

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

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Seven Miraculous Signs of Jesus from the Gospel of John

Seeing the Light of the World

John 9:1-7

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In June of 2018, the world focused its attention on twelve boys and their soccer coach in northern Thailand. After soccer practice, they decided to explore a local cave they had visited before. It wasn't supposed to be a long adventure - just a fun outing before heading home.

What they didn't know was that a massive storm was heading their way. While they were inside the cave, heavy rains began to fall, flooding the passages behind them and forcing them to move deeper and deeper into the cave until they found a small ledge that was high enough to keep them above the rising water.

With no way out, they were forced to wait in complete darkness. Day after day. No sunlight. No moonlight. No sense of time.

And it wasn't just physical darkness. They were cut off from any source of information. They didn't know if anyone knew where they were or was on their way or if anyone could even reach them. In nearly every way, they were trapped in complete darkness.

Then, after nine dark days, two British cave divers emerged from the darkness. One of the boys later recalled the incredible moment when lights appeared in the distance. They once were lost, but now were found...they were blind, but now they could see.

- Their rescue didn't begin because they discovered the way out.
- Their rescue began because someone came looking for them. Someone risked their life to save them.
- All they had to do was yield themselves to their rescuers.

As amazing as that rescue was, there's an even greater rescue recorded in John chapter 9. We meet a man whose world had been dark - not for nine days, but for his entire life.

And just like the boys, this man doesn't go looking for his Rescuer. His Savior came looking for him. The Light of the world steps into a life that has only known darkness and everything changes. And, before we read our text let me give you the big idea for this morning.

Big Idea: Since Jesus is the Light of the World, people live in darkness until they rightly respond to Him.

John 9:1-7

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 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 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Time won't permit us to dig into everything in this text. So, I'm going to try and focus on the main things and trust that the Holy Spirit might stir you to go back through this passage at some point and prayerfully meditate on the details we don't get to today.

The story begins with Jesus leaving the temple and seeing a man who was born blind. When the disciples see him, they ask an interesting question - Whose sin caused this man to be born blind, his or his parents'? Like many people of their time (and plenty of people in ours) the disciples believed that every instance of suffering was the direct result of a person's sin. So, if a child was born with a disability, it meant that either the parent or the child had sinned. Now, we won't get into the reasons they thought someone could sin before they were born, but Jesus completely redirects their question. He says this specific instance of suffering wasn't the result of anyone's particular sin. He says this man's blindness was an opportunity for God to display His work in and through him.

Listen, there are often times in life where we get stuck in a place of difficulty or suffering. In that place, we can get further stuck by trying to figure out where it all went wrong. Like, "God, are you punishing me for something or is someone else to blame?" And that's a very natural reaction to suffering. But, while there is an appropriate place for acknowledging and repenting of clear sin in our lives, Jesus is saying that the most important detail isn't about assigning guilt to someone else for landing us in the place we are in, it about ascribing glory to God for the work He wants to do to move us beyond the place we are in. In other words, don't fixate on how you got where you are, focus on how God might work to move you forward to where He wants you to be.

But that's not the main point of our text. Remember, John 20:30-31 tell us that John specifically chose to include these miracles because they reveal and substantiate the truth about Jesus. So, what does this miracle tell us about Jesus? It displays the truth that Jesus is the light of the world. We can know that's the focus of this text because Jesus explicitly tells us.

John 9:5

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Jesus says, "This man was born blind so that I could do the work of God in him. And I can do the work of God to open this man's eyes because I'm the light of the world."

Now, this is the second time in two chapters that Jesus says He is the light of the world.

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world..."

Jesus is drawing attention to the fact that He is the light of the world. He says it twice in two chapters and He intentionally chooses to heal a man who has been living in darkness since birth to substantiate His claim.

Something that's good to know is that Jesus is in Jerusalem for a festival known as the Feast of Tabernacles. Just like our holidays, ancient Jewish feasts had certain symbols or ceremonies that were attached to them. Like having fireworks on the 4th of July or turkey on Thanksgiving. During the Feast of Tabernacles, lights were a major part of the celebration. Men would carry torches through the streets. At the Temple, four seventy-five-foot-tall lampposts would be lit each night. It was said

that the whole city would be lit by those lights. Those lights were reminders that God led His people through the wilderness by manifesting His presence in a pillar of fire.

Just think about what Jesus is doing here. He stands at the temple in Jerusalem and essentially says, “You know the pillar of fire that manifest the glory of God to Israel? You know the light that Delivered God’s people from Pharoah and led God’s people into the place of blessing? That was all about me. It was pointing to me. And I’m not just the light of Jerusalem or Israel. I’m the light of the entire world.”

