

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN

John 9



SYNOPSIS

John furthers his thesis of Jesus being the Messiah who gives eternal life (20:31) by describing the healing of a man born blind as the sixth miracle in his gospel. John implies that eternal life is God's Kingdom becoming deeply embedded into reality on earth. This miracle served both as a vehicle for Jesus's compassion and as an authentication of his messianic identity.



OUTLINE

1 JESUS SEES THE SUFFERING PERSON

Rabbis in Jesus's time believed that three miracles would identify the Messiah: 1) healing a leper, 2) casting out an evil spirit that caused deafness/dumbness, and 3) healing a man born blind. The disciples believed that the man's blindness was due to familial sin. Jesus chose to see the man as a person and not simply an issue. Jesus clearly stated that God's work would be displayed *in* the man, that the work of God often happens *in* people.

2 JESUS SENDS HEALED MESSENGERS

Jesus's method of healing was purposeful, from spitting to make mud to instructing the man to travel half a mile to wash in the Pool of Siloam. Jesus had purposefully claimed to offer living water during a water-pouring ceremony on the 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles. He purposefully claimed to be the light of the world while surrounded by candelabra in the temple. He also purposefully sent a blind man through crowded Jerusalem to be his herald: "The King, the Messiah, has arrived." We also are healed messengers with a message to herald: "The King is good, and he is here."

3 JESUS CONFRONTS CORRUPT LEADERS

When the religious leaders got involved, this miracle became a nationally important case to be tried. The man's parents were the additional witnesses required to prove the miracle, but they were controlled by the fear of excommunication. The man himself was courageous to testify and confident in God's work. He suffered what his parents feared, but his belief led to worship and eternal life. (vv 35-38) The Pharisees denied their blindness and heaped guilt on themselves. (vv 40-41)

4 JESUS CONFIRMS HE IS THE SON OF GOD AND LORD OF THE SABBATH

The testimony of 2-3 witnesses should have confirmed the miracle, but the religious leaders wanted to discredit the testimony; the implications of the miracle were too threatening. They called the man a *mamzer*, an offspring of any prohibited sexual union. They had previously implied that Jesus was a *mamzer* as well. An oral tradition at the time was that the spit of a legitimate firstborn opens blind eyes. Spit that made mud was considered "work" on the Sabbath. Jesus purposefully used spit-mud to heal blindness to assert his lordship over the Sabbath and to highlight the ridiculousness of elevating Sabbath rules over freeing a man from suffering.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Do we see people primarily as problems/talents or amazing places where God's work can be displayed? Why?

2

How has the Lord packaged his message of "the King is good, and he is here" using your life?

3

What is your experience living in the tension between fear and courage?

4

Have you ever insisted that you saw/understood clearly when you did not? Please share the event and the motivation.

5

What are some of your blindspots? Do you know what they are? Are you in denial about them?



BIG IDEA

P. Peter mistakenly tried to "pass" an eye exam. We must remember the purpose of a diagnostic consultation: the more honest we are, especially about our blindness, the better the prescription will be.

May we confess freely and ask Jesus to be our healer. He is good, and he is King.

