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.
Sing to the Lord with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,
With trumpets and the sound of a horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;
Let the rivers clap *their* hands;
Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,

For He is coming to judge the earth.
With righteousness He shall judge the world,
And the peoples with equity.

Psalm 98.1-9

Psalm 98.1-9 (*Duke Street: Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord*)

Come, let us sing unto the Lord new songs of praise with one accord!
Wonderful things our God has done: Jesus has our salvation won!

Now is God's saving mercy known; His glory to the world is shown.
Faithful and kind is God our Lord; earth has the Name of Jesus heard.

Raise to the Lord your loudest voice! Break forth and sing! Rejoice! Rejoice
Praise, praise to You our God and King, with all our hearts and strength we bring!

Now let the whole creation 'round burst into song with joyous sound!
Jesus will come to judge the earth; let all proclaim His matchless worth!

The Gospel of John: John 9.1-12

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. What's the most important lesson about being a witness for Jesus you have learned from this story?
2. What sorts of questions should we expect from people who see changes in our lives because of Jesus?
3. How does this story guide us in taking up the works of God?
4. Are there any areas of your life where you need Jesus to bring His healing touch?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 9.1-12? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.