Jesus is claiming to be the manifestation of God’s glory in this world. He is claiming to be the person of God in human flesh. He’s claiming to be the Ultimate Source of truth and holiness and salvation for all of God’s people in this world.

(For more on the meaning of Light, click [here](#).)

And the religious leaders get the point. That’s why the last verse of chapter 8 says they picked up stones to throw at Jesus. So, Jesus leaves the temple and, on His way out, He sees a man who has lived in darkness his entire life and decides to prove His point by healing him.

So, this section is clearly focusing on the fact that Jesus is the light of the world.

That means we are stuck in darkness until we rightly respond to Jesus.

And that’s what the rest of this chapter is all about. You see, after Jesus healed the blind man, it set off a series of shockwaves throughout the community. People had to grapple with what happened to this blind man who was no longer blind. And what we find are four different responses to Jesus. The irony is that the only one in this story who sees Jesus for who He really is, is the man who was born blind. Everyone else who thinks they can see is trapped in spiritual darkness.

So, let me show you four responses to Jesus, the Light of the World.

Response #1 – The Neighbors Respond with Doubt

John 9:8-13

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?” 9 Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” 10 So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” 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.” 12 They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

The man’s neighbors get into a bit of an argument. Some of them recognize that he looks just like the guy who sat by the temple every day and begged for money. But none of them are quite sure. It’s possible that very few of them ever really took notice of him. To them, he was just another poverty-stricken man on the street. All the while, this guy keeps saying, “It’s me. I’m that guy.” But no one quite believes him. They’re like, “You do look an awful lot like Blind Bob. The only difference is...oh, yeah, Blind Bob is blind and you can see!” He explains that Jesus made some mud and anointed his eyes. After he washed in the pool in Siloam, he could miraculously see. So, the people ask him where Jesus was and the guy basically says, “I have no idea where he is. The last time I saw Him I was blind.”

This group is gripped by doubt. They don't know how to explain what they are seeing – even though it's right there in front of their eyes. They have legitimate questions. But they aren't actually willing to believe legitimate answers. They don't have a category for the miracle working power of Jesus so they reject the clear evidence and remain in their doubt. Then, to reinforce their doubt, they don't even look for Jesus, they run to the enemies of Christ.

And countless people still make that same mistake. They don't have a category for the miracle working power of Jesus. They don't have a category for someone rising from the dead or for God becoming a man. So, rather than honestly contemplate the clear evidence, they hold on to their doubts and run to the enemies of Christ to reinforce their unbelief. What kind of answers do you think you'll get from people who have an agenda against Jesus?

Friend, if you are in a place of struggling to understand legitimate questions about who Jesus is and how Jesus works, let me encourage you to do something. Be willing to doubt your doubts. Be willing to allow for the existence of a transcendent God who can do things you don't understand and can't figure out. Be willing to ask Jesus to show you the truth in a way that would overcome your doubt. Don't remain in the dark by refusing to believe and holding onto your doubts.

Response #2 – The Parents Respond with Fear

When the Pharisees learn about this miracle, they bring the healed man to them and interrogate him for a little bit. Then, they call in the parents.

John 9:18-23

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 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 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." 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. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him.")

The parents are called in to testify about the miracle. They are willing to go on record by saying he was born blind and that he now able to see. But they don't want to comment at all about Jesus. And John tells us why. They knew that the religious leaders were opposed to Jesus and had already decided to kick anyone out of the synagogue if they believed Jesus was the Christ. Getting kicked out of the synagogue was like getting kicked out of a church and being removed from a country club all in one. It made you a religious and social outcast.

And this man's parents were afraid of being outcasts, so they made sure to keep their distance from any conversation about Jesus. They were afraid of how their lives might be changed if they sided with Jesus. So, they stayed in the dark because they were too afraid of stepping into the light.

And that same kind of fear still keeps people from following Jesus today. People love their lives the way they are. They're afraid of change. They are afraid that following Jesus will mean things will have to change. And the fear of change keeps them from following Jesus, so they stay in the dark. Make no mistake, following Jesus will mean change. He'll change everything. He'll change your purpose and your direction. He'll change your identity and your destiny. It always hurts our eyes when we've been living in the dark and someone turns on the light – but the only alternative is to stay in the dark. Don't allow the fear of change keep you from stepping into the light.

Response #3 – The Religious Leaders Respond with Pride

John 9:24-34

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." 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." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 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?" 28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 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. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

The religious leaders bring in the man who had been blind. They interrogate him a second time. And what you find in their response is nothing but pride. It's interesting that they ask him questions but think they're the only ones with the right answers. They already know it all. And, since Jesus didn't fit in their box of religious tradition, they reject Him and reject anyone who is willing to believe in Him. This is really at the heart of anyone who rejects the truth about Jesus. If the truths about Jesus don't coincide with what they think they know or what they're willing to believe, they reject Jesus outright. Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools and remain in the dark. Doubt plus Fear plus Pride equals darkness.

