

Message
"I Once Was Blind"
John 9:1-41

- I. Happy New Year! Welcome to Awaken Las Vegas!
- II. Read John 9:1-7
 - a. **9** *As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ²And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.*
- III. **PRAY**
- IV. The way chapter 8 ends
 - a. Confrontation with the Pharisees
 - i. Jesus tells them they're spiritually dead and children of the devil
 - ii. They continue to accuse Him of being demon possessed and He tells them Abraham rejoiced in His coming
 - iii. They say, you're not yet even 50 years old; how did Abraham rejoice in you?
 - iv. Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."
 - v. So they picked up stones to stone Him but Jesus hid Himself and went through their midst.
 - vi. Then..."As He passed by..."
 1. In the midst of avoiding a deadly mob of people He sees the plight of a blind man.
- V. Profile of the blind beggar
 - a. His life, experience, and perspective

- i. The Bible tells us this man was born blind, and a beggar. That means that he would have been impoverished, looked down on, often abused, thought of as religiously unclean.
- ii. He would have been used to being in public places, near gathering places especially on festival days in order to make more money.
- iii. It was thought people would get extra blessings from God for the good deeds they did, specifically near gathering and festival times.
- iv. So this man was begging near a place of gathering, waiting for a handout.
- v. Probably being largely ignored or feeling the animosity of those rushing by.
- vi. He hears a group of men walk by and he realizes that he is the subject of someone's conversation.
- vii. The disciples asked Jesus a question about this man and his condition.
- viii. WILLING TO DEBATE HIS ISSUES BUT NOT WILLING TO HELP

VI. Explain verses 3-4

- a. Who sinned? His parents, or did the baby in the womb?
- b. What exactly happened? Who's to blame? How can we sum this up, put it in a box so that we can understand it? Let's philosophize about it.
- c. Don't we do that today? We are willing (and enjoy) talking about people's issues and judging how they got to the place they're in. How often do we seek to help people out of genuine care? Many times we do nothing. It's almost like, and talking about it, it feels like we've actually done something.
- d. Jesus says the circumstance in this man's life is an opportunity for Him to do His work and be glorified.
 - i. Jesus is not saying that He caused this problem so that He can now make Himself look good.
 - ii. He's saying, these situations happen. Things happen in people's lives. Sometimes it's circumstances beyond their control, sometimes they do things to contribute to the negative circumstances.

- iii. The bottom line is this – every adverse circumstance is another opportunity for us to realize our need for God and His work in our life.
- iv. Do you see your need this morning?
- v. God wants to work in your life.

e. What the Enemy Means for Evil, God Will Use for Your Good

- i. Gen 50 – Joseph is kidnapped, sold into slavery, accused of a crime he didn't commit and imprisoned. After many years of intense trials God does something miraculous and Joseph is placed in a position of honor and authority.
 - 1. He could have been bitter and resentful
 - 2. He could have had his brothers put to death or imprisoned
 - 3. Instead he trusted God and was delivered
 - a. Not just physically – he was delivered internally
 - b. Not a victim of bitterness or hate
 - c. Some of us today are prisoners
 - d. Walking around looking free- but not on the inside
- f. *But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.* Genesis 50:19-21
 - i. Joseph was free physically, free spiritually, and free emotionally. He also freed his brothers from guilt
 - ii. Supernatural work of God
 - iii. What the enemy or others mean for your hurt, God will use for your good

VII. God Is Writing a Unique Story with Your Life

a. He sees you. He loves you. He's with you.

b. Verses 6-7

- i. Jesus took mud from the ground, made with His own saliva and placed it on the man's eyes. Then he told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam.
- ii. Why did Jesus choose to heal the man? Why in this way?
- iii. Why didn't He just speak the word and the man was healed?

1. That's what he did to the nobleman's son in chapter 4.
Or the invalid in chapter 5. Or Lazarus in chapter 11.
- iv. Jesus moved in the way that was right for this man
- v. God does a unique work in each of our lives
- vi. It may not look the same as what He does in someone else's life. May not look the way you want it to look.
- vii. God speaks differently to each of us
 1. The direct way he spoke to the woman at the well in chapter 4
 2. The compassionate way that he spoke to the woman caught in adultery in chapter 8
 3. The loving, yet sometimes corrective way He spoke to His disciples
 4. The harsh way He spoke to the Pharisees
 5. The way He taught the crowd at the feeding of the 5000
 - a. Same love and truths but different ways of communicating to reach the heart of the recipients
- viii. God sees you and knows your situation
- ix. He wants to work in your life specifically in unique ways that are His will for you
- x. God is the author – a biography, not an autobiography
- xi. A story for His glory, for your benefit
- xii. We don't always understand or appreciate the twists and turns in the plot
 1. The Man Who Invented Christmas
 2. Are the characters argue with Charles Dickens about his decisions within the novel. It is like his own imagination trying to work out what the plot should be.
 3. In a way, we sort of do that with God. Although we should be listening to our Author, we tell Him how we think the plot should go. Of course, the difference here is that God is perfect, all knowing and able to work all things together for our good.

