

Now I See

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[0:00] If you would open up your Bibles to John chapter 9. It's on page 1064 of your pew Bible.!

I see those hands. And as power to the tour, our guide brought us to the deepest part of the cave. And up until this point, everything had been lit up by electrical lights.

We could see everything. And as we got to the deepest part of the cave, our guide informed us that she will now turn off the lights. On a count of three.

Three, two, one, lights out. It was the darkest dark I'd ever experienced. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.

And I felt my son draw close to me in the darkness. Well, after what seemed like a long time, she turned the lights back on.

[1:15] And I could see. Light brought sight. Could you imagine living in a pitch black cave for most of your life?

Having never seen or known light? You'd figure your way out. You'd learn how to grope around and get around the cave a little bit. Could you imagine being born blind?

Never in all of your life knowing light? Just living without sight? This morning as we look to John chapter 9, we're going to look at an account of a man born blind who Jesus gives physical sight.

And this is the sixth sign in the Gospel of John. There's seven signs and this is the sixth sign. But this account is what's called a living parable.

A lived parable. You may have heard of the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus spoke those words. It was a verbal parable. This is a lived parable.

[2:25] And so what it's going to teach is this. Just as this man needed physical sight to see, what it points to is our need for spiritual sight.

We've all been born into spiritual darkness wrought by our sin. We are all born spiritually blind. And Jesus is the light that brings us sight.

To see things, the most important things. And so this lived parable has three different acts. Act 1, there's a healing. Act 2, there's interrogation.

Act 3, there is a revealing. Jesus is the light that gives us sight. Now if you're a child in the room or maybe a grown child and you want to draw, draw me a picture in each of the acts.

I'll give you a heads up when we're going from one act to the other. But draw me a picture. I'd love to see it. So let's head to Act 1. Oh, Act.

[3:30] Act 1. The healing. And this is in verses 9 through 12. If you've seen a play before, you've seen a play. A play has multiple acts.

And then within each act, there are multiple scenes. So it is with this chapter and this lived parable. And in this first act, there are two scenes.

Scene 1 is verses 1 through 7. So let me read it for you. As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned?

This man or his parents? That he was born blind. Jesus answered, it was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I'm in the world, I am the light of the world.

[4:24] Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent.

So he went and washed and came back seeing. So this is scene 1. Jesus and his disciples are walking along and his disciples raise a question.

And that is the impetus that starts this lived parable out. And here's the question. Well, it's actually assumption. They assume that this man who was born blind is blind because of his own personal sin or his parents' personal sin.

So that was the assumption. And it was the common misunderstanding of the day. That if you had suffering in your life, it was the result of your personal sin. And God was somehow punishing you for that.

Some wrong you've done. And today there is very similar thinking. Suffering. Suffering enters your life because God is, and you think God is somehow punishing me.

[5 : 30] If you remember, if you're familiar with the book of Job, Job's friends wanted to help Job see why he was suffering. And they were saying, it's some sin that you did.

You need to confess it to the Lord. They were wrong. Another version of this is not thinking that your suffering is the result of God punishing you for your sin.

It's you're questioning God's character when hardship enters your life. Because you're saying, I've done nothing wrong. Why is God causing me to suffer?

However, both of these questions are bound up in this kind of misunderstood understanding of suffering and God's role in suffering. And it's in verses 3 through 5 that Jesus provides an alternative explanation.

He doesn't deny that there are real consequences to our actions. We know Galatians 6 is in our Bibles. You reap what you sow. So personal sin can lead to personal hardship, but not always.

[6 : 39] And so in verse 3, Jesus says this, it was not this man sinned or his parents, but the works of God might be displayed.

Jesus isn't saying that this man or his parents were sinless. What he's saying is that there wasn't a particular sin in this case that led to his blindness. And the alternative is that Jesus is saying this man is experiencing blindness so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

There's a redemptive purpose to his suffering. God is behind this. He's using it for his glory. In verses 4 and 5, we see more of this purpose.

