JOHN 9

Joh 9:1  As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.

Joh 9:2  And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Joh 9:3  Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

* Sometime after the Jews attempted to kill Jesus in the Temple for claiming to be God, Jesus passed by a man who had been blind since he was born.
* The question Jesus’ disciples asked Him reveals a little bit about the way they thought about sickness and sin.
  + They considered sickness and handicap a direct result of sin.
  + In other words, they believed if a person had some physical ailment they must have sinned.
  + And there are many people today who believe something similar.
* But Jesus makes it clear the reality of the situation doesn’t align with their way of thinking.
  + This lesson was very important for the disciples and it’s very important for us.
  + Jesus told them the man wasn’t blind as a direct result of some parental or personal sin.
  + He was blind so that the power of God could be displayed through Him.
  + It must be very natural for human beings to think like the disciples.
    - No matter what culture you’re examining…
    - No matter what period of history you’re studying…
    - You’ll find this idea, that the reason bad things happen to people is directly correlated with that person’s actions.
    - But when you think about it, that isn’t the most consistent way to interpret the world.
    - Why?
      * Because there are all kinds of bad people who seem to have a great life.
      * Some of the most wicked people in the world have good health, good finances, and good lives.
* In John 9, Jesus steers His disciples away from that type of thinking and, instead of having them focus on the man’s past action, He directs their attention to God’s present work.
  + He tells them this man’s condition is an opportunity for God’s glory to shine.
  + This man’s inability will showcase the ability of God.
  + SPOILER ALERT: Jesus is about to heal this man.
  + And people are going to believe in Jesus and believe in God when they see this healing.
  + This man’s weakness is going to point people to God’s strength.
* APPLICATION:
  + Isn’t that our ultimate purpose as human beings?
  + In our weakness we point people to a strong God.
  + How are we to think about our own weaknesses?
  + We have a few options:
    - 1. We can sit around and bemoan our circumstances.
    - 2. We can see our weaknesses as a means to point people to God.
* God permitted this man to be born blind because He was going to use Him for a great purpose.

Joh 9:4  We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

Joh 9:5  As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

* This statement can be a bit tricky.
* I believe what Jesus is doing here is using day and night to represent life and death.
* Jesus’ life was quickly drawing to a close.
  + In a short time He would be killed on the cross.
  + He had only a limited time to accomplish the work the Father gave Him.
* Jesus is telling the disciples He is the light of the world and while He is alive He must be about His Father’s business.
* There was coming a time, after His death, when Jesus would return to God and no longer be physically present and physically working on earth.
* I imagine He intended this statement to be applied by His disciples.
  + While they were alive, they should busy themselves with the work of God.
  + Because there was coming a day for each of them when they would die and would no longer be able to work.
* APPLICATION:
  + Jesus knew the exact day of His death.
  + But the disciples didn’t and we don’t!
  + Therefore, we should busy ourselves with the Lord’s work immediately and every day because we don’t know if tomorrow is going to be a work day.

Joh 9:6  Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud

Joh 9:7  and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

* Why did Jesus put clay on the man’s eyes and ask Him to wash in the pool of Siloam?
* What is the significance of the pool’s name, “Sent.”
* I have not idea!
* I’ve read all kinds of theories and speculations, but I’ve not found one that I like well enough to present as a possibility.

Joh 9:8  The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?”

Joh 9:9  Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.”

Joh 9:10  So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”

Joh 9:11  He answered, “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.”

* There was some discussion between the townsfolk about whether the man who could now see was the same man who had sat begging in their streets.
* The debate was resolved when the previously blind man confirmed his identity to the people and told them how a man named Jesus had healed him.

Joh 9:12  They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

Joh 9:13  They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

Joh 9:14  Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

Joh 9:15  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.”

Joh 9:16  Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.

* The people wanted to know where Jesus had gone, but Jesus didn’t stick around after telling the man to wash in the pool of Siloam.
* The people then brought the man to the Pharisees.
  + We aren’t told why they did this.
  + Some of them may have had malicious intent towards Jesus.
* The Pharisees questioned the man, and after hearing his story, concluded Jesus wasn’t from God.
  + Why?
  + Because He kept “breaking the Sabbath.”
* Verse 14, tells us it was the Sabbath day.
  + The Jewish leaders have been mad at Jesus for months because He healed a lame man on the Sabbath day, now He is at it again!
  + Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath intentionally.
  + Jesus could have healed the man any day of the week.
  + Apparently, He wanted to challenge their traditions.
* Can you imagine if a man came into your church and started healing people.
  + People you knew had been sick for years.
  + Blind and lame people.
  + He then told your congregation they weren’t interpreting God’s commands correctly.
* Or maybe it isn’t in a church setting.
  + Maybe you meet a man on the street who is performing undeniable miracles and he tells you you aren’t living the way God wants you to live.
  + The man’s ability to do supernatural things clearly shows He knows something you don’t know.
  + And while you may not fully comprehend what He knows that you don’t, you would think His power would be enough to at least get you to sit down and consider what He had to say.
* The Pharisees will not consider what Jesus has to say for one minute.
  + They heard some things they didn’t like at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and now their ears are closed off.
  + Even though Jesus had broken down the Law in a way that challenged their interpretation, and even though they were unable give a coherent rebuttal to Jesus’ interpretation, and even though they were incapable of explaining away His miracles… Somehow they concluded the best thing to do was to put their fingers in their ears and stop listening.
* APPLICATION:
  + This is a warning about the blinding power of pride.
  + They were the teachers, they were not going to be taught!
  + Even with the all the facts against them, they held on to their bad interpretations.
  + The same thing can happen to us.
    - Maybe we hold a position so firmly we aren’t willing to be taught.
    - Relinquishing something we once thought to be true can be extremely difficult, especially when we’ve believed it for a long time and spend time defending it.
* But what was true then is also true today.
* Even among a group of stubborn people, there are always some honest truth seekers.
  + We know Nicodemus was one among the Pharisees.
  + And there were some who questioned the conclusion of the Pharisees.
    - “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?”
    - Calling Jesus a sinner didn’t match the evidence.