But there's one more person who responds to Jesus in this story.

Response #4 – The Beggar Responds with Belief

John 9:35-38

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

Once again, Jesus finds this man. He comes to him and asks if he believes in the Son of Man. That's a phrase from the Old Testament that referred to the Messiah, or the Christ – the One God the Father promised to send who would rescue and redeem people from the curse of sin.

The beggar asks Jesus who the Son of Man is. I love Jesus' response. He says, "You're looking at Him. He's the one speaking to you right now." And the man responds with saving faith. He says, "Lord, I believe."

How do we step out of darkness and into the Light of Jesus? We believe. We believe He is who He says He is. We believe He will do in us what He promises to do. We are rescued from the darkness of sin and death by believing Jesus.

And the example of this blind man reveals to us two critical expressions of authentic belief in Jesus.

1. Authentic belief in Jesus obeys Jesus as Lord.

This man calls Jesus “Lord.” The word “Lord” simply means “the one who is in charge.” Believing Jesus is Lord means you believe He is the One in charge. It means He has the right to tell you what to do. He has the authority to tell you how to live.

Authentic faith in Jesus always expresses itself in submission to Jesus as Lord. And you see this early on in our story. You might have noticed that I jumped past a pretty crazy part of the story. When Jesus first encounters the blind man, Jesus chooses to heal him in an unorthodox way (alternative medicine). He spits in the dirt and makes some mud. Then, He smears it on the man’s eyes and tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.

Just think about that for a minute. This man was blind, but he wasn’t deaf. He’s standing there with Jesus and he hears Jesus spit.

Imagine what was going on in him. “Jesus, what’s going on? Do you have something caught in your throat? Are you making spit-mud? Are you going to put that spit-mud on my eyes?” It sounds crazy. But the man had a choice. He would either trust Jesus and let Him be in control of the situation or he’d reject Jesus and go on doing his own thing – and keep on living in the dark.

What does he do? He does what Jesus says. The pool of Siloam is about a quarter mile from the temple. So, this guy had to walk a quarter of a mile with spit-mud on his face before he could experience the blessing of Jesus. And something in him caused him to do it. It’s called belief. It’s called submission. He lived like Jesus knew what He was talking about and his belief was expressed in obedience to the Lord – and the blessing of God was poured out on him as a result.

How many people fail to experience the blessings of Jesus because they aren’t willing to live like Jesus knows what He’s talking about? How many of us try to dictate to Jesus the terms and conditions of how He will bless us? We tend to treat Jesus like a waiter at a restaurant more than the Lord of Heaven and earth. “Jesus, I’ll take my blessing medium-rare with a side of prosperity. I’ll trust you so long as you do what I think you should do.”

That’s not authentic belief in Jesus as Lord.

So, what would change about the way you live today if you really believed that Jesus is the Light of the World who sees what is best? How would you follow Him if you believed He is the manifestation of God’s glory and the pillar of fire that will lead you into the place of God’s blessing? In what ways do you secretly want to dictate to Jesus the terms of how He should bless you?

Authentic belief obeys Jesus as Lord.

2. Authentic belief worships Jesus as God.

John 9:38

He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

Worship is reserved for God alone. And this man worshiped Jesus because he believed Jesus is God. Jesus wasn’t merely a good man or a prophet. Jesus is God.

That means Jesus isn’t just one of many priorities in our lives. It means Jesus is THE priority for everything in our lives. He is the Light that transforms how we see everything else in our world. When we worship Jesus, everything in our lives exists to bring Him glory. Our marriage. Our parenting. Our jobs. Our hobbies. Our plans and dreams. Our finances and our futures. Is that who Jesus is to you?

This story is our story. All of us were born trapped in the darkness of sin. That's why we need Jesus. And we don't just need Jesus, we have Him because God so loved us that He sent Jesus to live and die in our place. Jesus didn't just shine light into this dark world, He entered it. On the cross, the Light of the world experienced the darkness of sin in our place. He took our punishment so that we could be rescued.

And all of us will leave this place having to respond to Jesus.

- You might leave doubting Him.
- You might leave resisting Him in fear or rejecting Him in pride.
- Or you'll leave believing in Him in obedience and worship.

The Light of the World is standing before every one of us.

- The One who spoke light into existence...
- The One who led Israel by fire...
- The One who opened blind eyes...
- The One who entered the darkness of Calvary...now calls every one of us to believe.