Lesson 10 [Chapter 9]"The Man Born Blind"

Remember:

Last lesson in chapter 8, we saw a woman caught in adultery, Jesus foils a trap set by the Pharisees by challenging them to examine their own sins, demonstrating that grace triumphs over condemnation. Following this, Jesus declares Himself the "light of the world," offering guidance to those in darkness.

Lesson Goal:

Let us move from spiritual blindness to seeing and believing in Jesus as the Son of God, enabling us to trust Him during tough times.

Lesson opener:



There is a story about a couple that was buying hotdogs at a convenience store at a Florida beach. Apparently, this couple cut in line, complained loudly about everything, how expensive everything was, how long the cashier was taking to ring them up, etc. Finally, they got their hotdogs and as they walked out of the convenient store, a seagull swooped down and snatched the husband's hotdog out of his hand. The wife was in such shock; she proceeded to drop hers! They both lost their meal.

Those stories are often quite satisfying, aren't they? It's what some refer to as "instant karma." They immediately reap what they sowed.

It's easy to believe that the couple got their sandwiches snatched away by seagulls because of how rude they were. But our bible passage really challenges the pervasive belief in karma, or what we often say, "what goes around comes around."

Some people believe the pain, and suffering of today is God's punishment for some sin you committed in the past. Jesus clearly teaches that the struggles you face in life are not always punishment for a particular sin but for God's glory. He corrects these ideas.

Lesson Body:

A sermon Reference: https://www.regent.edu/journal/journal-of-biblical-perspectives-in-leadership/john-9-message/

This chapter is read on the 'Sunday of Baptism' as it is associated with the mystery of baptism.

A Man Born Blind Receives Sight 9:1-12



This is the only chapter in all the Old and New Testament books where there is any mention of opening the eyes of a person born blind. [There are 6 blind people healed by Jesus, he is the only one born without eyes]

St. John emphasizes that these miracles are "signs" pointing to the fulfillment of the prophecy and identifying Jesus is not just a human but is God. The prophecies mention that giving sight to the blind is one of the deeds of the awaited Messiah. *"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped,"* (Is 35:5). Also (Is 29:18); (Is 42:6-7). (Ps 146:8). All these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus.

He is the Lord who opens the inner eyes of the heart as well as the physical eyes.

The healing of the blind man proclaims the person of the Lord and the reason for His coming: to open the inner sight so that believers would comprehend the mysteries of God. At the same time, the blindness of the proud and hypocritical leaders would be exposed. Sadly, they could not discover their spiritual blindness and sinfulness!

The place was probably some spot near the Temple, perhaps one of its gates where beggars sit.

Jesus and the disciples saw him, then they asked, "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

The disciples' question probably originated from the Paralytic man's miracle when Jesus told him to sin no more.

How could this apply to him if he was born blind, he could not have sinned before birth? Could it be his soul? [transmigration of souls]

Was it his parents? the man's parents had sinned, but his blindness was not the result of their sin. Also, God doesn't punish kids for their parents' sins.

There is a popular rabbinical saying: " there is no pain without evil". These words were imprinted in the minds of the Jews, including the Lord's disciples.

His blindness was not due to some error (the Creator) did. Rather, the plan was to postpone it until the time came to do a miracle. God had allowed this blindness to grant that person spiritual insight. Consequently, he would testify to the Divine truth before the violent Jewish leaders and would glorify God.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not say that the man born blind or his parents had not sinned. All mankind had fallen into sin. What this blind man was suffering from was not related to any particular sin. What the disciples and all believers should do is to be preoccupied with God's works and His plan for man.

'Why should that person suffer for the glory of God? Isn't this unjust?

The man has benefited from his blindness for he received the healing of his inner vision. People who can see might not get this healing, like the Jews. They get condemnation. Only sin is evil, whereas disability is not evil. St. John Chrysostom.

