

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, March 15, 2026

Based on John 9:1ff "The Man Born Blind From Birth"

Some stories are meant to be told again and again. Take the story of the Blind Man in our Gospel for today.

In John 9, the man, formerly known as the blind man, is asked to retell his story at least 3 times. But the motivations of the Pharisees asking him to tell his story were not because they were happy for him or rejoicing that he could see, but out of fear, fear that their way of doing church is threatened by Jesus. So, they interrogated the man in order to discredit Jesus for healing him on the Sabbath. Only God can heal on the sabbath. Little did they know, Jesus is God in human flesh.

The healing starts with the disciples seeing the blind man and asking a theological question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The prevailing theology of the time was that if you had a physical disability or a neuro diversity of some sort, it was because you sinned or your parents sinned. Thankfully, Jesus debunks this idea. He said, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; however, his blindness will be used to reveal God's works in him." It is true, God uses all of us to reveal God's glory regardless of our physical and mental abilities.

And John's Gospel, keep in mind that the whole purpose of Jesus' signs/miracles, like this one, is to move people onto a path of believing in Jesus as God's Son and Messiah. Here, the miracle combined with the blind man's testimony will move people to a place of belief.

Notice, in this story, the blind man's faith is never mentioned, nor did he ask Jesus to be healed. Jesus just made a mud elixir with his spit and told the man to go wash in the pool of Siloam. He never saw Jesus directly, he heard him and felt him putting mud on his eyes, but the key is that he listened to what Jesus said and went and did it. The same is for us to. Listening to Jesus' word and commands can bring new/abundant life to us as well. He did what Jesus told him to do. As a result, he could see for the first time. He went from a place of only seeing darkness to seeing in the light. His whole identity changed.

Instead of begging at the city gates, he is now in public giving his testimony of how a man healed him. But nobody recognized him or accepted his testimony readily.

It is Like in Monty Python's movie the Life of Brian, a religious satire set in the time of Jesus, Brian, the main character is constantly being mistaken for the Messiah. In one scene, Brian is walking through a crowded street when a young, tan, man comes bouncing beside him crying, "Alms for an ex-leper?" He tells Brian his story, "I was hopping along, minding my own business, and all of a sudden, up comes a man named Jesus and he cures me! One minute, I'm a leper with a trade, the next minute my livelihood's gone!"

That's the same issue with our blind man. He is no longer eligible to beg and has no formal training in anything else. People had a hard time accepting his testimony and welcoming him back into community.

When the religious leaders found out that he was healed on the sabbath, they considered Jesus a sinner for breaking sabbath laws. He can't be from God, can he? Then they questioned if the man was truly blind from birth. So, they went and found his parents and they confirmed he was blind from birth. When pressed further, out of fear of being kicked out of the synagogue, they said, "He is of age, ask him." So, they went to the man formerly known as blind again and asked him again about the man who healed him. He said, "I don't know that he is a sinner. All I know is that I once was blind but now I see." Amazing grace.

The religious leaders, still hung up on this man being a sinner and Jesus too, drove him out of the community.

There are different kinds of blindness, physical blindness and spiritual blindness. The Pharisees were spiritually blind, not seeing God working in their midst and they were stuck in the legalities of scripture. But we too are spiritually blind. We get stuck in our ways, or don't always see God working in our midst. But like Psalm 23 says, even in our lives when we are in the darkest valley, or the valley of the shadow God is with us. We shall not fear. Because of the cross

of Jesus Christ, God is with us always in the good and the bad. God will never stop pursuing us.

And there is a lot of fear in the world. The fear of the unknown. The fear of war and repercussions of war. The fear of speaking the truth because maybe we are afraid of being cast out of our communities or our families. But we are called to speak the truth in love. To proclaim the gospel of God's love for all.

At the end of the story, the man formerly known as blind was cast out of his community. He was an outcast. But in hearing this, Jesus went to find the man he healed. They have a conversation and Jesus asked him "Do you believe in the Son of Man? He said, "I believe". The man, who once was blind but now can see, becomes a true disciple of Jesus.

We too are called to share our stories. The way God is present in our lives willing healing and wholeness for us. May we have eyes to see that God is with us in the valley of the shadow and invites our trust that God is working in our world to bring us hope and peace. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.