

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, September 12, 2010 – 11:00 AM
Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor

Series: Portraits of Jesus

Jesus: The Light of the World - John 8:12; 9:1-11

Introduction: In 1818, 9 year old Louis was watching his father, a harness maker, work the leather. *"Someday I want to be a harness - maker, just like you,"* said Louis.

"Why not start now?" said the father. He took a piece of leather and drew a design on it, and said, *"Now, take the hole-punch and hammer and follow this design, but be careful that you don't hit your hand."* Excited, the boy began to work, but when he hit the hole-punch, it flew out of his hand and hit him in the eye! Immediately he lost the sight of that eye. Later, sight in the other eye failed. Louis was now totally blind.

A few years later, a friend handed Louis a pine cone. As he ran his sensitive fingers over the cone, an idea came to him. He began to create an alphabet of raised dots on paper so that the blind could feel and interpret what was written. The boy's name - Louis Braille, and we know this man today as the person who opened up a whole new world for the blind.

2000 years ago, Jesus Christ began to open up a whole new world for the spiritually blind. In **John 8:12 (NIV)**, Jesus proclaimed, *"I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me, will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Today, as we continue to gaze at John's portraits of Jesus, we'll examine an encounter Jesus had with a blind man. We're going to see what He did when He encountered physical blindness, and what He meant when He said, *"I am the Light of the World."* It is my prayer that we will discover how that relates to what He can do for you. Let's read John 9:1-11, the story of Jesus: The Light of the World. First, let's notice:

1. The Misery

This story begins by reminding us of the misery of physical blindness. It was this beggar's blindness that caught the disciples' attention. Perhaps this man was dirty and smelly, and not dressed very well. Perhaps one of the disciples recognized him and knew of his condition - we don't know. We do know from the Scriptures, though, that this man was blind from birth.

Can you imagine that - never having seen anything? To me, being blind would be just about the worst kind of physical handicap there is. I already can't hear too well, so, I guess I'm used to it. I'm already suffering from bad knees, bad ankles and a bad memory, so in a way, I guess I'm already preparing for old age! But blindness is terrifying to me. To never seeing a sunset, or the faces of my wife, kids and grandkids would be almost unbearable. But, this man had been blind from birth - he had always been in a state of darkness.

But the beggar's blindness was not the only blindness we find here. In vs. 2 (NIV), we see another kind of blindness mentioned: *"His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"*

Did you catch it? The disciples believed that the blindness of this man happened because of some sin that had been committed. Now, this is a natural assumption, especially in their culture. The Jews had been taught from birth that bad things happen as a result of either someone's direct or indirect sin. But their assumption tells us that they were blind to the ways of God. They still had limited sight and limited knowledge of spiritual matters, for this was not the case at all.

But the disciples were not the only blind ones about spiritual things. In **John 8:43, & 45-47 (NIV)**, Jesus tells the unbelieving Jews were blind because they refused to see He is from God. The Pharisees later in this chapter deal with another blind man and they attributed Jesus' healing to the devil and cast this man out of the temple. So, He was right – people can be blind to the truth!

So in John's Gospel we find two types of blindness - the physical blindness of the beggar, and the spiritual blindness of the disciples, the Jews, and the Pharisees. Which do you think is worse? Not being able to see the physical world, or not being able to see God's love and forgiveness and His grace? To be in either state is miserable, but I believe that spiritual blindness is far worse than having sightless eyes. And, that's the place

where everyone apart from Jesus, finds themselves.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV) says, *“The god of this age (that’s Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”* If you’ve never received Jesus as your Savior, you are in spiritual darkness. But, there is hope for you! Jesus wants to open your eyes. He wants you to see and understand what He is doing and saying. The way He will do that is the same way He restored this man’s physical sight, which is my next point.

2. The Miracle

Jesus didn’t leave this blind man in his state of physical blindness. Jesus explained to His disciples that He would heal this man to demonstrate the works of God. Jesus says in **John 9:4 (NIV)** *“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”* In other words, even though Jesus is the *“light of the world,”* darkness is always lurking around. And just as darkness always follows the day, and one day even the light of the world – Jesus Himself will come and when He’s gone, the darkness will follow. But right now, in this day of grace, Jesus is bringing light to dark places - just like He brought light to this blind man.