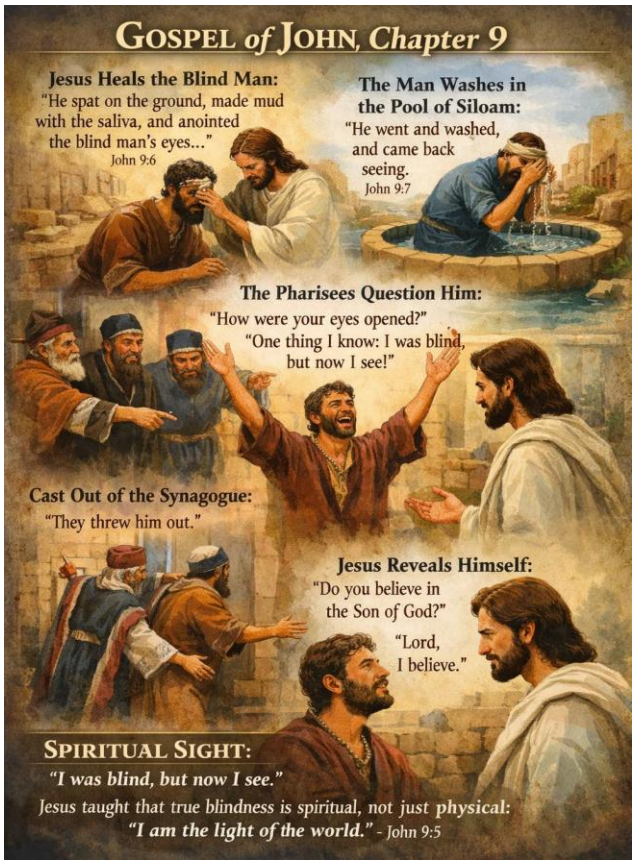
9: 4 "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

The Lord performs the same works as the Father.

The period of His service is an opportunity to work openly even if that is done on the Sabbath.

This is an invitation for us to work and to seize every hour in our lives; lest our work remains unfinished when the day of our lives comes to an end. The Lord has granted us the day so that we may labor.

As if He says: 'As long as there is light, the nation could believe in Me; and as long as this life goes on, I need to work.' The night is coming when no one will be able to work.' There will not be any more time for faith, service, or repentance.



<u>Why did Jesus use clay?</u>

A confirmation that He is the Creator and Savior. The blind man's community would have believed that his creation from the dust of the earth was incomplete, so Jesus completes it, spitting on the ground and making mud

WAS IT NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH THESE STEPS TO BE HEALED? It is well known that mud would damage a healthy eye.

1. Perhaps by doing various things, all of them impossible on their own to heal, He was just making it obvious that there was no magic or power in any ritualistic format. The power was in Him, and He could heal anyway He chose.
2. We must obey Jesus' command and wash in water. Baptism regains sight, it is needed to enjoy the Light of the Holy Spirit through the new birth.
3. He sets an example of not postponing good work. [Sabbath]

Why did the Lord not use water in the mud but rather used spit?

So that the spring of water would not be considered the source of healing but His divine power.

The Pharisees cast out the Healed Man 9:13-34

The neighbors were astonished as he had been born and had grown among them. There were conflicting views. According to human knowledge, healing appeared to be impossible in such a case.
Was he the same man who had been blind and begging?

The blind man was completely accurate and faithful in answering all their questions.

He became a confessor through grace!! Having received insight!

He confirmed the story to 1) the neighbors then to 2) the Pharisees.

Some of them approved it was a miracle but were confused about being on a Sabbath [so against God] and some thought His deed is supreme love and a true sign from God.

Notice how the man born blind did not get agitated. He did not deny or say anything different from what he had said before. The Pharisees and the other people had brought him hoping he would reject the One who had healed him. Consequently, they were faced with disappointment due to his answers. They got to know fully well the miraculous act of the Lord. That afflicted man had beaten them in every way due to the Lord's miracle. St. John Chrysostom.

Did Jesus break the Sabbath?

O miserable people, the Sabbath has been established by the Lord Jesus Christ whom you claim that He is not from God. You observe the Sabbath in a physical manner. You have not received the spit of the Lord on your eyes, and you have neither gone to Siloam nor washed your faces.

Consequently, you persist in your blindness; you are blind to the goodness found in this blind man. He is no longer blind in body or in heart. "For judgment I have come into the world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind," [9:39].

Maybe he wasn't blind, let us ask his parents!





His parents avoided answering the question concerning their son's healing manner. They feared being thrown out of the Temple.

The Second Dialogue between the Pharisees and the Man Born Blind:

The Pharisees called him again and said "Give glory to God"➔ under oath to tell the truth.

They were just looking for ways to justify their pre-existing conclusion that Jesus is a sinner.

Here is a meditation dialogue not the exact wording.

