



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

SERIES: JOHN

LESSON: THE WAY OF SEEING

JOHN 9:1-41

5/23/21

MAIN POINT

Jesus is the light of the world who gives sight to the blind and blinds the sighted.

JOHN CONTEXT

This might be a good time to ask your group “what is the purpose of John?” And then see if they can recite or at least remember this concept (John 20:31).

Every lesson’s purpose: “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:31

But it is also a good time to capture what is happening in this section. This narrative happens in the context of a larger section in John (John 5-10) where Jesus faces increasing opposition from the Jewish leaders. This section also includes two signs, both on the Sabbath and both leading to a desire to see him killed.¹

INTRODUCTION

Let's review

What's happened up to this point? This is a continuation of a section, so what claims did Jesus just make in John 8 about himself? What has been the reaction of the people and Jewish leaders? This can be popcorn answers to help them remember where we're at in the narrative and what has transpired thus far.

Here are some sample themes/concepts to pull out. Who are the characters in this narrative? What do we know about them? What ideas do these characters discuss? How do they respond? What themes from John are continued in this narrative?

This section is an application and explanation of two of Jesus' claims in John 8. "I am the light of the world" (8:12) and "Before Abraham was, I AM" (8:58). Both of these claims lead to opposition. Both of these claims are a declaration of deity that is made manifest in his healing of the blind man in John 9.

EXPLANATION // ...believe Jesus is the Christ...

¹ Taken from John: Read, Mark, Learn by St. Helen's Bishops Gate, p.65.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ JOHN 9:1-41 (THIS IS A LONG PASSAGE, SO BREAKING IT UP INTO GROUPS IS HELPFUL)

This text is divided into five sections: The healing and then four interviews.. So let's dive in.

1. The Healing of the Blind Man (verses 1-7).

Look at the verses again. Who are the characters in this scene?

What important question do the disciples ask Jesus in verse 2? How does he respond in verses 3-5?

What are those "works" that he is talking about?

In John 8:12, Jesus says "I am the light of the world." And here, he gives "light" to a man in physical darkness. We know that these signs are meant to point to a deeper spiritual reality, so keep that in mind as we dive into the various interviews that take place after his healing. This man went from physical darkness to physical light.

2. Interview Number 1 – The Neighbors and the Pharisees (verses 8-17).

Like a lot of the signs Jesus performs, everyone is confused. But this time, he leaves them to figure out what is going on. He doesn't reappear until the end of

the narrative. Who are the characters in this interview scene? What are their varied responses to this man's healing?

How does the formerly blind man respond to their questions?

Verse 14 provides a key contextual detail for this scene. When did this healing occur? Think back to another healing performed in John that occurred on a Sabbath day. In John 5:1-16 Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, which led to much opposition. In the table below, compare and contrast this healing with the entire section of John 9:1-41

Text	Compare	Contrast
John 5:1-16		
John 9:1-41		

3. Interview Number 2 – The Parents and the Pharisees (verses 18-23).

How do the man's parents respond to the Pharisees questions?

John inserts a really helpful explanation for their response in verse 22. What is it?

4. Interview Number 3 – The Interview That Leads to Rejection (verses 24-34).

The Pharisees cut right to the chase in this interview. What do they say in verse 24?

It seems that they are trying to discredit Jesus in this interview. How do they try to do this? (Look at verses 28-29, 24)

How does this man respond to their questions in verses 30-32?

5. Interview Number 4 – The Most Important Interview of His Life (verses 35-41).

This interview comes right after the climax in verse 24. What has just happened to this man?

This entire conversation is an explanation of all that has just transpired in the previous verses. Like he has done in so many other encounters in John, Jesus comes back to find this man in order to draw out his belief. And amazingly, this man believes! (see verses 35-37). But the main idea in this text is found in verse 39. Have someone in your group read this verse out loud.

How does this man's healing point to this truth that Jesus is saying here?

Can you think of other encounters in John where Jesus draw out belief like he does with this man?

