

*“The Meaning of the Blind Man’s Healing”*

August 24, 2014

Text: John 9:39-41

**For the last month & a half, we have been studying Jesus’  
healing of a man who had been blind from birth.**

In today’s text, Christ will explain the spiritual meaning of that event.

We have seen there is such a thing as spiritual blindness,  
which is analogous to physical blindness.

In the aftermath of the miracle, it was obvious that it had created  
a major division among those who had witnessed it=>

- \* On the one hand, the man healed of blindness was lying prostrate before Jesus, openly worshiping Him.
- \* On the other, the proud Pharisees who were still there, were more unbelieving/hostile towards Jesus than ever.

Jesus wanted His followers to understand the meaning of it all=>

That this would always be the result of Christ’s manifesting  
Himself, for who He is.

His coming into the world as the Son of Man & Son of God  
would always divide people into these same 2 groups  
(believers and opposers).

Whenever we present the gospel of Jesus Christ today, we

present Christ Himself, and the result is still the same=>

The spiritually blind are healed of their spiritual blindness;

But those who are confident of their own spiritual sight/insight apart from Christ, go away even more unbelieving/indifferent/hostile to Christ than they were before.

**This is a judgment on men that is a consequence of Jesus' presence, but not one sought by Jesus Himself.**

For that reason, Christ will say in today's text=> "*For judgment I came into this world.*"

That was not His purpose, but it was the inevitable consequence of His coming.

Christ's statement might seem strange, because earlier on Jesus had said (Jn 3:17)=> "*God did **not send** the Son into the world to **judge the world**, but that the world might be **saved through Him.**"*

In Jn 12, Jesus will say it again=> "*If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not **judge** him; for I did **not come to judge** the world, but to **save the world**" (12:47).*

Jesus wasn't contradicting Himself now in our own text.

His purpose for coming into the world was not to judge/condemn people, but rather to save their souls thru His own death.

But the natural consequence of His coming was to divide the world into believers & non-believers, based on their response to Him.

Those who refuse to believe in Him bring judgment upon themselves because of their unbelief.

In John 3:18, Jesus said=> *“He who **believes** in Him [God’s Son] is not judged; he who does **not believe** has been **judged already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

Still today we present to people the claims of Christ, & they invariably group themselves according to 2 possible reactions=>

- 1) Those who were once spiritually blind, but can now see the glory of Jesus Christ, in the gospel of His grace.
- 2) And those who beforehand had a false assurance that they understood the truth, & have now buried themselves deeper than ever, in their own spiritual blindness/ignorance.

If this continues, they will ultimately become completely and finally separated from the Light of God=> irreparably blind.

**This is the lesson to be learned from Jesus’ healing of the man born blind.**

- \* It is a warning to those who hear the gospel & turn away in unbelief/indifference, that they are propelling themselves into judgment.
- \* It’s a warning from God, to listen carefully/humbly, not with a critical spirit like the Pharisees, but w/ an open heart/mind, like the blind man;  
Or like a child would listen—not trying to find fault, but open to the truth & willing to believe/obey it.

**Obviously, we are not equal w/ God in spiritual wisdom, so  
when we ignore His truth in favor of our own opinions,  
we risk/invite even greater spiritual blindness.**

A wise person yields/surrenders himself to the Lord.

Or as Peter put it=> *“Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God”* (I Pet 5:6).

As we do so, believing & yielding ourselves to what He has revealed, we come to the realization that we have sinned against the Lord, & have lived in rebellion against Him. He gives us the spiritual sight to see the sinfulness of our sin from the perspective of His perfect holiness.

We also realize that we are spiritually impoverished and even bankrupt.

And our reaction is to mourn over ourselves.

Jesus said that is a very good thing, leading to blessedness=>

*“**Blessed** are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. / **Blessed** are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted... // **Blessed** are those who **hunger & thirst** for **righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied”* (Mt 5:3, 4, 6).

Jesus gives the blessedness of spiritual sight to those who are spiritually blind, know it, & don't want to remain blind any longer.

But those who are confident in their own spiritual sight & understanding, are blind, & will become even more blind.

