



Seeing For the First Time

Pastor Jon Duncan

Kick Start:

How did God speak to you through this message?

Main Point:

The account of Jesus healing a blind man reminds us that we were blind and unable to see God. We had no capacity to recognize the Savior and no way to initiate a cure. So, Jesus came looking for us. He reached out to us in our blindness, and gave us sight. All He asks is a simple act of faith.

Introduction:

Every interaction in the Gospel of John is a divinely inspired attempt to make connections between the physical world around us and the spiritual realm we cannot see. These interactions drive us to see ourselves within them so that we can be assured of our salvation. Distilled down to the two simplest things, the Apostle John shows us a comparison between interactions of unbelief and belief. This miracle of the blind man receiving sight is a picture of the salvation process. Jesus found him, applied the cure, gave instructions which were obeyed, and sight was granted. God did His part, the man believed and obeyed and did his part—promise offered, promised received.

Message Outline:

I. The Compassion Jesus Has

In ancient times many believed serious birth defects were caused by sin, either their own or their parents'—thus the disciples' question in verse 2. But sickness, disease, and defect are not necessarily the result of personal sin (consider Job). Sometimes God allows negative conditions and circumstances in our lives in order to accomplish positive goals: our good, His glory, and bringing benefit to others. Instead of focusing on the man as a theology problem, Jesus saw him as an opportunity to work the works of God while He was still here.

John 9:1-5

Talk About It:

1. How does Jesus' attention to the blind man challenge our own awareness of those in need around us?
2. When the disciples saw the blind man, they assumed his blindness was caused by sin (v. 2). How did Jesus correct their thinking? What does this teach us about how God can use difficulties for His glory?
3. According to Romans 8:17-18 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, how does our suffering here on this earth affect our life in the future with God? How does Paul depict our sufferings? How could these passages be an encouragement to you in your suffering?
4. In what ways can physical blindness in this passage be compared to spiritual blindness in our lives?

II. The Command Jesus Makes

After Jesus offered words of compassion for the blind man, He gave explicit instructions to wash in the pool of Siloam. Faith demanded obedience and action, and demonstrates saving faith. The result of the man's obedience was the blessing of sight for the very first time.

John 9:6-7

Talk About It:

5. Why do you think Jesus asked the man to go wash his eyes the Pool of Siloam? Why do you think the man obeyed Jesus? Describe how you think he might have felt as he walked there.
6. We know how to act in obedience. We obey traffic signs, follow the laws of the land, and listen to the instruction of our boss at work. So, what makes it so difficult to obey God in all areas of our lives?
7. How is that man's walk to Siloam a picture of a Christian's life of faith?
8. What steps of faith and obedience is God calling you to take in your current circumstances?
9. The man born blind gained his sight because he heard, believed and obeyed God's word. What was physically true of him is spiritually true of us. What implications does this mean for (1) how we grow as disciples and (2) how we do evangelism?

III. The Change Jesus Causes

The neighbors and others noticed the change in the blind man. He looked the same, but he was so different that some questioned if it was him at all, interrogated the man and in disbelief, worked to verify that he was truly the man they knew as being blind.

John 9:8-12

Talk About It:

10. This miracle didn't remove all the man's experience of darkness, but it allowed him to see the only One who ever could. How does this help us understand what our experience will be as we increasingly hear, believe and obey God's word?
11. We all have a story. Jesus came to earth to rewrite our brokenness into a story of hope. Share about when Jesus came looking for you. Briefly talk about how you were once spiritually blind. What happened for your eyes to be opened to Jesus? What change did Jesus cause in you?

Conclusion:

Do you recognize a time when we were walking in the darkness believing wrong things or not believing at all? And do you remember meeting Jesus, hearing His voice when you couldn't spiritually see Him; hearing Him offer, "Do you want to be healed?" Then saying "Yes" and receiving the promise that if you would believe you would receive the Holy Spirit and become part of the family of God? If you haven't, Jesus is still asking if you want to see. Don't wait any longer, say YES.

Make It Practical:

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

by Dr. Robert Jeffress

You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. –1 Peter 2:21

If you are going through a difficult time right now, do not be perplexed by that. Suffering is a part of God's plan for your life.

What are some of the reasons God allows suffering in our lives?

Some suffering is for our strengthening. Some suffering is the result of living for Christ in this sin-filled world. Some suffering is simply the result of living in a fallen world like we do right now. Sometimes we suffer because someone sins against us. Sometimes we suffer the negative results of our own sin. But the big point is that God is aware of your suffering, and it is part of His plan for your life.

I once read a statistic that said 70 percent of Christians believe that God plays no role in the suffering they are experiencing, that He has absolutely nothing to do with it. I don't know about you, but that would be a depressing thought to me if it were true. I would be depressed if God had absolutely no hand in what I was going through, if God looked down from Heaven at what was going on in my life, slapped His forehead, and said, "Oh, I wish that were not happening to Robert. That is too bad. I hate to see that. I wish there was something I could do to help him, but I just can't." Who wants to serve a God like that?

The Bible says suffering for whatever reason is a part of God's plan. In 1 Peter 2:21, Peter said, "*You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.*" In 1 Peter 4:12-13, Peter said, "*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*"

Some of you reading these words are Christians who are suffering right now. You may be suffering from health concerns, financial pressure, a broken relationship, or a prodigal child or grandchild. You are thinking, "If I am a child of God, then why is this happening? I thought when I signed up for this Christian stuff, things were supposed to get better, not worse." Do not be perplexed at what is happening in your life; it is all part of God's plan. Remember, suffering was part of God's plan for His beloved Son. If God's plan for His own Son, Jesus, included unfair and unbearable suffering, then why are we surprised when suffering comes into our lives?

There will be times when God's face seems hidden to you. The road to Heaven is going to have some jolts and bumps along the way as well, but every shadow, every jolt, is simply a reminder that you are headed in the right direction. Suffering is a part of every Christian's journey, but it is only a prelude to the incomprehensible and eternal future that God has planned for us. We can, like the psalmists, pour out our hearts to God (Psalm 62) and trust that He is intimately aware of our sufferings and with us in them (Psalm 56).

Prayer Points:

- Thank you, Jesus, for lighting our path and leading us out of spiritual darkness into salvation.
- We ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance to walk in the light of Christ daily.
- We ask for help, encouragement and strength in our sufferings.
- Illuminate any darkness within us and help us to wash and have changed hearts in those areas.
- Lord, open the eyes of the blind in our family members and friends who remain in darkness.
- Pray for the needs of the group.