

DISCUSSION GUIDE: John 9

November 19, 2017

In this stand-alone message, we look at John 9 and the account of Jesus healing a man born blind from birth. This story serves as a contrast between the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees who in their arrogance thought they could see, and the spiritual sight of the blind man, who in his humility was able to see Jesus rightly.

1. The opening scene of this chapter contains a remarkable truth. Jesus disciples' ask him about the reasons for this man's blindness. Jesus uses their short-sighted question to teach them about God's good providence by saying this man was born blind for the purposes of God to be displayed in his life.

—Discuss the implications of this interaction in vv. 1-7. How do Jesus' words about God's sovereignty in the life of this blind man challenge our culture's presuppositions about how things work in life?

—Discuss how a biblical understanding of God's providence can serve to stabilize and comfort Christians in the trials of life and unstable times?

2. A noteworthy detail of the healing of the blind man is Jesus' use of mud (made from his spit!) and his command for the man to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Certainly, Jesus didn't need the mud or the pool to heal him, yet, they are part of the man's healing.

—Discuss what might be behind Jesus' use of the mud and pool. What can we learn from this?

—What are we to make of the fact that this man was not healed instantly, as others were by Jesus? (Certainly, it's not that Jesus lacked the power or authority to do so!). Discuss what this delayed process of healing might teach us.

3. In vv. 18-23 of our text, we read about the blind man's parents and their reaction to their son's healing. It seems as though they were piecing together the possible implications of who Jesus might be, but yet, due to their fear of the Jews, they cowered when asked about their son's healing.

—This interaction with the parents should cause us to reflect on the fear of man. Discuss the subtle and debilitating effects that the fear of man has on people.

—Take time to discuss how we are prone to the fear of man. What subtle ways are we tempted to deny what we know to be true about Jesus? How does this manifest itself in your life?

4. In vv. 24-34, we read where the formerly blind man boldly testifies to the work of Jesus in his life. He doesn't have it all figured out, but, one thing he does know is that Jesus made him see. This caused the still spiritually blind and arrogant Pharisees (who could not deny his healing) to judge him as a sinner unworthy to instruct them.

—Notice the arrogance of the Pharisees and even Jesus' disciples at the beginning of John 9 when discussing the cause of this man's blindness. This shows how prone we can be to judge other people harshly and dismiss them because they challenge our paradigms. What are ways that we fall into a similar arrogance towards people different from us?

5. In vv. 35-41, we see the culminating point of this chapter. More than physical healing, John 9 is about spiritual blindness and spiritual sight. The proud religious leaders who thought they could see were actually blind, while the humble blind man is the one who ends up seeing Jesus rightly.

—In what ways can pride and spiritual arrogance actually blind us to the gospel?

—Take to time pray for one another, that we would correctly see Jesus and respond to him rightly like this humble and healed blind man did.