**All this is due to the very nature of spiritual blindness itself,  
and in today's text, we will discover 3 practical  
principles about the nature of spiritual blindness=>**

- \* It is determined by one's response to Jesus.
- \* It is based on self-delusion.
- \* It is the result of a personal decision.

**\* Spiritual Blindness—Determined by Our Response to Jesus**

**[John 9:39]=>** *“And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.’”*

**By His very entrance into the world, Jesus divided mankind  
into those who believed in Him (e.g. the blind man)  
and those who didn't (the Pharisees).**

It all depended upon their reaction to Jesus Himself.

God had revealed Himself as a man, in gracious humility,  
but also in divine glory.

Some people rejected Him and condemned themselves  
because their rejection was a sin against God, which  
became definitive to their whole lives/being.

**At this point, Jesus described 2 different groups of people.**

1<sup>st</sup>, *“Those who do not see,”* which refers to people who are lost  
in spiritual darkness, know they are lost, & long to be saved  
from it.

They are like the child whom Christ once set before Him,  
& said=> *“Unless you are converted & become like  
children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven”*  
(Mt 18:3).

Like children they don't rely on their own independent understanding in spiritual matters, but rely on God's Word.

These are the very kind of people Jesus came to save.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> group Jesus described was "*Those who see*"—people like the self-righteous Pharisees.

They are convinced, they see/know the truth, although the "truth" they see isn't really truth at all.

In the Pharisees' case, their "truth" was a false interpretation of Scripture which they had imposed on the OT by rabbinic tradition.

In other people's cases it is any form of human religion or human wisdom/philosophy that promises man an understanding of reality apart from Christ.

Rejecting the light of God's truth revealed in Christ, they confirm themselves in spiritual blindness/darkness, & God hides the truth "*from the wise and intelligent*" as He "*reveal[s] [it] to infants*" (Mt 11:25).

**Throughout the world right now, there is a judgment taking place wherever salvation in Jesus Christ is being preached.**

The gospel will always have that effect, being either an aroma from death to death, or from life to life (II Cor 2:16).

It is having one effect, or the other, on you as you sit here—either softening, or searing your heart.

It will cause you to see the truth, or, if you depend on some other “truth,” its brightness will blind you, to “the Truth.”

The gospel of Jesus Christ, like Christ Himself, has such a decided effect on people’s hearts, that it reverses & turns everything upside down.

It causes the spiritually blind to see, & those who think they see w/o it, to go blind rejecting this gospel of Christ’s-glory.

It brings about radical change in a person’s life—from darkness to light, or from supposed “light” to darkness, the absolute reversal of a person’s spiritual condition.

One old preacher, realizing the power of the gospel he was preaching, stopped in the middle of his sermon & said=>

“What am I doing? I am preaching Christ to you and, while I hope some of you are receiving Him, and so I am leading you toward Heaven, many others of you are rejecting Him, & thus I am increasing your responsibility and your guilt! I am doing evil instead of good to you! Woe is me!”

As a gospel preacher myself, I can only hope/pray that my words will be profitable, not detrimental, to you folks.

Either way, if I’m preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ (& I truly believe that I am), its effect will be determined by your response to Him—either a blessing, or a curse, light or darkness, sight or blindness.

But I can assure you, that if you are spiritually blind, unable to deal w/ your own blindness, enslaved to, & broken-hearted over, your sin, almost at your wits' end, you are exactly the kind of person Jesus came to heal of spiritual blindness.

**\* Spiritual Blindness—Based on Self-Delusion**

[Verse 40]=> “*Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, ‘We are not blind too, are we?’*”

**These experts in the Law were sure *they* weren’t “blind.”**

But their certainty was based on self-delusion.

They wanted to know if Jesus was inferring that He considered them spiritually blind, just as they did the blind man He had healed.

Their words, “*We are not blind too, are we?*” were prob. spoken w/ a sarcastic sneer.

Actually, not only were they *among* the spiritually blind to whom Jesus had alluded—they *were* those people.

They’d have agreed that the average Jew who didn’t know much about the Law was spiritually blind, but they felt that their own spiritual status was far superior to that of most Jews.

