



Unbelief Investigates a Miracle

Pastor Jon Duncan

Kick Start:

How did God speak to you through this message?

Main Point:

Jesus used the healing of a man physical blindness to teach spiritual truth. To those who desperately acknowledge their spiritual blindness, Jesus would free them from sin. But to those who claimed to be spiritual know-it-alls, their sin remained. When we think that nothing is wrong with us, everything is wrong.

Introduction:

This section in the story of the healing of the blind man reveals some key characteristics of willful unbelief. The Pharisees' interrogations after the miracle are not for facts to discover truth, or a following of evidence that brings them to conclude that Jesus is the Messiah. Unbelief sets false standards; unbelief always wants more evidence but never has enough; unbelief does biased research on a purely subjective basis; unbelief rejects the facts; and unbelief is self-centered. When you start with a preconceived idea but all the facts point in the other direction, you end up looking like a complete fool.

Message Outline:

I. Interrogation One

After Jesus healed a blind man, the Pharisees grilled the man about how it could have happened. For a second time he recounted his healing. The crucial issue to the Pharisees was that the healing took place on the Sabbath. The Pharisees should have been praising God for a miracle; instead, they sought evidence to prosecute Jesus. As a result of the man's testimony, the Pharisees were divided over their beliefs regarding Jesus' identity. The man wasn't intimidated by the Pharisees. When asked who he thought Jesus was, he boldly said, "He is a prophet!"

John 9:13-17

Talk About It:

1. Within the story we see reactions of bystanders. Discuss how each group responds: neighbors (vs 8-12), Pharisees (vs 13-17), parents (vs 18-23). None appear to be happy for the healed man. What does this teach us about recognizing God's work in others' lives?
2. Like the healed man, are you willing to testify of Christ's work in your life even in the face of adversity? What makes you sure or unsure?
3. How have you demonstrated courage in confessing your faith in Jesus, especially in challenging environments?

II. Interrogation Two

The Pharisees and Jewish leaders want to confirm this man was born blind, and that they're not falling for some sort of elaborate hoax. It was easier for the religious leaders to believe that the man was never really blind than to believe that Jesus healed the man. Unable to explain this miracle they needed to verify if he was healed, and if so, exactly how was he healed? So, they call his parents in to be interrogated, but they would not speak to the question of how he was healed because of the threat of excommunication.

John 9:18-23

Talk About It:

4. It's sad to think that the blind man may have seen his parents for the first time when they refused to back his story out of fear. How does the fear of being ostracized by society affect our willingness to confess Jesus as Lord today?
5. In what ways can we overcome the fear of man and prioritize our fear of God in our daily lives?

III. Interrogation Three

The Pharisees called the healed man back for further questioning. The man boldly proclaimed that Jesus must be from God because no one else had ever performed such a miracle. Enraged by his response, the Pharisees excommunicated the man from the synagogue. However, Jesus sought out the man and revealed himself as the Son of God. Seeing Jesus for the first time, the man responded in faith and worship. The Pharisees, however, remained unconvinced and, therefore, blind. Their claim to see kept them from coming to Jesus, and so they were still lost in sin.

John 9:24-41

Talk About It:

6. After the healed man was excommunicated, how did Jesus complete the healing that He had begun on him?
7. This man's 'spiritual sight' – i.e. really seeing who Jesus is develops gradually (v12, v17, v25, v33, v38). Share how you relate to his experience of gradually 'seeing' Jesus and His glory more clearly?
8. Based on these verses, what are some symptoms of spiritual blindness in our lives today?
9. How do we recognize spiritual blindness in ourselves and others without becoming judgmental?
10. How can we help illuminate God's truth for those struggling with spiritual blindness today?
11. For those who have "spiritual sight," they know that God is BIG and our trials are small. Share with the group where you need God to do something big in your life?