All this man had seen his whole life was darkness. Then he met Jesus. Verse 6 (NIV) says Jesus *“spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.”* I try to imagine myself there watching Jesus do this. It almost seems out of character doesn’t it? I mean we see ball players and *“backer”* chewers spit all the time, but Jesus spitting? It just doesn’t seem right, but that’s what He did. Why did He do this? Well, here’s my explanation:

Anointing of the eyes with the clay would have caused irritation to the eyes. When Jesus convicts us of sin, it’s irritating and uncomfortable. We want to shrug it off. We want to run from it. We want to wash it off.

But folks, it’s the only way anyone can ever be saved. Jesus says in John 6:44 (NIV), *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...”* For a sinner, especially one who enjoys sinning, to be drawn into the presence of a holy God, is an uncomfortable, irritating position to be in.

But notice, Jesus didn’t let the man be uncomfortable for long. He told him how to be healed. He told the man in verse 7, *“Go...wash in the pool of Siloam.”*

Now I don’t know how far it was for this guy to walk to the pool of Siloam. But any distance would have been quite difficult for a blind man as he stumbled and ran into things, or tried to get help. It all had to be cumbersome and challenging to say the least. But either way, it would be quite a journey. And that is not saying anything about the embarrassment he’d face walking along with mud all over his eyes! Can you imagine the looks - the stares - the snickering – and the snide remarks?

I’m sure it must have crossed his mind to just say, *“But Jesus, why don’t you just put your hands on my eyes and heal me here? Why don’t you just say a few magic words, and I’ll be on my way? Isn’t there another way, Lord?”*

That’s what a lot of people say when they’re given God’s simple plan of salvation. They’ll say, *“But Lord, there’s got to be a better way. I’ll do better. I’ll read my Bible. I’ll go to church. I’ll treat my neighbor kindly. Why do I have to do all this repentance and faith stuff. Surely there’s another way – a way that won’t crimp my style!”*

But there’s only one way to gain spiritual sight, and that’s Jesus’ way. He said in **John 14:6 (NIV)**, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* **Acts 4:12 (NIV)** says, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”* There’s only one way for those in darkness to get to heaven folks – and that is by the miracle of the Light of the World coming into your life!

So this man went, just as Jesus said, and when he washed his eyes, he was healed of his blindness. And when people asked him what had happened, he never mentioned the clay. Why? Because he had not seen it take place! He was blind!

There is a lesson here for us. There are times when God is working in our lives to try and bring us to Himself, and we can’t see the Lord’s work. We don’t realize all the little things God is doing to bring us to the place of salvation. We may not realize all the prayers people were praying, all the tears people were shedding, all the people God was placing in our lives to guide us toward Him. But after we’re saved, we can see!

This man who had never seen his reflection or people's faces or buildings could now see it all. He had met Jesus and now he could see. It was a miracle. Which brings us to the last point:

3. The Master

What kind of man would Jesus have been to find this blind man and work a miracle in his life? He is the Master. He was the only one who could deliver man from the bondage of darkness. He is:

A. A Shining Light (5) - Jesus is still in the business of delivering people from darkness. If you have never been saved, you can come to Jesus today and He will bring you out of the darkness. He's still a Shining Light to all who will come to Him.

B. A Seeking Light (35) - Even after this man had been cast out by the Jews, Jesus went looking for Him. You may have been criticized, victimized and ostracized, because of your sin, but Jesus wants to find you and give you worth and purpose. Jesus Christ loves you just like you are and will save you by His grace if you will only come to Him by faith and ask Him. He is still seeking souls to save this morning!

C. A Saving Light (38) - When this man received Jesus, I am sure that he forgot about the days of blindness and pain. When he called on the name of Jesus, He was eternally saved and received into a family from which he will never be removed!

Conclusion: Jesus is a shining light, a seeking light, and a saving light. He comes spreading light to the whole world. He comes as a candle of hope in the dark room of despair. He comes as a beacon of safety in the dark storms of fear. No longer does anyone have to walk around in spiritual blindness.

He came so that we may see more clearly the path of salvation. He came that we might clearly know who God is. He came so that we could speak to God. He came so that you could understand the Bible when you read it. He came so that you could see clearly the way to eternal life.

Many are lost and in the depths of great spiritual darkness and they do not even realize that Jesus can set them free forever. Let me remind you that Jesus loves you just as you are and that He will save anyone who will come to Him by simple faith. If you are tired of the dark come to Jesus and step into the Light of His salvation. Will you do that today?