They viewed themselves as Moses’ disciples and were confident their own spiritual understanding and discernment was superb.

**But in reality, unknown to them, they were blind to spiritual truth, and their rejection of Jesus proved it.**

The Scriptural knowledge of which they boasted, had been corrupted/perverted by their own non-biblical teachings/traditions.

They were like the unbelieving Jew to whom Paul wrote=>

*“[You] are confident that you yourself are a **guide** to the **blind**, a light to those who are in darkness” (Rom 2:19).*

But Jesus said of these Jewish Pharisees=> *“They are **blind** guides of the **blind**. And if a **blind** man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit” (Mt 15:14).*

Not only were they blind, they were leading astray others who were spiritually blind, so that they were all going to end up in the pit of hell.

**These Jewish leaders—the Pharisees/scribes—always overestimated their own righteousness.**

Jesus had undoubtedly shocked them/everyone-else when He publicly declared to a Jewish crowd=> *“Unless your righteousness **surpasses** that of the **scribes and Pharisees**, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:20).*

Because they were so rigorous in their observance of their religious rites/regulations, they were generally thought to be some of the most righteous people in Israel.

But their righteousness was just an outward show, having no inward reality w/i their hearts.

Jesus had publicly confronted them about this, saying=>

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside*

*appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness” (Mt 23:27).*

**Self-righteousness can be a problem among people who seek to live upright lives, because it becomes their blindness.**

They are so morally excellent, so humble, so well-meaning, such seemingly good people, they easily forget that their righteousness too is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

And that (as David had said) *“There is none righteous, no not one”* (Ro 3:10).

Many people like this, who consider themselves Christns, will never be born again, because they think of themselves so highly, they overlook/dismiss their own sinfulness, and need for a Savior who will save them by God’s grace, rather than their own threadbare righteousness.

Jesus said (Lk 5:32)=> *“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”*

Unfortunately, they don’t view themselves as real sinners.

Those who delude themselves that they are righteous are not the kind of people Jesus came to call.

They’ve been spiritually blinded by their self-delusion, so they can’t perceive the real sinfulness of their own hearts.

They know of nothing so bad w/i them that it should incite God’s wrath, or require Jesus’ death for its atonement.

**On the other hand, there are people whose hearts the H.S. has prepared, who will admit they are unhappy/uneasy, knowing their hearts are not right before God, but who don't know what to do about it.**

They know they're sinners, & need Christ's forgiveness, but they grieve that they're not really grieved over their sin (because they cannot "see" it).

They feel stymied spiritually, trapped in a place of spiritual doldrums, short of the safe-harbor of salvation.

I.e., they are spiritually blind.

If that's you, my friend, look up, because you are the very sort of person whose blindness Jesus has always healed.

Spiritual blindness is based on self-delusion, but you are beginning to allow Christ's Spirit to take away your self-delusion, enabling you to see your sin candidly/correctly.

Pray w/ David=> *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any hurtful way in me"* (Psa 139:23-24).

Admit your blindness/confusion/helplessness to Him.

Trust your heart to Him, as the blind man did his eyes.

Then look away from yourself, & your sin, to Him who is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him (Heb 7:25).

**\* Spiritual Blindness—the Result of a Personal Decision**

Each person who learns about Jesus chooses to be, & to stay, blind;

Or they choose to be healed of spiritual blindness by Him.

[Verse 41]=> *“Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, “We see,” your sin remains.’”*

**What does Jesus mean by, “If you were blind, you would have no sin”?**

Is He saying that spiritual ignorance frees a person of guilt? No.

In Rom 2, Paul says this about Gentiles who are ignorant of their sin, because they are ignorant of God’s Law=>

*“When Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, / in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them” (2:14f).*

Though the image of God in man is marred by sin, his conscience still intuitively warns him of his guilt.

Gentiles, though ignorant of the Law, are not free of guilt.

**Jesus’ words, “If you were blind” refer to those who have no personal knowledge of God, or of the life/joy/holiness of His salvation, but who long for these blessings.**

These are people lost in sin, who are crying out to be found, instructed in the truth, and saved from their sin.

People like this would certainly not reject Jesus, who can take their sin/guilt away, and free them from their sin.