This is a really sobering section of scripture. Think about what a natural human response to healing might be. It's joy, right? Someone is healed of anything, let alone blindness, and we want to tell everyone about how miraculous the healing is. But how does everyone respond? The neighbors respond with doubt and confusion. The Pharisees respond with unbelief. Even his own parents refuse to acknowledge how it happened, or that it even happened. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." But up to this point only one person is able to see—the man who once lived in utter darkness. But in contrast to the healing of the man in John 5, and we see that not everyone who is healed by Jesus truly understands who he is. Verse 39 seems to be the key idea in this entire narrative. Jesus came not just to give sight to the blind, but to blind those who think they see. Throughout this narrative we see two competing progressions. The progression of a physically blind man who is given both physical and spiritual sight. And the progression of physically sighted people being further blinded by their own rebellion and rejection of the Son. The truly sighted person, this once blind man, only grows in his sight as the opposition to him grows right alongside his sight. This proves that he truly is a follower of Jesus because he perseveres.

SUPPORTING VERSES: ISAIAH 6:9-10, 29:18, 23:3, 35:5; JOHN 1:4-5, 10-13

Have someone read each of the supporting verses. What do these verses say about the Messiah?

Now look back at this week's text. How do these verses help explain the blind man's response, the Pharisee's response, and Jesus' response?

It is incredibly striking that the religious leaders are the ones rejecting Jesus here. They knew the scriptures, even these Isaiah verses, and yet they do not see what is happening right in front of them. One commentator says "The shock of these chapters is enormous—especially to John's audience. John wants to persuade his readers that they must acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. John's point is that *they* must believe, even if the Jews won't: he makes it clear that the Jews' unbelief is a reflection of their own sin, and not of Jesus being false."² In many ways, tragic as it is, this response was predicted. Jesus' kingdom is an upside-down kingdom, where those who are expected are not saved and healed, and those who aren't are brought into the fold. The point is still belief. You don't get into his kingdom by knowing enough. You don't get in by being part of the right group. You get in through the Savior. You get in by belief.

APPLICATION // ...have life in His name.

This man was cast out by the leaders, but received by the Savior. Can you think of a time in your life where you were rejected by the ones who were respected (whether

² IBID, 109.

in church or society)? How would knowing that you're loved and received by Jesus change your response to that circumstance?

Jesus is absent for most of this incident. He heals the man in the beginning, but then leaves him to himself for a while. Is there a time in your life where God's testing of you made you feel like you were alone in the battle? How would this text encourage you if you faced that trial again?

This is not the point of this text, but is an important verse in the text. Jesus says the man wasn't born blind because of a specific sin but so his works could be displayed in his life (verse 3). As far as we know, this man is an adult when he is healed. So he likely spent his entire life blind, but for what? To be healed by Jesus in adulthood and then ultimately rejected by everyone else? Can you think of a time in your life where God's ways with you were surprising like this? How does the character of Jesus, as seen in this passage, help you trust him?

BE PREPARED

One of the best ways to get a grasp of the text is to read the sermon text ahead of time. Many of us want to spend more time in the Bible in the new year—what better way than reading along with the sermon series! Below is the text for next week, along with some questions you can use to help you get acquainted with the text on your own time.

1. Read John 10. During this reading don't write down anything. Just read the text.
2. Observe: Read the text again.
 - Write down as many questions you can think of. These can be questions like "What does Jesus mean by XX?" or "What is the nature of true faith in this text?"

- Write down as many repeated phrases (or repeated ideas you've heard of before). Write down key ideas from their interaction with each other. Where have you seen this elsewhere in John?

3. Interpret: Read the text again.

- Can you think of any other verses in scripture that tie into what you've just read? In the Old Testament? What about the New Testament? If you need help, that's okay! That's a normal part of studying the Bible. Pull out a study Bible or an online program that includes cross references. This will help you see where other verses tie into what is happening in this text.
- Read John 20:31—how does this verse explain what is happening in this text?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, asking God to press this truth that was studied.