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day, night is coming, when no one can work. What Jesus is talking about is the labor that he was doing leading up to his death and that his disciples were a part of that.

And then verse 5, he starts talking about the works of God that are to be displayed. And that's where he links it to this claim, I am the light of the world. He's already referenced this in John 8, 12, where he says, I am the light of the world.

[7 : 56] Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. That goes all the way back to John chapter 1, verses 4 and 5, where Jesus is the new creation light, the new creation light that brings new creation life.

A life that shows up as new birth. A life that shows up as springs of living water inside of you.

A new life that gives new sight. A life that gives new life that gives new life that gives new life that gives new life that He spits on the ground.

He makes some saliva mud pie. And He smears it on the blind man's eye. There's been a lot of speculation as to what this mud pie was all about.

I have a hunch. It's just speculation, though. As Adam came from the dust, so Jesus brings new creation healing from the dust.

[9 : 14] He spits on the ground, smears it on the blind man's eyes, and He says, go wash in the pool of Siloam. And the pool of Siloam means sent. And what you're to think when you hear the word sent is that Jesus has been sent by God.

So this blind man goes, washes, and he receives his sight. He returns seeing. And this is scene one.

It's setting up the lived parable. The healing itself is just the beginning of the story. The beginning of the works of God to be displayed.

Jesus, at this point, leaves the scene. He'll come back later. Scene two. In verses eight and nine, this formerly blind man comes back, and he comes back to his neighbors and those who know him as a beggar because that's how he had to live at the time.

They're like, who is this guy? Is this not the man who used to sit and beg? Verse nine. It is he, said some. Others, no, it's not him.

[10:20] He just looks like him. And the guy who was blind but now sees, he's like, it is me. I am that guy. It's me. Look what he does. They say, then how were your eyes opened?

And he just gives them the facts. The man called Jesus, made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and received my sight.

He's just relaying the facts of how his life was changed. And they said to him, where is he? And he said, I do not know. So this first act, scene one, starts with Jesus providing an alternative explanation of why there is suffering.

That it can put God's glorious works on display. And then scene two, this formerly blind man shares the facts of how he is healed.

And then he does a little bit of a confession. Did you guys notice? The man called Jesus. He has a sense of who healed him.

[11:28] But he at this point have never laid physical eyes on him. Because Jesus said to go to the pool of Siloam. He did. But when he came back, Jesus wasn't there anymore. He's never seen Jesus.

What we're going to see is that his spiritual sight is going to eventually come into full clarity of Jesus.

Act two. Interrogations. There are three scenes in act two. And they're all interrogations. They're interrogations from the Pharisees to people regarding the healing of this blind man.

Scene one is verses 13 through 17. Read that with me. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, he put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see. Some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath.

[12:32] But others said, how can a man who is a sinner do such things? And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, what do you say about him since he has opened your eyes?

He said, he is a prophet. The formerly blind man we see in this passage is now a seeing man. There's something extraordinary that has happened.

And so he is brought to the Pharisees who are the religious leaders of the time. And what they are going to do is either give him the stamp of their approval or not. In verse 14 we learn that this healing took place on the Sabbath.

We've already encountered what happens when Jesus has healed somebody on the Sabbath. That was John 5 and the healing of the paralytic. And it was very upsetting to the Pharisees because the Pharisees thought that this was a major no-no.

The Pharisees wanted to keep the Sabbath, but they also wanted to keep their oral traditions around the Sabbath. They had the set of oral traditions that they had elevated to the same scale in importance of Scripture.

[13:41] And these rules were governing how you observe the Sabbath. And so when Jesus healed on the Sabbath, they thought he was breaking the Sabbath. In verse 15, the Pharisees asked the formerly blind man how he received his sight.

And again, he's just consistent. He put mud on my eyes. I washed. I see. In verse 16, there's this disagreement that breaks out.