When they turn to Jesus in faith, He promises=> *“I am the Light of the world; he **who follows Me** will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life”* (Jn 8:12).

**But, instead, the Pharisees said, “We see [already].”**

By that, they meant they had come to understand the truth, through their mistaken rabbinic interpretations of the OT. They had decided to trust those faulty interpretations, even when it didn't make sense to do so.

As a result, Jesus said, *“Your sin remains.”*

They locked themselves into their own sinfulness, leaving themselves no way of escape.

Sadly, they were like the people in Heb 6=> *“In the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift & have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, / and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, / and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame”* (6:4-6).

Even though they had the light of truth in the OT, it was inadequate because, in their misinterpretation of it, they left Christ out.

As Jesus had told them in John 5=> *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; / and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life”* (5:39-40).

Because they “*loved the darkness*” (Jn 3:19), they chose to ignore the fact that everything Jesus was, and said, and did, fulfilled OT Scripture

**Too arrogant to admit their error, the Pharisees decided to reject the true light of God revealed in Jesus, & thus they condemned themselves to even greater blindness.**

As a result, Jesus said, “*Your sin remains.*”

The sin of impenitent unbelievers remains unforgiven.

If only they had confessed their sin/spiritual-blindness, their sins would have been forgiven, just as David had discovered=>

*“I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’; And You forgave the guilt of my sin”* (Psa 32:5).

Whenever a spiritually blind person desires deliverance from his sin/blindness, God will always heal him.

But those who ignore that blindness & despise God’s grace, make their own blindness incurable, as He withdraws His offer of spiritual healing.

Jesus’ disciples observed this happening to the Pharisees whom He had called “*blind guides of the blind.*”

Sadly, He told them=> “*Let them alone*” (Mt 15:14), and He turned away from them.

Christ described their fate in Mt 6=> “*If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*” (Mt 6:23).

Ultimately, they'd be cast into outer darkness (Mt 8:12),  
where their blindness would become complete.

What a stark contrast this is to the believer's destiny, as described in Rev 22=> *"There will no longer be any night; & they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them"* (22:5).

They will all be full of the light of God's glory.

**Although this text is all about the Pharisees & their blindness, in the background we see the far happier picture of the man Christ had healed of both physical/spiritual blindness.**

Spiritual blindness is a personal choice, one that the Pharisees chose.

But healing from spiritual blindness is also a choice, & that is the one chosen by this man Jesus had so wonderfully healed.

**What made the blind man so different from the Pharisees?**

1<sup>st</sup>/foremost, as we have seen in the past, God had prepared his heart to hear/receive the gospel, and to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior.

But also, from the perspective of the man's own mindset, we see several crucial differences.

\* 1<sup>st</sup>, his heart was open to the truth, as God revealed it to him.

He had prob. heard that Jesus had healed other blind

people, but, as he said, *"Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person **born blind**"* (Jn 9:32).

He may have feared, this ruled out his chances for healing.  
Yet in spite of that fact, he dared to hope Jesus might heal  
him too.

So when he realized that Jesus had stopped to look at him,  
& he could feel our Lord smearing the clay on his  
face, there must have been a rush of hope in his heart.  
He opened his heart wide to whatever Jesus might do  
for him, & in him.

And if you, like that blind man, have an unfulfilled hunger  
& thirst for the righteousness which only Jesus can  
give, the H.S. has already gone to work in your heart.  
Open your heart wide to Him, and dare to hope.

Focus your heart on Jesus, surrender yourself to His will, &  
trust Him to forgive/heal your soul, cleansing you of  
sin.

\* 2<sup>nd</sup>, having surrendered to Christ's will, the blind man obeyed  
Him.

Jesus said, "*Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,*" & he didn't  
negotiate for some other pool that was a little closer.  
He stood still, letting Jesus wipe the mixture of saliva/dirt  
on his face, even though, humanly speaking, such a  
mixture could be of no medical help at all.

Believing Jesus to be a prophet, he trusted Him, submitted  
to Him, and obeyed Him.

If Jesus is to be our Savior, we must let Him be our Potter.

