

HAVE YOUR EYES BEEN OPENED?

John 9:1-41 Text: vs. 10 *“How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.*

Let’s begin this sermon a little differently. I want you to close your eyes. Now, don’t go to sleep! But use your imagination. . . . You just started your day. The alarm’s ringing by your bedside. But you’re blind. You can’t see where to smack the snooze button. But do it! You’ve been doing it as long as you can remember. You know where to reach out. Hit it! It shuts off. . . . Now, hang your legs over the side of your bed. Get up. Walk over to your dresser. Feel around for a drawer handle. Pull the drawer out and reach in to get your socks. . . . Now, go to the closet. Get your clothes for the day. Put them on. You can’t tell the color of your socks or your clothes. It could be a disaster! . . . Now, you’re at work. You feel around. Stapler. Letter opener. Everything’s where you left it on your desk. . . . It’s now afternoon. . . . You’re cleaning the house. You hear a screech. A “thump!” Did you just vacuum up the cat? . . . You fix dinner. Everyone takes a bite. It tastes funny. Is it tuna? Or is it cat food? . . .

Now, open your eyes. Strange, isn’t it? You are a seeing person. And yet, it’s hard to imagine what it’s like being blind! Just as a blind person can’t imagine what it’s like being a seeing person. . . . The disciples, and probably most of the Jewish population in Jesus’ time, lived with the belief that injury, and illness, were caused by sin. So, seeing this blind man, they figured it was either him, or his parents who had sinned. And this miracle upset the enemies of Jesus! He did it on the Sabbath! And they used it to build their case against Jesus whom they despised. When they questioned this poor fellow how it happened that now he could see, he simply said, *“One thing I know, I was blind, but now I see.”* Holier-than-thou people, like those Pharisees, detested seeing how good things could happen to good people. They despised Jesus for making things happen for the better, such as this blind man receiving his sight.

There’s a saying that *“There’s none as blind as those who won’t see!”* Helen Keller said: *“What would be worse than being born blind, is to have sight without vision.”* And that’s true of this encounter the Pharisees had with Jesus on this occasion. He healed a man who had been born blind. The scene was Jerusalem. Jesus had left the Temple after a disagreement with the Pharisees over what they thought was an outrageous claim by Jesus. He had told them, *“I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am!”* (8:58). They were so infuriated at what He had said they *“picked up stones to stone him.”* They thought what He had said was heresy! But Jesus was aware His time had not yet come. So, He *“hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.”* From then on, the Pharisees watched Jesus like a hawk to see if somehow, they could find some excuse to bring an official charge against Him. And this is it! The question they put to Jesus was filled with assumptions. It showed how slow they were in learning about Jesus. *“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”* *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* The real problem here was, it was those Pharisees who were blind! Jesus wasn’t interested in the *“whys and wherefores”* of the past. He was focused on how this man’s problem could be resolved in the present.

All things, even afflictions and calamities, can work to the glory of God who can turn suffering into good. And Jesus made it clear, He wasn’t here to explain the mystery of evil. He was here to remove the cause of it! To break its power! And when Jesus made His first public statement, He quoted from Isaiah’s prophecy that Messiah would *“proclaim freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind and to release the oppressed.”* (Luke 4:18). The blind man didn’t care how he was healed. But when Jesus opened his eyes, he was not only physically able to see, but spiritually as well. The blind man’s portion in the miracle was to trust and obey. And Jesus told him how to get his sight. *“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam!”* The blind man had been there many times. But this time he went because Jesus told him to go. He trusted Jesus. It was the plan for his Recovery. And it’s so simple, a lot of people miss it. It’s like the old song says, *Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Now verse 7 in our lesson says, *“He went his way and washed, and came away seeing.”* Water represents *the word of God*. Siloam means *sent*. He was sent by Jesus to the word of God and healed. It was a *ritual washing*. There are many who are never convicted of their sin. There’s never been a change in their life. But there was a change in this blind man. *“His neighbors, and those who had formerly seen him begging, asked, ‘Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?’ Some claimed that he was. Others said, ‘No, he only looks like him.’ But he himself insisted, ‘I am the man.’”* Yes, there was a great change in this man. He changed so much that most didn’t even recognize him! Interesting! We began with a blind man who was healed, so that he could see both physically and spiritually. And we end with religious rulers who were blind yet thought they could see. In the presence of Jesus, in the presence of The Light, in the presence of God, those

Pharisees said they had no sin. Just like some unbending people today who are the atheists, the cults, and the non-believers. They say they *see*. But they are *blind!* They reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Their sin remains. And though they're not walking around with a white tipped walking stick like the blind, they are very much blind. We still have many today who are blind and just can't see the need for Jesus.

But as we get closer to the return of Jesus and God's judgment upon this world, the world is getting dimmer and dimmer spiritually. Jesus said, *"The world loves darkness more than light."* As a Christian, you must have your eyes opened to the fact that Jesus is *"the way, the truth, and the life."* But as a Christian, are you seeing as much spiritually as you should? Do you have a clear spiritual vision of what God is wanting to do in your life and your church. Are you moving in the direction He wants you to go? If not, then God wants to open your eyes. You need to make sure you are obeying God even if it means you might have to fumble about in the dark for a while, as the blind man did on his way to the healing waters of the pool of Siloam. You already need to be testifying about what God has done in your life. You need to be saying, *"One thing I know, I was blind, but now I see."* You need to trust Him to give you the words to say. You need to be willing to put aside what you expect God to do for you and be ready to hear what He expects of you when He comes again to receive you unto Himself.

Warren Wiersbe was an American Christian clergyman, Bible teacher, conference speaker and prolific writer of Christian literature who said, *"The people who joke about faith don't realize how big a part it plays in everyday affairs. It takes faith to get married, because marriage vows are basically promises. It takes faith to send children off to school. It takes faith to get a prescription filled. It takes faith to eat in a restaurant. It takes faith to deposit money in a bank. It takes faith to sign a contract. It takes faith to drive on the highway, or get on an airplane, or into an elevator. Faith isn't some kind of religious experience for the elite. Faith is the glue that helps hold people's lives together. But remember, faith is only as good as its object. If you trust people, you get what people can do. If you trust money, you get what money can do. If you trust yourself, you get only what you can do. But if you trust God, you get what God can do."*

The blind man trusted Jesus. He went to wash his eyes in the Pool of Siloam so he could see and who simply said, *"One thing I know, I was blind, but now I see."* What's it going to take for you see? The words of the Gospel song say it very well, *"Open my eyes that I may see!"* And when you totally put your faith in God, then you, too, will say, *"One thing I know, I was blind, but now I see."* AMEN