Some of the Pharisees are saying that this is a blatant infraction of not keeping the Sabbath according to their oral traditions. Therefore, this man is not from God.

Others are saying, how can a sinner do a sign like this? Remember, this is the sixth sign. And it seems as though these Pharisees are already familiar with other signs that Jesus has done.

And let me just remind you that all of these signs in the Gospel of John are designed to cause people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, have eternal life in his name.

[14:52] So in verse 17, in their division, they ask this formerly blind man, hey, what do you think?

I've got a picture I want to show you. Mary, would you show it? This is a device called a four-opter. Has anybody put their face in a four-opter before?

Many of us have. It's designed, it's uses with eye doctors. And an eye doctor, put your face in that. And he has you looking at the kind of letter list, the E.

And then you have gradually kind of letters and lines that are getting smaller and smaller. And then your face is in there. And they're blocking one eye.

And you're looking through one eye. And he starts, or she starts giving you different lens options.

They'll be like, okay, can you see clearer in this lens or this lens? Click, click. The first lens.

[15 : 56] And then they'll show you kind of a next step. They'll say, go to the next line down, which is clearer. This lens or this lens? Click, click. Or the second lens.

And what is all aimed to do, this four-opter is designed to give you better clarity of sight. That you see things with greater clarity so that you can have an accurate corrective lens.

And what we're going to see throughout this passage is that there's a four-opter work going on.

That this blind man who's been physically healed of his sight is now gaining clarity in his spiritual sight.

So in the first act, this former blind man says that the man Jesus did something. And now, when he's asked, how do you make of this man?

What do you say that he is? What do you say about him? He says, he's a prophet. So he goes from calling Jesus just a man to now talking about him as a prophet.

[17 : 03] Like Elijah or Elisha who healed people, who was uniquely sent by God. God, scene two, 18 through 23.

These Pharisees realize that they need to get more information. You can see it in verse 18. The Jews did not believe that he had been blind from birth and had received his sight.

So they called his parents in. This is scene two. The second interrogation is with this blind man's mom and dad. And so what we have is the Pharisees ask them three questions.

You can see that in verse 19. First question, is this your son? Second question, who you say was born blind? Was he born blind from birth? And third question, how then does he now see?

And the parents answer each one. First answer, verse 20. We know that this is our son. Yes, he's our son. Second answer, and that he was born blind.

[18 : 08] Yes, he was born blind. Third answer, but how he now sees, we do not know, nor do we know, who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is of his age. He will speak for himself.

Please do not talk to us about who may or may not have healed him. It's like they're kind of taking the fifth. They're like, we don't want to talk about this.

Yeah, he's our son. He was born blind. But as far as how he now sees, we have no idea. That's a little weird. That's a little odd.

Because certainly they would have known. So why are they behaving this way? Well, we have a little kind of parenthetical note from John, the writer of this gospel.

Verse 22. They don't want to come anywhere close to acknowledging that Jesus had a role in this man's receiving of his sight.

[19 : 15] Because they wouldn't want to be confused for saying that he's the Christ, the Messiah, the King of Kings, the Son of Man. You see what's going on here is called the fear of man.

And the fear of man is preventing these parents from even speaking the name of Jesus. So that's why he says he is of age, ask him.

Their fear of man has blinded them. And so we move on to another interrogation. Scene 3, verses 24 through 34.

The third interrogation is a re-interrogation of the blind man. They call him back. And they say in verse 24, Give glory to God.

We know that this man is a sinner. It's a test. They're saying, hey, you're either with us or against us.

[20 : 22] Give glory to God. Is this man a sinner? Yes or no? They're talking about Jesus. This man, they don't even reference his name. They're really putting him in a spot.

In verse 25, we get a sense of the humility of this man. In verse 25, he says this, Whether he's a sinner, I do not know.

One thing I do know. That though I was blind, now I see. Maybe you know the version. One thing I know. I was once blind, but now I see.

