

November/December 2009

SMALL GROUP SERIES:

7 Signs of Jesus

Discussion Guide

Sign #6

Jesus Heals the Blind Man

Sign #6: Jesus Heals the Blind Man

John 9:1-41 (TNIV)

1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. 8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." 10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. 11 He replied, "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." 12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided.

17 Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." 18 They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 19 "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

20 "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. 21 But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23 That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God and tell the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." 25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see! 26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" 28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, [a] "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." 40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" 41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

Notes For Reflection:

Facilitator's Guide

Helpful Background Information for the Passage:

9:2. Jewish teachers believed that suffering, including blindness, was often due to sin; one could suffer for one's parents' sins or even for a sin committed by mother or fetus during the pregnancy.

9:14-16. This is a natural Pharisaic response on the sabbath (5:9-12; see comment on Mk 2:23-3:6). Kneading (dough, and by analogy clay) was one of thirty-nine classes of work forbidden on the sabbath. Pharisees were divided among themselves on many issues in Jesus' day, and they had still not settled those issues by the end of the first century, when John was writing.

9:22-23. Pharisaic law was scrupulous about cross-examining witnesses fairly and without prejudice; these interrogators thus violate Pharisaic ethical teaching. Excommunication was one of the severest forms of discipline administered by a synagogue community and was apparently rare and thus very harsh in the time of Jesus.

9:31. This view reflects good Jewish piety: everyone taught that God heard the pious but rejected the prayers of the ungodly

9:32-33. The minor premise of the argument (9:31) is that an extraordinary miracle was done; the conclusion is that Jesus is a righteous man. Syllogism—the practice of demonstrating a conclusion from two accepted premises—was a common way of arguing a case in antiquity.

Blindness from birth was thought an especially difficult ailment to cure; in the rare instances when such extraordinary healings were claimed at a pagan healing shrine (e.g., empty eye sockets filled), they became a cause for much praise to the pagan god held responsible for them.

The InterVarsity Press Bible Background Commentary, Craig Keener

Facilitator's Tip of the Week

When Jesus healed blind man, what do you think was the first thing the blind man saw? Perhaps *light*? We are celebrating this Advent season that **Jesus** is the **Light of the World**. Each week the sermon and worship programs focus on this theme, culminating with a Christmas Eve celebration. Consider worshiping on Christmas Eve together as a group –there are 8 services to pick from!

1:00 & 3:00 p.m. – Children & Youth Choirs, Live Animals

5:00 p.m. – Contemporary Band, Brass, Organ – Sanctuary

5:00 p.m. – Worship Café, Grace Notes – Fellowship Center

7:00 & 9:00 p.m. – Chancel Choir & Orchestra

10:30 p.m. - Communion

Jesus Heals the Blind Man

START IT

- Share about a time in your life when you were blind to something.
- What's the connection between seeing and believing?

STUDY IT

- How do people interact with Jesus in this passage?
- How does Jesus interact with people in this passage?
- What's the scandal in this story?
- What's significant about how Jesus heals the blind man?
- What do you notice about the reactions to Jesus?
- In what ways are the Pharisees blind to who Jesus is?
 - Why does their blindness bring judgment on the Pharisees?
- After studying this story, what's the connection between seeing and believing?

LIVE IT

- In what ways are we blind to who Jesus is?
- Where might God want to heal you from blindness?
- What do you need to see in order to believe?

PRAY IT

- That we would be healed of our spiritual blindness.
- That we might have the courage to break the rules to love others well like Jesus did.