

St. John's Gospel

Session 15

We left off last time with John 7:53-8:11, the story of the woman caught in adultery. We indicated it was a story inserted into the story of the Feast of Tabernacles, as a wonderful illustration of the dramatic eschatological change that has come with Jesus Christ. The point of the story is that God is not only with us (Emmanuel), but he is for us. See John 3:17. He came not to condemn the world, but to redeem the world and to give us hope for our eternal fate. Jesus of course forgives the woman, while at the same time admonishing her to not engage in adultery again. Adultery is always sinful, Jesus does not change the moral codes. He does however show that God is a God of forgiveness and mercy, when we repent (changed behavior). This is a sign of the new age Jesus is ushering in. A new relationship can be had with God through Jesus Christ.

Today we pick it up with ch. 9 – the story of the man born blind. Read 9:1-41

Vs. 1-2 – Jesus and the disciples come upon a man born blind. The disciples ask Jesus – “who sinned, the man or his parents, that he was born blind?”. This reflects the theology of the Deuteronomistic historian “D”, who had editorialized the story of the Old Testament. That theology was based on the premise that the man's blindness must be some sort of punishment for sin. This theology is still around today. People who may develop cancer, may say what did I do wrong, why is God punishing me. Now I want to be careful about what I am saying. There is some truth in the reality that my personal behavior has consequences. If I smoke 3 packs of cigarettes a day and get lung cancer, I probably had a role in it by what I have done. But it is not punishment from God for smoking. Job and much of the wisdom literature was written in part to counteract the Deuteronomistic historian. Job was close to God, but had tragedy after tragedy befall he and his family. Things happen to us that are part of living in a fallen creation. We have no real explanation for it.

Vs. 3 - Jesus responds – neither the man nor his parents sinned, but his blindness will reveal the glory of God.

Vs. 4-5 - Jesus having just proclaimed himself to be the light of the world at the Feast of Tabernacles, says “we must work the works of God during the day. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”

Vs. 6 – Jesus spits on the ground to make clay out of the spittle, and places it on his eyes

Vs. 7 – He tells the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which means “sent one”. The man does so and come back able to see.

Vs. 8 – the neighbors and those who had seen him begging say: “is not this the man who used to sit and beg?”

Vs. 9 – Some say yes it is he. Others say no, but he is like him. But the man himself says “I am the man”

Vs. 10 – They ask him – “how were your eyes opened”.

Vs. 11 - He says – “the man Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me to go to the pool of Siloam and wash. I did so and received my sight”.

Vs. 12 – They ask him, where is he?, but he responds, I do not know.

Vs. 13 – They take the man to the Pharisees.

Vs. 14 – It was the Sabbath day, when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

Vs. 15 – the Pharisees ask the man again as to how he received his sight. The man repeats again, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see”

Vs. 16 – The Pharisees say – “this man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath”. But others say – “how can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” So there is a division among them about Jesus.

Vs. 17 – They ask the blind man again – “what do you say about him?” The man born blind says “he is a prophet”.

Vs. 18 – The Jews did not believe he had been born blind and had received his sight. So they call the man’s parents and ask them

Vs. 19 – is this your son, who you say was born blind but who now sees?

Vs 20-21 – his parents answer – “we know this is our son, and that he was born blind, 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”

Vs. 22 – John tells us that his parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews. The Jews had already made it clear that anyone who professed Jesus to be the Christ would be thrown out of the synagogue.

Vs. 23 – They repeat – he is of age, ask him.

Vs. 24 – so they call the man a 2nd time and say: “give God the praise, we know this man (referring to Jesus) is a sinner.”

Vs. 25 – the man says: “whether he is a sinner, I do not know – one thing I do know – once I was blind but now I see”

Vs. 26 – they ask yet again – how did he do this? How did he open your eyes?

Vs. 27 – the man says – “I have told you already, but you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples?”

Vs. 28 – They revile him saying – “you are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses – We know God has spoken to Moses (vs 29) but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from”.

Vs. 30 - The man who can now see says – “this is a marvel. You do not know where he comes from and yet he opened my eyes”.

