



DATE: January 31, 2010

TEXT: John 9: 13-41

TITLE: John XXVI: Characteristics of Spiritual Blindness

This morning we are finishing up our study of the healing of the blind man. Remember this fact.... John puts stories of miracles in his gospel for a purpose. He is not just reporting historical facts... he is also teaching truths. What is the truth that is being taught in the 9th chapter of John. I believe it is summed up in the words of our Lord Jesus in *verse 39*. It states.

Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

36"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

37Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

38Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

39Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

The lesson is this.... there is as contrast between those who have spiritual vision and those who are spiritually blind. The man who was healed could see... the Pharisees were blind. I want to share 3 contrasts between those who could see the truth and those who were blind to the truth.

Lesson #1 The spiritually blind rely upon rules.... followers of Christ rely upon grace.

From our text *John 9: 13-16a*

13They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14Now the day on which

Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. 15Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." 16Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

For the Pharisees Jesus was not from God because he did not keep the “religious rules” that they had established. As Christians we understand that we are saved by grace through faith... and only by grace through faith. Allow me to take a moment and look at the belief systems of different people. Everyone has a belief system... everyone... some are the truth many are not the truth.

First, we have the belief system of the non-believer. Many, non believers have a morality. They are not just evil.... they just reject religious belief systems. I believe many would sum up their belief system with the “Golden Rule” “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” In other words... “don’t be bad... just do what needs to be done to get along in life.” Often they are not hostile to religious... they are indifferent to religion. They have a “goodness doctrine.” Try to be relatively good and get by in life. This is a work doctrine. And the good news for these people is they are able to define the word “good.” They determine the standards

that they are suppose to follow and of course... they meet these standards... if they don't... they change the standards. The slogans of these people are.... "no one is perfect"..... "I'm just trying to get by in life"..... "live for the moment."

Second we have the religious people. Let me say I group both Christian religious people and non-Christian religious people (like Muslims and Buddhists and religious Protestants and religious Catholics) in the same category. They all try to achieve a relationship with God through good works. For a Muslim it is maintaining the 5 Pillars of Islam. Let me say this... you do not get a more moral, more righteous person than a practicing Muslim. They are good people because their salvation is based on their goodness. For a Buddhist their next level of reincarnation is based on how good a life they life now. For a Protestant Christian it is how well they obey the 10 Commandments and possibly how often they go to church. For a Catholic Christian it is how often they celebrate the sacraments and possibly go to Mass. Do you see they all have the same standard... they all have a work doctrine.... they are all, in a sense... Pharisees. This is exactly what Jesus is condemning in our text this morning. No one can work their way

into the presence of God REPEAT. No one. No one can do enough “good” act to please God.

Scripture could not be plainer. *Romans 3 states this...*

**12All have turned away, they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good, not even one."**

13"Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit."

"The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

19Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Do you understand this clear, clear teaching of scripture. Let me say this... I believe this is

the most important lesson for people to hear....no one can be good enough for God.... no one.

What is the purpose of the Law... for example the 10 commandments? This text tells

us..the purpose is to make us conscious of our sin. The 10 Commandments. “Thou shall not

kill.” Jesus was clearIf you look at a person with anger you have broken that commandment

Let me ask a question... who here has been angry? You have broken that commandment...you

are not good. You do not deserve to be in God’s presence. “Honor thy Mother and father” Any

one ever broken that one?

Contrast that false path of the spiritually blind to the path of the man who was healed.

Hear these words of our healed man in contrast to the Pharisees... *John 9:24-25*

24A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God,[a]" they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

25He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

Here is a statement of a believer in Jesus Christ... once I was blind... but now I see. That is my statement. That is the statement of every person here. We are saved by grace and grace alone. *Ephesians 2* gives us the summery of all of Christianity. It states...

4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6**And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7**in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9**not by works, so that no one can boast. **10**For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do

Dead... but made alive. Saved by grace and grace alone. Grace through faith. Not by works... any works. Created to do good works. Because we are saved by grace we desire to do good works. We don't come to church in order to be a Christian... we worship God because we are a Christian... we were blind but now we see... therefore, just as the blind man did... we desire to worship our Lord.

Please, please see this truth.... Christianity is totally unique from all the other religions of the world... and Satan's great lie is to try to turn Christianity into a religion like ever other religion of the world.

Lesson # 2 Spiritually blind people compromise the truth. We see two great examples of this in our text... the Pharisees and the parents of the man. *John 9: 18-23*

18The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. **19**"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

20"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. **21**But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." **22**His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. **23**That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Even the man's parents refused to stand up for the truth. Why? Because they were afraid of the consequences.

Remember this fact... this gospel of John was distributed near the end of the 1st century. If there were consequences for believing in Jesus when he walked on this earth... by the end of the 1st century there were serious consequences to being a Christian. Yes, you would be cast out of the synagogue... and yes, you may be put to death for your belief. In our text we see a contrast

between the healed blind man and his parents. The parents compromised the truth. The healed man...stood up to the Pharisees and proclaimed this belief and love of Jesus.

The question is this.... are we willing to stand up for the truth of God's word? Stand up in our homes. Stand up in our community. Stand up in our work places. Stand up in our families.

In a couple weeks my wife and I are going to the wedding of our niece. It will be held in Miami on a cruise ship. We are not going on the cruise.... just to the rehearsal dinner and the wedding. I ask for your prayers. This family is not at all involved in faith. As a matter of fact my niece and her fiancée specifically stated their desire for no religion in their wedding ceremony. Please pray for doors to open for Kim and I. As we all know, family can be the biggest challenge for all of us. We are already seen as the "religious nuts" of the family. Pray for loving opportunities to share Christ's love.... and pray that we will be brave enough to take those opportunities.

We were blind but now we see. Let us share this truth every opportunity we have.

Lesson # 3 We are responsible for the truth that we know. *John 9:40-41 states....*

40Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

41Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

We have heard the truth. The truth will set you free... or the truth will condemn you. Let there be no doubt whatsoever..... those who reject this wonderful gift of grace.... those who reject the truth of Jesus Christ stand condemned. People say to me “how could a loving God condemn a person to hell.” I say. “A loving God never forces a person into heaven.”

The truth is offered.. The gift of grace is offered..... it must be received.... god does not send a person to hell ... a person chooses to go to hell... by rejecting the gift of Christ.

Do not be blind. Do not be spiritually blind. See Jesus. Echo the words of the blind man..... ‘Once I was blind, but now I see.’ We see Jesus.

AMEN