He's like, I'm just keeping to the facts. I can't make a pronouncement as far as his sinful or sinless character, but I can't deny the fact that I once was blind, but now I see.

26, the Pharisees circle back to how did this happen? How did he open your eyes? In verse 27, we start seeing something of interest from this formerly blind man.

[21:37] I have told you already, and you would not listen. It's a little bit of a confrontation. Hey, I've already told you how he opened my eyes. That was interrogation one. Why do you want to hear again?

Do you also want to become his disciple? Which says that this formerly blind man wants to become his disciple.

You too? It's not clear if this is like genuine, do you want to become his disciple too? Or it's more sarcastic. What, do you want to become his disciple too?

He's starting to smell the hypocrisy on the Pharisees. That this is not some kind of objective questioning, trying to get the facts. They've already made a decision.

You see, the wise man, this blind man, has a clarifying view of who Jesus is. He's starting to see Jesus with greater clarity more and more.

[22:48] And with that clarity comes conviction. And with that conviction comes courage. Even at cost. They revile him in verse 28.

They reviled him. You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. They're like, there's two ways here. We're disciples of Moses because Moses is better than Jesus.

You're Jesus. This guy who you want to be a disciple of. Moses is better because God spoke to Moses. But this guy, we don't even know where he's from.

To which the former blind man says, why, this is an amazing thing.

You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. You know what he's doing? He's like, hey, I know what you're doing. You're trying to make this an issue about origins, but you cannot get around the fact that he opened my eyes.

[23:56] It's tough to argue with a changed life. Tough to argue with a changed life. So this blind man sees these men for what they truly are.

They don't know what they're talking about. In fact, if you go all the way back to John chapter 5, in 539, regarding Moses, Jesus has already spoken about his relationship to Moses.

And Jesus says this, speaking to the Pharisees, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that bear witness about me. That's a huge claim.

And then in 45, 46, and 47, Jesus continues to say, do not think that I will accuse you to the Father.

There is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? So Jesus has already answered the question, who's greater, he or Moses?

[25:03] Because Moses would say, Jesus is greater. He's been writing about him. So what we see going on here is extraordinary. This man continues on to say, we know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

There is no account in your Bible of a man born blind being healed. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

That's where this blind man lands, formerly blind man. He has moved from calling Jesus a man to a prophet to now one sent from God to do something that there is absolutely no other record of in all of human history, and that is a man born blind being given his sight.

There is this four-opter clicking of clarity going on. These Pharisees then say to him, you were born in utter sin and you would teach us.

They're like, are you crazy? You wicked man. You would teach us? This is the height of pride. The blind man sees the spiritual reality of who Jesus is and he proclaims the truth of it.

[26:47] But these Pharisees who claim to be seeing the Scriptures are actually blind because they're denying Jesus. And they cast him out, out of the synagogue.

The very thing that his parents were deeply afraid of, he steps right into because he's being consistent with what he's saying about Jesus.

So act two are three interrogations, and we see people who are spiritually blind, whether it's these parents out of the fear of man or the Pharisees themselves, because they think that they're right.

But in their thinking of the right, they deny who Jesus is. And we all have this man who was once blind, but now is seeing, and his spiritual sight is gaining clarity.

So that brings us to Act 3, the revealing. And there's two scenes in this. I love verse 35.

[27 : 59] Jesus heard that they had cast him out and having found him. This man bore witness to Jesus. He suffers for it, and Jesus finds him, seeks him out.

He goes and is with him. And he says to him, in verse 35, do you believe in the Son of Man? Now just note this. Jesus now comes back into the story. The last time we saw him was actually we heard him, in verse 7, telling the blind man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

And now he comes back. He's back on the scene. And the question that he's asking is, do you believe in the Son of Man? And if you're not familiar with this title, Son of Man, it's a title from the Old Testament, from the book of Daniel.