VIII. God Is Not Finished with Your Story

- a. Verses 8-11

i. 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?"* 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."*

- b. The story seemed unfinished. The man didn't know all the answers. He himself seemed disoriented and incomplete.
- c. What people could tell there was a change there. The man himself knew that there was change.
- d. But Jesus wasn't done working in this man's life. In fact, you're going to see that this is just the beginning. This man encounters Jesus again and makes a decision to surrender his heart and life to Him.
- e. It's a good thing that Jesus isn't done with him, because his life is about to get even more complicated. He is about to be excommunicated from the temple. What this meant in that day is people would've viewed him as being separated from God, and a social outcast.
 - i. Sometimes I think it's so funny how we view stories in the Bible. We think "Wow that's an awesome story! They lived happily ever after."
 - ii. We don't think about what it was like to walk in their shoes. What was the next day like? The next month? The next year?
 - iii. They had to continue to trust God on a day by day, minute by minute basis just like we do.
- f. Jesus isn't done working in your life either. And the first step is an initial encounter with Jesus. You have to recognize your need for Him. You have to raise the white flag of surrender to Him and commit your life to Him. Then you will be reconciled to God. Then that day to day relationship begins.
- g. Then we recognize our continued dependence on God.
- h. What if I make a mistake? You will!
- i. What if I get myself into a mess?
 - i. God still cares, can forgive and will work in your life

- IX. It's not about our perfection, it's about pursuit.
- X. We don't just expect perfection of ourselves, but sometimes we place that standard on others.
 - a. We look at their lives and notice or point out their errors and mistakes.
 - b. We try to get that speck out of their eye.
 - c. There's a difference between noticing characteristics that don't line up with the word of God, and finding faults in others. The major differences typically found in our prayer life. Are we praying for people?
 - d. You Are Different - You are being transformed (and so is your brother and sister in Christ!)
 - i. *From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Cor 5:16-17 ESV*
 - ii. *So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Cor 5:16-17 NLT*
 - e. New Year's resolutions
 - i. What does the Author of your story have in store for you this year?
 - ii. Do you sense something that He is laying on your heart to work on? Something to give up? Something to add?
 - iii. Are you asking Him what He wants you to achieve? Do you make all of your plans and then just ask Him to bless it?
 - 1. Living life with open hands.
 - 2. God is the Author and it's OK.
 - 3. Living in partnership. Listening to his voice in the word and in prayer. Being teachable. Walking in humility.
- XI. Your Story Is Meant to Be Shared
 - i. This man immediately shared his story with others.
 - ii. Read John 9:13-38

1. ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 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." 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. 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." 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 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 synaogue.) ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 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." 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 (EXCOMMUNICATED HIM) ³⁵ 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.

- b. Pharisees – this is a sect of religious leaders. The word Pharisee means separate. They were specialists in the law and their job was to make sure that people understood and follow the law of God. Their major responsibility was protecting the Sabbath.
 - i. The Sabbath is a day that is set aside for the worship of God. It is something that God commanded. But the Pharisees took the law of God and added hundreds of man-made laws to it in order to protect it from being abused or neglected.
 - ii. So these Pharisees, separatists, in order to keep the sabbath day special and holy, added their own laws to it and made it virtually impossible for man to keep it.
 - iii. When they accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, please note He didn't break God's law, He violated man's law.
- c. The Pharisees asked the man, “What do you say about him?” In other words, who is he?
 - i. The man says in verse 17, “He is a prophet.”
 - ii. In verse 24 and 25 they challenge him again saying, “Give glory to God” meaning tell the truth... the man says, “whether he is a sinner or not I do not know... one thing I do know, is though I once was blind, now I see.”
 - iii. Then in verses 30-33

1. 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."*
 - iv. The man realizes that Jesus must be from God
 1. May recognize scriptures He has heard taught about the Messiah opening the eyes of the blind (first time this miracle is recorded)
 - v. Finally, in verse 38 he recognizes Christ as Savior and worships Him
 - vi. Progression of understanding of who Jesus is. A deepening.
- d. Notice that the Pharisees are furious with the man for corrupting and trying to teach them anything. They call him a sinner and they cast him out. The excommunicated him from the temple. No longer would he be able to come to worship with his people.
- e. What does it mean to share your story?
 - i. Tell people what Jesus did in your life
 - ii. Doesn't have to be extremely theological or dripping in scripture.
 - iii. It's about your experience with Jesus
 1. We don't base our belief on experience, we base our belief on the word of God.
 2. Our experience is our personal testimony of what Christ has done in our life and is based on the truth in God's word.
 - iv. Sometimes we get hung up on what we feel like we don't know or won't say correctly, and so we don't share. That's wrong thinking.
- f. When You Share Your Story You Sometimes Encounter Opposition
 - i. From family
 - ii. From within the church
 - iii. From the world

- iv. Anytime we believe in something so strongly that it changes our behavior and beliefs, people react
 - 1. When I met Karyl and my family's reaction – I didn't give up on Karyl or shy away from her because of their reaction – they would have to deal with it
 - 2. When my kids first met their spouses and how that changed the way they related to me and our family
 - 3. Some thing as deep as a life-changing relationship with Jesus definitely changes the way people relate to us.
 - a. If you were persecuted... Blessed are you
 - b. *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

Matt 5:13-16

XII. The Overriding Message of This Passage

a. John 9:39-41

- i. *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."⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?"⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.*
- b. *If you acknowledge your blindness Jesus will make you see. If you think you see, then you are blind – spiritually.*
- c. All of this was done for the blind man on the Sabbath, in front of the Pharisees not only for the benefit of the man. But also for the Pharisees to be confronted with their own spiritual blindness.
- d. This morning do you recognize your need for Christ?

- XIII. Altar Call
- XIV. Communion