In order to be useful, clay must completely and  
compliantly submit itself to the Potter's hand.

There is a sweetness in yielding up one's own hard/stiff  
will like that, to the saving hand of Jesus, until we are  
ready to do anything He asks, or nothing at all, if He  
so wishes, because we have trusted Him implicitly.

That too was a key difference between this man, & the  
Pharisees.

\* 3<sup>rd</sup>, the man Jesus healed wanted to know more about Him.

When Christ asked, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*"

he responded=> "*Who is He, Sir, that I may believe  
in Him?*" (Jn 9:35, 36).

When he discovered that Jesus had the power to open his  
eyes, & realized He must be from heaven, he  
worshiped the Lord, adoring Him, as God incarnate.

If you/I have not discovered Jesus to be God, that is strong  
evidence that we are still blind spiritually.

Until we see Him as both Lord/Christ, exalted on high to  
grant repentance & forgiveness of sin to anyone who  
reaches out to Him by faith, we are still in darkness,  
and w/o the eternal light of God's truth.

**So be like the blind man, not like the Pharisees.**

\* Pray for God to give you an open heart, and a hunger/thirst for  
righteousness that only Christ can fulfill.

\* Surrender your heart to Christ's will in your life.

\* Seek to know/love Him by faith, so you too can worship Him,  
just as that grateful blind man did, after Jesus had so  
wonderfully healed him.

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1. We have been studying Jesus’ healing of a man who had been blind from birth; in today’s text, Christ will explain the spiritual [16 meaning] of that event.  
Jn 3:17; 12:47
2. His purpose for coming into the world was not to condemn people, but rather to [10 save] their souls.  
Jn 3:18
3. We are not equal with God in spiritual wisdom, so when we ignore His truth in favor of our own opinions, we risk even greater spiritual [20 blindness].  
I Pet 5:6; Mt 5:3, 4, 6

**In today’s text we will discover three practical principles about the nature of spiritual blindness...**

### **\* Spiritual Blindness—Determined by Our Response to Jesus**

**[John 9:39]**

4. By His very entrance into the world, Jesus divided mankind into those who believed in Him and those who didn’t; it all depended upon their [18 reaction] to Jesus Himself.  
Mt 18:3; 11:25
5. Throughout the world right now, there is a judgment taking place; the gospel will always have that effect being either an aroma from death to death or from life to [10 life].  
II Cor 2:16

### **\* Spiritual Blindness—Based on Self-Delusion**

**[Verse 40]**

6. These experts in the Law were sure they were not “blind”; but their certainty was based on [10 self]-delusion.  
Rom 2:19; Mt 15:14; 5:20; 23:27
7. Self-righteousness can be a problem among people who seek to live upright lives because it becomes their [20 blindness].  
Isa 64:6; Rom 3:10; Lk 5:32

8. On the other hand there are people whose hearts the Holy Spirit has prepared, who will admit they are unhappy or uneasy knowing their hearts are not right before God, but who [12 don't] know what to do about it.

Psa 139:23; Heb 7:25

**\* Spiritual Blindness—the Result of a Personal Decision**  
**[Verse 41]**

Rom 2:14-15

9. Jesus' words, "*If you were blind,*" refer to those who have no personal knowledge of God or of the life, joy and holiness of His salvation; but who [10 long] for these blessings.

Jn 8:12; Heb 6:4-6; Jn 5:39-40

10. Too arrogant to admit their error, the Pharisees decided to reject the true light of God revealed in Jesus, and thus they condemned themselves to even greater [20 blindness].

Psa 32:5; Mt 15:14; Mt 6:23; Rev 22:5

**What made the blind man so different from the Pharisees?**

- \*11. First, his heart was open to the truth, as [8 God] revealed it to him.

Jn 9:32

- \*12. Second, having surrendered to Christ's will, the blind man [14 obeyed] Him.

- \*13. Third, the man Jesus healed wanted to [10 know] more about Him.

Jn 9:35-36

14. Until we see Jesus as both Lord and Christ, exalted on high to grant repentance and forgiveness to anyone who reaches out to Him by faith, we are still in darkness without the eternal light of God's [12 truth].