Conclusion:

Spiritual sight comes only to those who acknowledge that they do not see, who confess their spiritual blindness and their need for the Light of the World. On the other hand, those who think they see on their own apart from Christ delude themselves, and will remain blind. They will not come to the Light, because they love the darkness and do not want their evil deeds to be exposed. To reject Jesus' peace is to receive His punishment; to reject His grace is to receive His justice; to reject His mercy is to receive His wrath; to reject His love is to receive His anger; to reject His forgiveness is to receive His judgment. While Jesus came to save, not to condemn, those who reject His gospel condemn themselves, and subject themselves to judgment. — John MacAurthur

Make It Practical:

God is a God of Miracles

from GotQuestions.org

While miracles are fascinating, they are not the “main thing.” Rather, they were done to show us who God is and to point us to Jesus as the only way for salvation.

A miracle is an extraordinary act of God that defies normal expectations of nature or circumstance. God is not bound by the laws of nature because He made creation and its “laws” (Genesis 1:1). Throughout Scripture, He works miracles to glorify Himself, rescue His people, validate His messengers, and accomplish His redemptive plan. Therefore, miracles are not random displays of power but purposeful signs that point to God’s character and will.

God is still able to work miracles today, but He does so according to His own wisdom and timing. Miracles are never guaranteed or normative, and claims of them must always be tested against the truth of Scripture. The primary miracle still happening today is the miracle of salvation, the spiritual resurrection of a sinner. It is the greatest display of His supernatural power.

God sovereignly does what is impossible by natural means to fulfill His purposes:

The Old Testament shows many miracles, each serving key purposes: 1) authenticating God’s messengers, 2) revealing His glory, 3) delivering His people, and 4) bringing judgment. For example, Aaron’s staff turning into a serpent confirmed God’s message to Pharaoh (Exodus 7:9–10), and Elijah’s fire consuming a water-drenched altar proved his prophetic authority (1 Kings 18:34–38). God revealed His glory to Moses through the burning bush that was not consumed (Exodus 3:2–3) and demonstrated His power over Egypt’s gods via the ten plagues (Exodus 7–12). God delivered Israel by parting the Red Sea, saving them and defeating the Egyptians (Exodus 14:16, 30), and miraculously provided food in the wilderness for 40 years with quail and manna (Exodus 16:12–13, 35). He judged enemies like Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:24–25) and destroyed Korah’s rebellion by opening the earth to swallow the rebels (Numbers 16:31b–33).

Confirming He is the promised Messiah:

In the New Testament, miracles serve distinct purposes focused on Jesus: to prove 1) He is the Son of God, 2) He is the Messiah, and 3) to authenticate His apostles. Jesus demonstrated His divine authority by forgiving and healing a paralytic, showing He alone can forgive sins (Mark 2:7–11). Nicodemus recognized Jesus’ miracles as proof He came from God, eventually understanding His true identity (John 3:2; John 19:39–40). Jesus fulfilled Messianic prophecy by healing the blind, lame, lepers, deaf, raising the dead, and preaching the gospel, proving He is the promised Messiah (Isaiah 53:4–5; Luke 7:21–22).

John ended his Gospel saying, “there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). Even though we know only a small number of the miracles Jesus performed, John recorded what He did “so that

you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

The Miracle of Salvation:

Believing that God is a God of miracles doesn’t mean we expect Him to give us a miracle whenever we want one. It means that we trust that He can and does act in extraordinary ways to fulfill His perfect will. Certainly, we should rejoice when God heals or rescues someone, but we should rejoice even more in the subtle, daily miracle of transformed hearts and lives through the gospel.

Prayer Points:

- Ask God to show you any planks that may be clouding your eyesight
- Pray for soft hearts that are convicted of sin
- Help us to be humble and contrite in spirit and tremble at God’s Word.
- Pray for those in our families and our friends who remain spiritually blind.
- Help us to illuminate God’s truth for those struggling with spiritual blindness.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes so that you can see the ways God is at work in your family, your church, and your community.
- Pray for the needs of the group.