

Jesus Opens Your Eyes

John 9:1-41

Pastor Tom Anderson

I want to put mud in your eye this morning. I say this, not because I want to blind you, but because I want each of us to leave this place with clarity of vision—20-20 vision of heart and mind; that you may know the truth of Jesus Christ. It's no good to open your eyes when you're in the dark. It's no good to close your eyes when you are in the light. I want us to open our eyes in the light of Christ and to walk in that light all of our days. So here's mud in your eyes! Seeing is not believing; but believing is seeing. I want to proclaim to you this morning that Jesus is the Son of God. I want to warn you about the danger of willful blindness. I want to teach you to use your head. Finally I want to invite you to cross the line of faith today and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Jesus performed more miracles to restore eyesight to the blind than any other type of miracle. It was his signature miracle. This is not a coincidence because in the Bible, only God gives eyesight. Jesus alone performs such miracles in scripture. Restoring a blind person's vision is the exclusive function of God himself. As the Lord said to Moses, "Who gives man sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?" (Exodus 4:11)

This miracle is less a healing and more an act of creation. Jesus spits on the dust and makes mud and with the mud he makes eyesight. This re-enacts the creation story in Genesis 2:7, when the Lord God formed the first man from the dust of the ground. The message is unmistakable: Jesus is the creator through whom all things were made.

Jesus references his divine status as "the one sent from God" in John 9:4. He goes further to call himself "the Light of the world." (John 9:5) He doesn't say that he points us to the light. He doesn't say that he is a light. He says he is *THE Light*. Finally at the end of the chapter, he introduces himself as "the Son of Man" (John 9:35) - this is a reference to the divine figure in Daniel 7:13-14 who has all divine authority, glory and power. Jesus gladly accepts the faith and worship of the man in John 9:38.

Jesus is also the promised and long awaited Messiah to the Jewish nation. One of the identifying marks of the true messiah that he would demonstrate the power to restore vision. It is important to emphasize that Jesus is the fulfillment of scripture. We Christians see the unity and

reliability of the Bible because of the coming of Christ. He makes manifest the trustworthiness, the authority, and the dependability of all the wisdom and promises of this book. We can trust the Bible because we trust Jesus Christ.

This miracle is much more than a personal favor to a blind beggar in Jerusalem. It is an announcement that identifies Jesus as the Christ and the very Son of God.

There is also a warning here about willful blindness. Ignorance and blindness Jesus can fix. But he cannot fix willful blindness. In fact the more he tries to convince his opponents, the more hardened and entrenched they become. The healed man is astonished. In John 9:30 he says, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes." In other words: Their unbelief in the face of the evidence is more remarkable than the miracle itself!

The Bible everywhere warns us about willful blindness, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness..." (Isaiah 5:20) This was the original moral confusion of the Garden of Eden where Eve rethought the forbidden fruit and called it good and desirable. She judged God's word to be inferior and her own words to be superior. There is a lot of this in the world today.

Bill Hybels tells the story of meeting a man who was deeply involved in the New Age Movement. Hybels asked him, "What caused you to second-guess what you were involved in?" He said, "It was the moral anarchy. I became part of a group, and we used to sit around and talk about what 'my truth' was. One person would say, 'My truth is acting out this form of morality.' And someone would say, 'Oh, that's nice. That's your truth. Well, this is my truth.'"

He got the idea that the wife he had been married to for many years was not as beautiful and wonderful as another person in the group, who said her truth was that they ought to get married. He said, "I thought about it more, and after a while I decided that was my truth, too. So we got our truth together. I divorced my wife. She was very upset about that, but I told her, 'Honey, this is my truth.'" How are you going to argue with that? A short time later the man visited the Willow Creek church.

He said, "That day, you gave a message about human beings standing morally accountable before a holy God. While you were talking I became conscious for the first time of my sin. I knew I was playing games. I was just making up the truth. That's all I was doing; manufacturing the truth I wanted for myself so I could live the way I wanted to live. The next morning I fell on my knees, and I received Christ and forgiveness."

This miracle is a plea to our age to wake up from our willful moral blindness that is destroying us.

There is also an appeal to reason in this miracle. Reason cannot bring us to faith, but it can bring us very close to Jesus. The promise is that if we use our heads, we can better understand a lot about Jesus. But we must begin with the right premise.

The Pharisees began in the wrong place. They tried to falsify the facts and discredit the witnesses in order to make things fit into their pre-determined conclusion.

The blind man began with the simple facts: “I was blind but now I see.” Jesus can’t be a sinner he must be a man sent from God. The arguments with the Pharisees only serve to drive this man into a deeper appreciation of who Jesus is. Reason is not the enemy of the Gospel but a friend. This man would never have come to faith if he had not used his head. In our church we don’t ask you to check your brains at the door. We want rational debate and reflection because reason leads us closer to Christ.

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went camping. They set up their tent, rolled out their bedrolls and turned in after a long day. In the middle of the night, Sherlock woke up Dr. Watson and asked him, “Watson, tell me what do you see?” Watson looked into the night sky brilliant with myriads of stars and said, “I see a vast universe of galaxies, stars and planets. Sometimes I wonder if there is another planet with intelligent life and if there is what they are thinking about as they look at us...” Holmes interrupted and cried, “Watson, you idiot, someone has stolen our tent!”

It’s our job as a church to help each other see the right things in the right way. It’s our job to help each other break through our willful blindness and come to the knowledge of the truth. Otherwise we’ll just keep on looking and never finding.

The miracle is not over until Jesus meets up with the man a second time. The man concluded that Jesus does extraordinary things and that somehow God is behind Jesus. But this is not enough to inspire faith and worship. Jesus comes to him personally to introduce himself as God. The man confesses his faith and worships Jesus. Faith requires an object and Jesus is that object.

I believe Jesus still does this today. I believe he comes directly to us and whispers to our souls the invitation to believe. If you have already heard and answered, then rejoice this day! If not then are you ready to answer the invitation to faith? Believing is seeing.