

JESUS HEALED MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH

John 9:1-41

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, the blind man who was healed, and the Pharisees

Key-location: Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Rejection: Jesus was rejected by the Pharisees after he healed the blind man (Jn 9:16); Pharisees expelled the man healed from blindness from the synagogue (Jn 9:34).
- People were confused about who Jesus was (Jn 9:16-17; 10:19-21).
- Blind (Jn 9:1, 2, 6, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 32, 39, 40, 41).

Key-attitudes:

- Confrontation and arguments.
- Jesus' confidence in the words he spoke.
- Healed blind man's determination to say good things about Jesus.
- Jewish leaders' hostility in rejecting both Jesus and the man healed of blindness.

Initial-situation:

It was the third year of Jesus' ministry. During the first half of that year, Jesus went on three retreats seeking to be alone with his disciples. During the second half of the year, Jesus made three trips to Jerusalem. The first trip was for the Feast of the Tabernacles where Jesus made the following claims: he is Living Water; he is the Light of the World; his followers would know the truth and the truth would set them free; his followers would never die; God is his Father. Those claims resulted in confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. The Jews picked up stones to kill Jesus, but he slipped away from the temple grounds.

Initial-problem:

Walking down the street of Jerusalem, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Teacher, whose sin caused him to be born blind?"

Final-situation:

Jesus told the Pharisees, "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty of sin; but since you claim you can see, you're accountable for every sin."

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Heals a Man Blind from Birth

Jesus remained in Jerusalem after the Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus was walking down the street and saw a man who had been blind since birth. His disciples asked,

“Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind? Was it his own sin or was it his parents’ sin?”

Jesus replied, “Neither his sins nor his parents sins caused his blindness. This happened so that the work of God might be seen in his life. While I am in the world, I am the light for the world.”

Jesus spit on the ground, made mud with his spit, smeared mud on the man's eyes and commanded, “Go, wash off the mud in the Pool of Siloam.” The blind man went, washed off the mud, and came back seeing.

Neighbors and those who had previously seen the man begging claimed, “This is the same man who used to sit and beg!”

Others argued, “No, he only looks like him.”

The man himself insisted, “I’m that man.”

They demanded, “How did you receive your sight?”

He replied, “Jesus made mud with his spit, smeared the mud on my eyes, and told me to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash it off. I went; I washed the mud off; then I could see” (Jn 9:1-12).

Pharisees Investigate the Healing

People took the healed blind man to the Pharisees. Jesus made the mud and healed the man's blindness on a Sabbath day. The Pharisees grilled the man on how he received his sight.

He replied, “Jesus put mud on my eyes; I washed it off; now I see.”

Some Pharisees said, “This man Jesus isn’t from God, for he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.”

Others Pharisees countered, “How can a sinner work such a miracle?” So the Pharisees were divided.

The Pharisees questioned again the healed blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, “He’s a prophet.”

The Jewish leaders didn’t believe the man was born blind and had received his sight. They sent for the man's parents, who confirmed that the man was their son and that he was born blind.

The Pharisees summoned the man who had been blind a second time. They told him, “Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner.”

He replied, “I don’t know if he’s a sinner or not. I do know that I was blind, but now I see!”

They asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he give you sight?”

He answered, “I’ve told you over and over and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear the story again? Are you eager to become his disciples too?”

The leaders yelled insults at the man, “You’re this fellow's disciple! We’re disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from.”

The man answered, “Wow! You don't know where he comes from, yet he gave me sight. We know that God listens only to people who love and obey him. No one has ever

heard of giving sight to a person born blind. Jesus couldn't do anything if he didn't come from God."

The leaders replied, "You were born and brought up in sin; how dare you lecture us!" The leaders expelled the healed blind man from the synagogue (Jn 9:13-34).

Jesus heard what happened. Jesus found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

The man answered "Tell me who he is so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said, "You've already seen him. In fact, he's the one speaking with you."

The man said, "Lord, I believe in you," and he worshiped Jesus.

Jesus said, "I came into this world so that the blind will see and those who make a pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

Some Pharisees overheard Jesus and asked, "What? Are you calling us blind?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty of sin. But, since you claim you can see, you're accountable for every sin" (Jn 9:35-41).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus continue healing on the Sabbath when it upset the Pharisees so much?
2. How did Jesus heal the man born blind?
3. How did different people react to Jesus healing the man born blind:
 - Neighbors?
 - Pharisees?
 - Man healed of blindness?
4. What did different people claim to know for certain:
 - Pharisees?
 - Healed blind man?
 - Healed blind man's parents?
5. How did the healed blind man gain real sight while the Pharisees became blind?
6. If you were questioned about your faith, like the healed blind man, what would you say?
7. Today, what gives spiritual sight and what causes spiritual blindness?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Some diseases and disabilities are the result of sin; however, not all sickness and disabilities are the result of sin.** Sometimes good behavior is unrewarded and bad behavior is unpunished. Sometimes innocent people suffer. Jesus said sin did not cause the man to be born blind (Jn 9:3).
2. **The person who speaks in favor of Jesus may suffer persecution.** The man who was healed of blindness testified for Jesus. He was cursed and evicted from the synagogue (Jn 9:28, 34).
3. **People who trust in their own spiritual insight are spiritually blind.** The Pharisees judged themselves to have spiritual knowledge, but were guilty of spiritual blindness (Jn 9:39-41). Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, was a holy day of rest. Pharisees had made a long list of do's and don'ts regarding the Sabbath. Jesus mixing his spit with the clay was considered working to knead the clay. Healing was considered work and forbidden. Because the Pharisees refused to believe God could work outside of their rules of do's and don'ts, they refused to see God at work. Their stubbornness made them spiritually blind (Jn 9:39-41).
4. **Hardening of the heart against God is a process.** The confrontation between the Pharisees and the healed blind man is an example of the process of hardening of the heart:
 - Begins with preconceived ideas about Jesus (Jn 9:16).
 - Proceeds with the refusing to accept facts that are presented (Jn 9:18).
 - Considers Jesus a sinner (Jn 9:24).
 - Refuses to listen when a person tells of his experiences with Jesus (Jn 9:27).
 - Insults the person who testifies about Jesus (Jn 9:28).
 - Refuses to learn from the person who tells the truth (Jn 9:34).
 - Expels from their presence the one who disagrees with them (Jn 9:34).
5. **People don't need to know all the answers in order to share Jesus with others.** The healed blind man didn't understand why he was healed. He knew that his life had been changed, and he was willing to tell the truth (Jn 9:25).
6. **Religious leaders who are false prophets do not have Jesus-like characteristics.** There was a contrast between the religious leaders who were false prophets, and Jesus. The false prophets expelled the believer in Jesus from their presence (Jn 9:34). However, Jesus accepted him, made him a part of his flock (Jn 10:16), and made him one of his sheep (Jn 10:3-4, 14).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Role-play Drama:

Tell the story one time. Then have different volunteers tell the story for the viewpoints of:

- Healed blind man's neighbor who is surprised and skeptical.
- A prejudiced Pharisee who is convinced that Jesus could not be from God because he healed on the Sabbath.