Joh 9:17  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.”

Joh 9:18  The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight

Joh 9:19  and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”

* The Pharisees asked the man who had formerly been blind what he thought of Jesus.
* He told them he thought He was a prophet.
* There was no question in his mind Jesus was sent by God.
* The Pharisees didn’t believe he had actually been blind, so they went and found his parents.

Joh 9:20  His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.

Joh 9:21  But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”

Joh 9:22  (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)

Joh 9:23  Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

* The man’s parents confirmed the man was their son and that he had been born blind, however, they told the Pharisees they didn’t know how their son had been healed.
* They told the Pharisees to confirm the facts with their son.
  + John reveals they were quick to redirect the Pharisees’ questions because they were afraid of the consequences of looking like they approved of Jesus.
  + The Jews were kicking anyone who believed in Jesus out of the Synagogue.
  + In those days, as today, the synagogue was a huge part of Jewish life.
  + Getting kicked out of the synagogue was essentially being ostracized from much of Jewish life.
* The man’s parents were afraid because their leaders were making unreasonable rules.
  + The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Sanhedrin council were bad religious leaders, there is was no question about it.
  + I find it interesting Jesus didn’t lead the people in revolt against their bad institutions.
    - Jesus didn’t rally the people to throw down the corrupt leaders.
    - He didn’t gather a mob to throw the Sadducees out of the Temple.
    - He could have if He had wanted to.
    - He didn’t lead a physical revolt.
    - Instead, He called men’s hearts to the Kingdom of God.
    - Anytime sinful men are given authority, things will eventually be corrupted.
      * If that isn’t one of the great lessons of history, I don’t know what is.
      * These systems are not perfect because they are run by imperfect people.
    - But the Kingdom of God is different.
      * Its Ruler is perfect.
      * Jesus calls men’s affections and loyalty to that Kingdom.
      * A Kingdom you can build without fear of all your work crumbling.
      * And you can become a citizen of the Kingdom of God no matter what current world leadership you’re subjected under.
      * No matter how oppressive, unfair, and brutal your current situation, you can have confidence that its God’s Kingdom that comes out on top in the end.
      * And if you are part of that Kingdom, you can be confident your King is going to make all those things right in the end.
      * When will the world finally be at peace, when will the plights of the poor finally be resolved, when will systems/governments/rulers not be corrupt?
      * Answer: When God reigns finally and forever!

Joh 9:24  So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.”

Joh 9:25  He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

* The Pharisees told the blind man to give glory to God but not to Jesus.
  + They probably didn’t want the man going around telling people what Jesus had done for him.
  + So they told him it was fine to praise God but not Jesus.
* They told the man Jesus was a sinner.
* The man replied, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”
* APPLICATION:
  + There is a good application here about letting people (especially people in authority) form opinions for you.
  + They told the man, “This is what you need to believe…”
  + The man said, “I don’t know about that, I can only judge based on what I’ve seen (pun intended).
  + The Pharisees told him what to believe without giving him evidence to believe it.
  + There are a lot of people in the world today who want to tell you what to think without providing you good reasons.
  + Demand reasons!

Joh 9:26  They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

Joh 9:27  He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”

