



Spiritual sight or spiritual blindness?

John 9 – Leader’s version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

Read John 9 v 1-12

You might like to ask people to read the various parts in the passage

Narrator: As Jesus went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him

Disciples: ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’

Jesus: ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, 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.’

Narrator: After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.

Jesus: ‘Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam’

Narrator: Siloam word means ‘Sent’. So the man went and washed and came home seeing. His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked

Neighbours: ‘Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?’

Narrator: Some claimed that he was. Others said,

Others: ‘No, he only looks like him.’

Narrator: But he himself insisted,

Man: 'I am the man.'

Others: 'How then were your eyes opened?'

Man: 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.'

Others: 'Where is this man?'

Man: 'I don't know.'

1. Jesus and His disciples see a blind man. What do the disciples assume in v2?

They assume that he is blind because of someone's sin. This is not a trick question, it's a real one, so Jesus gives a straight answer.

2. Read v3-5. What is the straight answer to the question, 'Whose sin caused the blindness?'

Nobody. (Sickness is indirectly a result of all humanity's sin in that it is a result of the fall, but that is not what is being discussed in this passage).

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Jesus says in v3 that this man's blindness is an opportunity for God's glory to be displayed. Have you ever seen God working through someone's suffering?

3. What do you think Jesus means when He refers to 'night coming, when no-one can work'?

He's talking about His crucifixion and death. Jesus is working, as the light of the world, during His earthly ministry and He works through His followers after the resurrection.

4. Why do you think Jesus makes the statement 'I am the light of the world' at this point?

The man's world has always been in darkness. Jesus is using this man's physical darkness to illustrate 'the darkness of the world' (our spiritual darkness).

5. Read v6-7. What does Jesus do for the man?

He heals him. We're not told that the man asked for healing! Jesus has the power and authority to heal the man just by speaking, but this time He makes mud with saliva, puts it on the man's eyes and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam. It's not clear why Jesus works like this on this occasion, however it does result in physical contact with, and obedience from, the blind man.

6. Read v8-12. What happens when the man comes back from washing in the pool, having been healed?

There is confusion amongst those who know him as to whether he is the same man or not. He had been blind since birth, this is a lot to take in for the crowd! Having received his sight, it's possible that his posture, demeanor and confidence have significantly changed – maybe the crowd think he just looks like the blind man, but isn't behaving like him?

He says he doesn't know where Jesus is. When he met Jesus he was blind, so he didn't know what Jesus looked like!

Questions 7-9 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group work on them in pairs.

7. **SDL** Read v13-17. The people take the man to the Pharisees. How do the Pharisees react to the good news of the healing of the blind man?

Instead of celebrating, they take issue with Jesus having done this on the Sabbath.

8. **SDL** The opinion of the Pharisees is divided. What are the two opinions they have?

Some say Jesus cannot be from God because He had broken the Sabbath. Others say a sinner could not do such a miracle (someone who broke the Sabbath was 'a sinner').

9. **SDL** What is the man's opinion of Jesus at this stage?

That He is a prophet i.e. someone sent by God to tell the people God's message.

10. Read v18-27. The Pharisees call more witnesses (the man's parents, who weren't very helpful) and then call the man back in. What do you think of the man's response in v27?

Considering that he is talking to the Pharisees, the man has guts! He was probably fed up of being asked the same question and giving the same answer repeatedly when all he wanted to do was go out and look at things! He challenges them about their own response to what Jesus has done.

11. Read v28-33. What do the Pharisees now state as their problem with Jesus? How does the man respond?

They say that they don't know where Jesus comes from. The man says, enigmatically, 'You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes'.

12. Read Isaiah 29 v 18, 35 v 5 and 42 v 7. These verses from the Old Testament are recognised to refer to the coming Messiah. What should the Pharisees have understood about Jesus as a result of this healing?

They should have deduced that Jesus is the Messiah.

13. The man has told the Pharisees that Jesus is from God. How do they respond? (v34)

They throw him out of the synagogue.

14. Read v35-39. What does Jesus do when He hears about this? (v35)

He searches for the man and asks him if he believes in the Son of Man (a title from the OT that refers to one coming from God, which Jesus used to refer to Himself).

15. How did the man respond and what is the difference between the way he addresses Jesus in v36 and v38.

He uses the title 'sir' in v36 but 'Lord' in v38. As his understanding has deepened, he has recognised that Jesus is his Lord and he worships Him v38 – he has understood that Jesus is worthy of worship.

16. Read John 9 v 39. In the passage we have read today, who was truly blind and who had good vision?

The man who had been blind can now see – physically and spiritually. But the Pharisees, who were supposed to be able to see spiritually, were actually blind because they did not recognise that Jesus is the Messiah.

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Look back over your own life. Do you see how you have been spiritually blind at some point in the near or distant past? Can you see how your blindness has been, or is being, healed by Jesus?

Check out – ask how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

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