

I Once Was Blind

John 9:1-41

Blindness is a common ailment of all people. Some are blind physically while others are blind spiritually. As the light of the world, Jesus can open the eyes of the blind. Unfortunately, some remain blinded by his light.

Jesus opens blind eyes (1-12)

As the light of the world, Jesus demonstrated physically and spiritually how dark life is without him.

Jesus encounters a man who was blind from birth (1). The disciples' question (2) reflected the popular opinion of the day that all suffering was punishment for sin, either one's own sin or one's parents' sin. Jesus stretched their thinking by explaining that God allowed this disability as an opportunity to display his power and glory.

Jesus began his work and his disciples would continue it (4-5). We need to work faithfully while we have the opportunity.

Jesus made mud and put it on the man's eyes and then told him to go wash it off in the pool of Siloam (6-7). Perhaps this was so the man would hear and feel what Jesus was doing.

The change in the man was so apparent that his neighbors were curious about what had happened (8-12). Since Jesus did not accompany the man to the pool, he could not point Jesus out to them.

Round One: The Pharisees interrogate the witnesses (13-23)

The religious leaders revealed their skepticism because they had already determined that Jesus could not have healed the man.

The Pharisees question the formerly blind man about the miracle that took place on the Sabbath (13-15). The man answered simply and explained what Jesus had done.

The people were divided in their opinion about Jesus. Some rejected him while others believed (16). When asked his opinion, the formerly blind man concluded that Jesus was a prophet (17).

The Jewish leaders wanted more information and called the man's parents to testify (18-19). Only they could confirm how long the man had been blind.

While his parents confirmed his life-long blindness, they dodged any further questions (20-21). They were afraid of retaliation if they supported Jesus (22-23).

Round Two: The Pharisees excommunicate a disciple (24-34)

Considering themselves enlightened, the Pharisees continue to badger the formerly blind man. They denied his personal testimony and threw him out.

The Pharisees pressure the man to tell the truth and acknowledge Jesus' sinfulness (24). The man refused to speculate on Jesus' character and would not back down on the fact that Jesus had healed him (25).

The Pharisees were hoping the man would contradict his story by repeating it (26). He refused to review the obvious facts (27) and sarcastically suggested that they wanted to become a disciple of Jesus. The Pharisees were not amused by the man's answer, and insulted him and proclaimed their allegiance to Moses (28-29).

The man showed insight and a sense of humor when he pointed out that while people could not agree on Jesus' relationship with God, they could see that he had performed a miracle (30-31). The man concluded that Jesus came from God (32-33).

The Jewish leaders responded negatively by insulting the man and threw him out of the temple (34).

Spiritual sight and spiritual blindness (35-41)

Mature faith in the Son of God does not come instantly or easily. Like the blind man, we grow in our capacity to trust God with our lives and our problems.

Jesus took the initiative to seek the man and give him further revelation (35).

When Jesus revealed himself as the Son of Man, the man responded by believing the message (36-38). The man went from "the man called Jesus" (11) to "a prophet" (17) to a prophet "from God" (33) to "Lord" (38).

Jesus explained that while his purpose was to save, it also resulted in judgment for others (39).

If we refuse to acknowledge our need, we remain spiritually blind (40-41).

Application

Write out your story of what Jesus did for you.

When people ask questions about your story ...

Keep the focus on Jesus and what he did for you.

Don't argue or be defensive.

Don't get caught up in theological debate.

Who can you share your story with this week?