

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 9:1-41

Topic

Jesus heals a man blind from birth by applying clay mixed with saliva on his eyes

Title

"Here's Mud in Your Eye"

The theater erupted in whooping and hollering when Matt Murdoch appeared in *Spider-Man: No Way Home*.

Murdoch is a lawyer by day, Daredevil by night. He does both as a blind man.

Blind superheroes hone their other senses to compensate.

The Pharisees were blind anti-heroes who honed the traits of their sin nature to condemn.

Their 'super powers' were pride, self-righteousness, disdain for others, conceit, selfishness, prejudice, rudeness, etc. They thought they could "see," but Jesus will diagnose them as spiritually blind.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 When You Acknowledge You Are Blind, You Will See**, but **#2 When You Insist You Can See, You Are Blind**.

#1 - When You Acknowledge You Are Blind, You Will See (v1-5)

In the finale of *Seinfeld*, Jerry, Elaine, Kramer, and George witnessed an overweight man named Howie getting carjacked at gunpoint. They made fat jokes while Kramer filmed the theft on his camcorder. Howie found a policeman nearby, who arrested the group on a 'duty to rescue' violation that requires bystanders to help.

The disciples saw the man born blind, undoubtedly begging. They ignored him and began a discussion about sin and suffering. It was a 'duty to offer spiritual rescue' violation.

Joh 9:1 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

Joh 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Their question reveals their belief that sickness is always directly associated with a person's sin. It is an ancient attempt to answer the questions suggested by a loving, omnipotent God allowing suffering. Job is the premier example in the Bible.

The disciples wondered how this man could be born blind, as a consequence of personal sin, before he had opportunity to commit sin. Could he have sinned in the womb? Could he be afflicted on account of the sin of his parents?

There was a begging blind man and Jesus' disciples felt it was the perfect time to have a theological discussion. *May that never be said of us.*

The disciples had witnessed all manner of healings, and were witnesses of Jesus' constant compassion. Nevertheless, they put help on hold.

We can get lost in our theology at the expense of sharing Jesus. There are groups who protest at evangelistic events because their theology tells them that altar calls are not biblical.

Joh 9:3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

One of the Bible paraphrase versions renders this, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do."

F.F. Bruce writes,

"This does not mean that God deliberately caused the child to be born blind in order that, after many years, His glory should be displayed in the removal of the blindness. To think so would be aspersion on the character of God. It does mean that God overruled the disaster of the child's blindness so that, when the child grew to manhood, he might, by the recovering of his sight, see the glory of God in the face of Christ, and others, seeing the work of God, might turn to the true Light of the World."

We know who sinned. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. All subsequent sin, suffering, and death, stem from that. This man's blindness was a manifestation of original sin, *not* a result of his sin in particular.

Suffering and affliction *can* be a direct consequence of sin. Not here, however. And not usually. The man was born blind because we live in a fallen world.

He was a man born blind. I am the man born to have Parkinson's disease. Pam was born to have MS. Some of you are the men and women born to have cancer.

Even if this man had caused his own blindness by sinning, compassion and the Gospel are due him.

Joh 9:4 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.

Joh 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

"I must work the works of Him who sent me" can be rendered, "**We** must work the works of Him who sent me." This is certainly the better translation. It is in agreement with what Jesus says in Matthew 5:14, "**You** are the light of the world," and in John 14:12, "He who believes in Me, the **works** that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do."

"Night is coming" when the "light" is removed. That cannot refer to Jesus' ascension to Heaven, since we carry on His work until He returns. This could be the resurrection and rapture of the church that ushers in the Great Tribulation. When the church is removed, the darkness of the Great Tribulation begins.

Jesus came as the light of the world into pitch darkness where every human is born blind. Dr. David Gooding writes, "As any practical evangelist will tell you, they will find people that by God's gracious Holy Spirit, have been worked upon, and their conscience has been aroused. Maybe they haven't gotten to the point of complete illumination, but they're stopping to think. And God, in His

mercy, brings a preacher to them, and these folks have been prepared. And when they hear the Gospel, they believe.”

#2 - When You Insist You Can See, You Are Blind (v6-41)

If this chapter were a game show, we’d call it, *Silly Sabbath*, and we’d be searching for absurd Sabbath traditions. We’re going to encounter a top five entry.

Joh 9:6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

Making clay with saliva violated the Sabbath.

A Jewish site I often consult said this: “Kneading [as in kneading bread dough] is forbidden on *Shabbat*. **This encompasses all activities which, like kneading, join small particles into one mass using liquid, and applies to both foods and non-foods.**”

Joh 9:7 And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

No reason is given for sending him to Siloam. It does show us that God leads in different ways. He likes to shake things up so that we can’t put our walk on autopilot.

Joh 9:8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”

Joh 9:9 Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.” He said, “I am *he*.”

It can be quite a shock when you visit an infirm person whom you have not seen in a long time.

Likewise, if you saw someone who had been infirm, now in perfect health, you might not recognize him or her.

Joh 9:10 Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

Joh 9:11 He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”

Joh 9:12 Then they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.”

Two sentences. Thirty-one words. Ten seconds. That's how long it took the previously blind man to share his testimony of Jesus Christ. It was long enough when coupled with his transformed life.

Here is a dare: Write your testimony to come in under fifteen seconds, with forty or fewer words.

Joh 9:13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees.

Joh 9:14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

Unimaginable joy must have filled this man's heart. He would have wanted to see everything, with a sense of contagious wonder.

First stop on his sight-tour: The Pharisees. His peers thought he needed to 'see' what violating the Sabbath was like.