Joh 9:28  And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

* I love the sassiness of this man.
* The Pharisees hadn’t opened this man’s eyes, all they want to do is put him on trial like he has done something wrong.
* Jesus had just given this man the greatest gift of his life and it’s with Jesus that his loyalties lie.
* APPLICATION:
  + That should be true for us as well.
  + Christ gave us the greatest gift of our lives.
  + The gift of salvation comes through Him and through Him only!
  + Are we going to side with people who are critical of Jesus and have never done anything for us?
  + Or are we going to give our loyalty to Jesus?
  + I wonder how many times the Pharisees had helped this blind man when he was begging in the streets?
  + Jesus had come along, miraculously healed him, and he isn’t about to turn His back on Christ.
  + That is the right response!
  + Sometimes we turn our backs on Jesus because some people who have never done anything for us express their disapproval.
* APPLICATION:
  + There is also a good lesson about the importance of actions vs. words.
  + The Pharisees had all the right words.
    - They knew all the Laws.
    - They memorized the Old Testament.
  + But the blind man didn’t care much for all their words.
  + He cared about the actions of Jesus.
  + He didn’t know a whole lot about who Jesus was but what Jesus had done for Him had a bigger impact on Him than all the Pharisees words.
  + People respond the same way today.
  + Actions will usually leave a greater mark on a person than words.
* The man had already told them the details of his healing and yet they asked him to explain it again.
  + The man said, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”
  + I think its pretty clear the formerly blind man knew what the Pharisees are up to and he wasn’t going to play along.
  + He even jabs them a bit when he says, “Do you also want to become his disciples?”
* The Pharisees responded that they were true followers of Moses’ Law.
  + They knew Moses’ Law (Old Testament Jewish Law) had come from God.
  + But they couldn’t confirm anything about Jesus’ origin (whether He was from God or the devil).

Joh 9:30  The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.

Joh 9:31  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.

Joh 9:32  Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

Joh 9:33  If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

* If you’ve followed along with this study, you’ll know the formerly blind man’s response to the Pharisees is the same common sense argument Jesus has articulated several times in this book.
* Which is proof that any honest person could come to belief in Jesus if only they would take 5 minutes to think about the evidence.
* The Pharisees claimed to know the origin of the Law of Moses… God.
* But when Jesus showed up with power that could only have originated with God… they claimed they couldn’t know where He came from.
  + The man is calling out their ignorance.
  + He told them, God doesn’t do miracles through sinners and blasphemers.
  + God hears and works through those who worship Him.
  + He said, “Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.”
  + He was saying, “This is obviously the work of God.”
  + “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.”
    - I think there is definitely some sarcasm in this statement.
    - He was saying, “All the facts are laid out in front of you. It’s amazing you can’t draw the proper conclusion!”
* In verse 33, the man says it plain.
* “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

Joh 9:34  They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

* The Pharisees probably weren’t used to being talked to this way.
* They didn’t enjoy being taken to school by former beggars.
* So, rather than provide an intelligent response, they mocked the man and threw him out of the synagogue (There is a difference between someone who is formally educated and someone who can give and educated answer to a question).
  + They told him he was “born in utter sin.”
  + Alluding back to the incorrect belief debunked by Jesus at the beginning of the chapter.
* Again, we see this unteachable attitude of the Jewish religious leaders.
* They were there to teach, not to be taught, especially from people they deemed to be from low societal rank.

Joh 9:35  Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

Joh 9:36  He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”

Joh 9:37  Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.”

Joh 9:38  He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

* I love the picture here.
  + This man has just taken an unpopular stand for Jesus.
  + His own parents wouldn’t even stand with him.
  + He takes the ridicule of some well respected people.
  + He gets thrown out of the synagogue.
  + Now he is walking away and who knows what he is thinking.
  + But Jesus searches him out and finds him to reassure him that he did the right thing.
  + Jesus is never very far from any of us.
  + And that is important, especially when you take a stand and end up feeling alone.
* The man didn’t know a lot about Jesus.
  + He knew He had healed him.
  + He knew He was a prophet.
* Now the man learns Jesus is the “Son of Man.”
  + The Messiah.
  + Interestingly, KJV, NKJV, and ASV all translate this “Son of God.”
* Upon learning this about Jesus, the man falls down and worships Him.
  + This detail is important when it comes to the discussion about Jesus identity.
  + Some “Christian” denominations teach Jesus wasn’t equal with God but was instead a kind of lesser being (above the angels but not quite God).
  + This verse is evidence against that view.
  + Several times in the Bible we see lesser heavenly beings refusing men’s worship.
  + Only God was supposed to be worshiped.
  + Jesus had no problem with this man’s worship or the other occurrences of this happening when He was on earth.
  + If only God was to be worshiped, what does that mean about Jesus?
  + He was God!

Joh 9:39  Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

* Jesus had not come down into the world to pass final judgement on the world, but he did come to deliver a standard by which people would be judged on the final day, His words.
  + Joh 12:48  The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.
  + All men are going to be judged based on Jesus’ words.
* Jesus’ words could give spiritual vision to those who accepted them.
  + Those who recognized their spiritual blindness.
  + Those who recognized Jesus as the only guide out of that darkness.
* But those who rejected Jesus, believing themselves to be sufficient guides, plunged themselves into deeper spiritual darkness because they denied the only true light.

Joh 9:40  Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?”

Joh 9:41  Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

* Some Pharisees overhead Jesus saying these things and asked Him, “Are we also blind?”
* Jesus tells them “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see’ your guilt remains.”
  + If they recognized their spiritual blindness and looked to Jesus for their healing, He would no longer hold them guilty.
  + But sense they turned Jesus’ healing away, their guilt remained on them.
* The chapter began with a blind man accepting Jesus’ help and being made whole.
* The chapter ends with spiritually blind men turning Jesus away and remaining blind in their own self-righteousness.