And let me just read you the passage that it comes from. This is Daniel 7, 13-14. And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man. And he came to the Ancient of Days, God the Father, and was presented before him.

[29 : 11] And to him the Son of Man was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion, the Son of Man's dominion, is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away in his kingdom, the Son of Man's kingdom, one that shall not be destroyed.

Who has a kingdom? A king! The Son of Man is a king! A coming king! The Christ, the Messiah, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Lord of all.

And so what Jesus is asking, and again, remember, this blind man doesn't recognize who he's talking to. Do you believe that the King of kings has come? Do you believe that the Son of Man has arrived?

And in verse 36, the now-seeing blind man says, Who is he, sir, kind fellow?

Would you point him out to me? Would you show me where he is? Just so I can lay my eyes on him? Just point him out. Just point him out.

[30 : 26] And then in verse 37, Jesus says to him, You have seen him. You have seen the Son of Man.

You have laid your eyes on the King of kings. It is he who is speaking to you.

Do you know what Jesus is claiming? To be the Son of Man. To be the Daniel 7, 13 and 14, King of kings, who will have this everlasting, indestructible kingdom from people, composed of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

This is a huge claim. And is he seeing this with his physical eyes or with his spiritual eyes, the eyes of his heart? And verse 38 is the response.

It's such a poignant confession of spiritual sight. Lord, I believe. Son of Man, I believe.

[31 : 41] Jesus, I believe it's you. Jesus, I believe that you are the King of kings. Maybe better said, Lord, I see you.

I see you for who you are. I see you as the creator of all, the sustainer of all, and the savior of all, and the judge of all.

I see you, and I believe. It's a beautiful response. And what we now see is that this blind man who was given physical sight, now the foreopter has brought full clarity of spiritual sight.

Lord, I believe. I see you. And he falls down and worships Jesus. after he just got kicked out of the synagogue. This is the lived parable of what happens.

Jesus is using this whole account to demonstrate to us that just as a physically blind man needs physical sight, spiritually blind men and women need spiritual sight.

[33 : 06] And Jesus is the light that gives us sight. It's a lived parable. And what this man's faith evidences is that eternal life had come to roost in his heart.

Scene two, Jesus of Act three, Jesus sums up this lived parable and he ends with a word of judgment. He says in verse 39, For judgment I came into this world that those who do not see, he's referring to those who know that they're spiritually blind, those who know they have a need for Jesus.

I came into this world that those who do not see may see, may see me. and that those who do not see and those who see, who think they see, who think they know what's true, may become blind.

It sounds a bit of like a riddle, but he's just describing two groups of people. Those who recognize their need for Jesus because of their sin and they are given sight and those who do not recognize their need for Jesus and they remain blind.

Some Pharisees overhear what he says in verse 40, they overhear it in verse 41, Jesus explains it to them. They're like, are we this kind of blind?

[34 : 38] And Jesus says, if you knew you were blind, you would come to me for sight. And I'd give you eternal life, I'd forgive you of your sins, you'd be part of the family of God.

God, but because you don't know that you're blind, that you think you see, that means your sin remains. You're unforgiven.

God's wrath remains over your head, John 3, 36. And so in this last act, there's this revealing and there's the confession of the blind man, Lord, I believe.

And then there's judgment on these Pharisees who are still blind. So three acts with multiple scenes of a lived parable, what's the point?

It's what I've been telling you all along. Just as the blind need physical sight, so those who are spiritually blind need spiritual sight, and Jesus is the light who gives spiritual sight.

[35 : 43] That's the point. It's a lived parable. So let's apply it. This passage helps us to see with new eyes by the light of Jesus.

Let me point to a few things that changes the way we see. It changes the way that we see suffering. We see it in the new light of Jesus. Not all suffering and hardship is the result of personal sin. Much is, but not all of it. God uses suffering for his redemptive purposes to display his glorious works. God is able to do that.