- The Jews: Say that the Lord pretended to be a prophet and that He had transgressed against the law.
- The man: All I know is that I was blind, but now I see. This is my experience with Him. What I know is my trust in Him. This makes me reject what you say altogether. Practical experience is greater and stronger than theoretical discussions. Do you also want to become His disciples? [Exposing their motives sarcastically] If you don't want to follow Him, why do you keep asking over and over?
- The Jews: We are Moses' disciples. We know he had a divine mission but not Jesus.
- The man: Well, I am proud to be his disciples though you say that to belittle me. Moses witnessed to Jesus. It is not an either/or situation. Moses never healed a man born blind. God does not hear sinners. You claim that this man is a sinner. God only listens to the pure that do His will. In the history of the world, we do not hear of anybody who has opened the eyes of a blind person. Even Moses did not perform such an act.

His argument meets each of their assertions. Because of their pride, they belittled his words and were surprised: how could this illiterate fool, who has been sitting and begging, now assume the place of a teacher and stand before the leaders of thought and knowledge?

They wanted him to report what he knew concerning his recovery and to leave the decision in the hands of the religious leaders who would judge the matter.

However, he disappointed them as he honored the One who granted healing to him. So, they excommunicated him [= isolated from other worshippers]

They had been totally unable to refute his evidence or find any flaw in it.
Yet, they concluded that he was born in sin and could not possibly teach them anything, so they cast him out of the meeting.

A simple man, guided by the Spirit of truth, and continuing steady in his testimony, utterly confounded the most eminent Jewish doctors.

True Vision and True Blindness 9:35-41

Jesus was looking for the man just as He deliberately "looks" for each of us. [rejected by the jews and his parents].

The man confessed to Jesus, saying that he believed and he then worshipped Him

A person does not need to travel far to meet with the Lord Jesus Christ for the Lord is standing by and is very close.

Physical and spiritual blindness ➔ Insight and belief.

Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world." Jesus wants us to know that He will pronounce decisions on the ungodly like a judge (John 5:22, 27). The blind that come to sight are those who, admitting their sinfulness, trust Jesus for their salvation. Unfortunately, the religious leaders claimed to see, thinking that God favored them because of who they were. They failed to see their need for Jesus and willfully sinned, bringing judgment upon themselves.

If they were ignorant of the scriptures, they would not be guilty. They claimed to have vision, saw divine truth, and understood the law and the prophets. Consequently, they isolated themselves and their sin remained.

Lesson Takeaways:

Over the course of the story, the faith of the man born blind gradually increases, as he works out for himself what has happened by participating in various interrogations.



1. To his neighbors he describes his healer as '**the man** called Jesus'.
2. Then, when the religious leaders talk to him for the first time, they ask 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened,' and to this the man born blind answers '**He is a prophet**.'
3. During the second interrogation, in which the religious leaders try to lead the witness and have him declare that the one who healed him is a sinner, the man points out the wonder of his healing and declares: 'If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' From describing his healer as the man called Jesus; to describing him as a prophet; to now describing him as **someone who comes from God**, the man's faith has grown as it has been questioned and challenged.
4. Finally, when the man born blind meets Jesus again, he is willing to believe in him as the **Son of Man:** 'He said, 'Lord,* I believe.' And he worshiped him.'

In the same way, the closer we come to Christ, the more our eyes are opened to the depths of His infinite love.

1. Draw nearer to Him through:
2. Prayer
3. Obedience to the Gospel,
4. Participation in the Eucharist.

This knowledge continues to grow deeper until we see Him as He truly is in eternity.

(And this is unlike our knowledge of people, which often reveals their weaknesses the closer we get to them.)

Is there a cost to live with Him?

1. He was cast out
2. His parents denied him
3. The Pharisees called him a sinner.
4. They considered his discipleship to Christ an insult!

And by this, people know that we are disciples of Christ.

We should not expect the world to accept the principles of Christ that we live by; rather, it will reject them—and reject us with them. But we thank God, because when they rejected the man born blind, Christ found him, and revealed Himself to him

Finally, sometimes we are under the impression that our Christian behavior is enough to bring people around us to God but even though the born blind met Jesus who was a perfect man, he didn't recognize Him until Jesus told him that He is the son of God. That means God does not want us to only be the light to those around us but also find an opportunity to tell them about Him and reveal our experience we have with Him.

Memory Verse: 9:25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1