Vs. 31 – We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Vs 32 – never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of the a man born blind”.

Vs. 33 – If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

Vs. 34 – the Pharisees answer him – you were born in utter sin, and you would teach us? And they cast him out.

Vs 35 – Jesus hears they have thrown him out. He finds him and asks: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

Vs. 36 – the man asks Jesus – “and who is he sir that I may believe in him?”

Vs. 37 – Jesus answers – “you have seen him and it is he who speaks to you”.

Vs 38 – The man says: “ Lord, I believe and he worshipped him”

Vs. 39 – Jesus says - “For judgement I came into the world. So that for those who do not see, they may see, and so that those who see may become blind”.

Vs. 40 – The Pharisees standing near ask Jesus – “Are we also blind?”

Vs. 41 – Jesus says to them: “If you were blind, you would have no guilt, but now that you say we see, your guilt remains”.

This story, is a story from Jesus ministry that Jesus uses to describe the unfolding drama of salvation history. It chronicles the opening up of the Kingdom of God to all who put their trust in Jesus, while chronicling at the same time the shutting of the door to those who reject who Jesus is.

In chapter 9 – two things are being shown. In this story the man born blind is a representative figure. Spiritually we are all born blind. Nobody is born believing in Christ, we are all blind. But in this story two critical things are revealed:

1. The man born blind, who is given to gift of sight – comes to believe. Look at the following verses:
 - a. Vs 11 – “the man called Jesus
 - b. Vs. 17 – “he is a prophet”
 - c. Vs. 33 – He is from God”
 - d. Vs. 38 – “Lord I believe”

The man born blind has come from knowing Jesus only to be a man, to making a profession of faith in Jesus – “Lord I believe”

2. The Pharisees on the other hand are going in the opposite direction.
 - a. Vs 10 – how were your eyes opened?
 - b. Vs. 16 – This man is not from God
 - c. Vs. 18 - they now deny that the miracle ever happened, saying he was not blind
 - d. Vs 24 – This man is a sinner
 - e. Vs. 29 – We do not know where he comes from
 - f. Vs. 34-35 – they cast the man out for bearing witness to Jesus

So this story shows what is happening in history. The man is born blind as we all are spiritually. He meets Jesus. Jesus makes clay and puts it on his eyes, similar to the story of the creation of Adam and Eve out of the dirt of the ground a new creation comes into existence. Jesus is using this miracle of physical healing to say to the world, in me everyone can become part of the new creation. When we receive Christ we begin to SEE differently. We begin a faith journey that deepens as our awareness and understanding of who Jesus is deepens. The man born blind (like all of us) goes through stages of understanding. He goes from (a) the man called Jesus to (b) He is a prophet to (c) he is from God to (d) finally – Lord I believe and in vs. 38 John tells us that the man born blind who now sees – “Worshipped Jesus”. His transformation is complete, he has seen the light. He has come to belief.

At the same time – the Pharisees are going in the opposite direction They who were given all of the learning to “see”, have become blind. (a) vs 10 - how were your eyes opened? (b) vs 16 - this man is not from God (c) vs 18 they deny that the man was ever blind! (d) vs 24 – this man is a sinner (e) vs29 - we do not know where he comes from (f) they cast them man who professes faith in Jesus out.

The man born blind, had clay put on his eyes. He was told he must go and wash in the pool of Siloam, the pool of “the sent one”, he must then become baptized and become a part of the church. New life and entrance into the Kingdom of god comes through being part of the church, being baptized into the “new Israel”. As we enter into the life in Christ, we can profess as did the man born blind “Lord I believe”

We must not forget the prophesy of Isaiah. In Isaiah 35:5-6 written about the signs of restoration that would be made manifest when God acts in history to save his people.

Is 35:5-6 – “then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a hart and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy”

John chapter 5 – the story of the healing of the lame man.

John chapter 9 – the story of the healing of the man born blind

Mark 7:31-37 – the story of the healing of the deaf man with the speech impediment, which was last Sunday’s Gospel.

The point is clear. With the advent of Jesus, the prophesy of the One to come has been fulfilled. A new age has dawned.

We will pick it up with chapter 10 next week!