This act one, scene one. Do you know what? If you're a Christian in the room, do you know what you can be confident of? That God is working out all things for your good. All things for your good. Even your messes that you make, God can unmess them for his glory. It is such good news. So we see suffering in a new light.

[36 : 51] Generally speaking, but we also see a certain kind of suffering in a new light. This blind man was cast out of the synagogue for identifying with Jesus.

It cost him because he witnessed to the truth. If you're going to witness to the truth of Jesus because your eyes have been opened up, it's going to cost you.

Jesus makes no apology for that. But you know what he does? He comes and finds us. He's with us in that.

He doesn't leave us alone in that. It evidences that we're his followers, that we're legit. It changes the way that we think about not just suffering in general, but suffering specific to Jesus.

Don't fear that. It will cost us. There's another area, speaking of witnessing, this Jesus being the light of the world helps us to see witnessing in a new light.

[38 : 03] We saw it. We saw it in this blind man. He went from calling Jesus the man Jesus to a prophet to one who is from God to confessing him as the son of man.

And with each step of the way, with clarity of who Jesus is was a deepening conviction on who Jesus is which resulted in a greater courage of proclaiming who Jesus is.

Do you see how that works? Clarity, conviction, courage. It'll cost you. Clarity, conviction, courage. are you afraid to share your faith? You afraid to witness to Christ? Do you know it? Do you know what you need? You don't need to turn on eye of the tiger before you go out and share your faith. What you need is a more glorious vision of Jesus. The greater clarity you have on him, the greater treasure you will see him for what he is and you will talk about your treasure.

[39 : 19] So we learn something from this blind man in terms of speaking courageously but we also learn something about witnessing in this sense.

Jesus is the light of the world. It's Jesus who gives sight. Not me, not you. Do you know what that does?

That gives you confidence. That translates into courage. That means I can speak to others about Jesus and their coming to Christ doesn't ride on my witness.

Jesus is going to give them eyes to see or not. It frees us up to witness all the more. It makes us prayerful in our witness especially for our loved family members who aren't believers.

We're able to say, Lord Jesus, would you light up their life? Give them sight. We're trusting you to do that. we're trusting you to do that.

[40 : 32] We just are faithful in speaking the gospel. It changes the way that we see people who are not Christians, whether it's a Pharisee-like person who is just saying, I am, I know I'm right, and therefore they deny Christ.

They need to be lit up by Jesus. Or we take the parents, people who out of fear of man are unwilling to confess the name of Jesus.

They're afraid of what others will think about them, afraid of being ostracized. Now if you're a non-Christian in the room and you've heard the gospel multiple times and the reason why you don't want to become a Christian is because you're going to lose your friends and you think that might be the worst thing that could ever happen to you.

That is not the worst thing that could ever happen to you. The worst thing that could ever happen to you is that your sins remain over you as with God's wrath.

That's the worst thing that could ever happen to you. And so what you do is you confess your fear of the Lord, fear of man, and you say, forgive me God for that, and I'm going to turn to you Lord, Lord Jesus, Lord, I believe.

[41:53] I believe that you're the Son of Man. But do you know who we see in a new light? We see Jesus in a new light.

The Son of Man, the light of the world. We see him with greater clarity for who he is. You see, when Jesus, the light of the world, gives us eyes to see, do you know who we see?

Jesus. He is the object of our faith. He is the focus. Our eyes are on Jesus together.

And so, if you're a non-Christian, it starts with the confession, Lord, I believe. believe. And if you're a Christian, you say, show me your glory.

Give me greater clarity on who you are, Jesus. That's where we go. Could you imagine living your whole life blind?

[43:01] never having seen the light of day? Becoming a Christian is like being blind and having someone open your eyes to what has always been there.

Every Christian in the room is able to say, once I was blind, but now I see. Lord Jesus, thank you so much for making yourself known to us in so many different ways.

Lord, would you help us to live in the light as you are in the light? In your name we pray. Amen.