Joh 9:15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

One sentence. Twelve words. Under five seconds. *For the times when you don't have ten seconds.*

Joh 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

Joh 9:17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

"Prophet" is high praise, but not in comparison to the sinless Son of God. He didn't know Jesus, but was being prepped by God the Holy Spirit to meet Him.

Joh 9:18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.

Joh 9:19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

Joh 9:20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

Joh 9:21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."

Joh 9:22 His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that He was Christ*, he would be put out of the synagogue.

Joh 9:23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

You who are parents. If your child who had been born blind could miraculously see... You know what I mean. For him to see your face for the first time. Priceless.

That is, *as long as it wasn't the Sabbath*. The parents were afraid. Fear overcame their joy, robbing them.

Religious fear is awful, robbing you of assurance and joy. A huge percentage of what Christians post to social media is religious fear mongering. Here is a quote: "The only reason you feel like raising your hands at a high point in a worship service is that your expectations have been shaped by 20th century Pentecostalism. If you lived before 1900, it wouldn't even occur to you to raise your hands while singing." That is religious fear mongering.

Joh 9:24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

Joh 9:25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

The Pharisees could not see beyond the things they had added to ruin the Sabbath. Their Savior was declared a sinner by their traditions.

Jesus kept the Sabbath. He kept it the way it was intended to be kept.

The man born blind brought the discussion back to his testimony.

Joh 9:26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

Joh 9:27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

Joh 9:28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.

Joh 9:29 We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for this fellow*, we do not know where He is from."

I don't think the man born blind was being disrespectful. "Do you also want to become His disciples" was his version of a call to salvation.

He started a game of Blind Man's Rebuff:

Joh 9:30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!

Joh 9:31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.

Joh 9:32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.

Joh 9:33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

I think it is safe to say that God the Holy Spirit prompted the man born blind to say these things. He certainly gave him the boldness to do it. I would go so far as to say that the man born blind was offering himself a living sacrifice.

Joh 9:34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

The Pharisees subscribed to the same theology of sin and sickness that taught affliction was always the direct consequence of sin. It causes you to see people as useless castaways, not beloved of God.

We are born in trespasses and sins. God works to bring us in to His forever family, not cast us out.

"Cast out" means *excluded from the sacred assemblies*. We use the word, *excommunicated*.

It was a severe punishment in a tribal society at a time you never lived more than a few miles from your birth.

It illustrates that new life in Jesus is incompatible with the self-righteousness of keeping the Law of Moses. Instead of being corrupted by a false sense of observing the Sabbath, the man born blind would experience the rest and freedom that the Sabbath was intended to bring. Being cast out was the best thing that could have happened.

Joh 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

Joh 9:36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

We mentioned that God the Holy Spirit prepares hearts to hear the Gospel and believe. See if this makes sense. Jesus began a work in him by putting mud on his eyes. Jesus sent him to Siloam. The man born blind obeyed Jesus. Returning, he encountered an evangelist - the Lord. He was called upon to believe, and he did, and was saved.

Joh 9:37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

Remember - *he had not seen the Lord*. Jesus said, "Here's mud in your eyes," then sent him off to Siloam.

Joh 9:38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

What must you do to be saved? *Believe in Jesus*. (But remember - Don't raise your hands!).

Joh 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

The apostle Paul explained this "judgment" using a different illustration. He said, "Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life" (Second Corinthians 2:14-16).

- The Gospel is the "aroma of life leading to life," opening spiritually blind eyes.
- The Gospel is "the aroma of death leading to death," blinding those who think that they see.

Joh 9:40 Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

You couldn't swing a cat without hitting a Pharisee. Did they take shifts following Jesus?

Joh 9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."

They thought they had spiritual sight, that they were saved, because they kept the Law of Moses. By rejecting Jesus, they proved that they remained dead in trespasses and sins.

Regarding the "blind" having "no sin," one commentator paraphrases it, "If you were not only without the light, but also conscious of this deplorable condition, and anxiously yearning for God's salvation, no charge could be brought against you."

We have at home small lamps that heat scented wax. A Christian is like that. Light & Aroma to bring the Gospel to those who are perishing.

Christians are involved in a debate on precisely how a person has the light go on, and becomes conscious of sin and their need for a Savior:

- Reformed theologian R.C. Sproul says, "Regeneration precedes faith." He means you must be born-again *before* you can believe.
- Our position is that believing *precedes* regeneration. You believe and are born-again.

Here are two strong reasons why we believe what we do:

1. There is no Scripture that *directly* says regeneration precedes faith. It is a logical deduction necessitated by a system of theology.
2. Many, many, many verses affirm that you believe and then are saved.¹ One example will suffice. Galatians 3:26, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus..." Becoming a son (born of God) is a fruit of faith, not the other way around.

The "regeneration precedes faith" group hold to it as an essential that you must believe. Truth is, *either view can be held by a Christian.*

This might help you choose one over the other:

¹ Acts 11:18, John 5:40, John 6:53, John 6:57, John 20:31, Acts 15:9, John 1:12-13, John 12:36, Ephesians 1:13, Galatians 3:2&5, Galatians 3:14-16, First Timothy 1:16, Colossians 2:12, James 1:18.
<https://soteriology101.com/2016/03/09/does-regeneration-precede-faith/>

1. If you think that regeneration precedes faith, then you believe God predestined who would be saved. God overlooked the majority of human beings. He could have saved them, but instead He predestined them to perish in the Lake of Fire.
2. If you think that faith precedes regeneration, you believe that the Gospel is a genuine call to every human heart, to "whosoever will believe," prepared by God the Holy Spirit, to be saved.

A.W. Tozer writes, *"Our Lord has given an invitation that excludes no one. 'Whosoever' is as broad as the human race."*