

## **WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY**

### **The Glory of Christ's Mercy and Judgment**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus healed a blind man, as a real-life parable of his mission. The light (8:12) has been conquering darkness (1:5). Last Sunday as I taught on vv1-12 in this text I said that the healing was the story, but the theme was Christ – Christ, the Light of the World. This whole point is brought to a conclusion in v39 of the account. That will be the point of this message. But before we get there, we need to see a few more details in the story.

**TEXT:** [John 9:13–41 \(ESV\)](#)

#### **THE STORY**

When the blind man obeyed Jesus and was healed he returned to meet his astonished neighbors. Immediately his neighbors wanted to see where this healer was. The healed man simply answered that he didn't know (v12). So, for some unknown reason they brought the healed man to the Pharisees. This launches the story into various interrogations.

- a. The Pharisees interrogate the man (9:13-17);
- b. The Pharisees interrogate the parents (9:18-23);
- c. The Pharisees interrogate the man again (9:24-34); and then
- d. The Pharisees bring threats and accusations against the man (9:28-34)

While the Pharisees were questioning the man about what happened a new detail emerges from the proceedings: Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. We know of course that the Jews had added hundreds of rules to the Mosaic Law and in that they listed 39 things that could not be done on the Sabbath. Making mud was probably one of them!

This makes Jesus a Sabbath breaker, therefore, a sinner. Being a sinner, who could not be sent from God. (Of course, this creates a problem. How can a sinner do a miracle?) The Pharisees question the healed man. "Who is he?" Answer: "He must be a prophet."

So now the parents are questioned. "Is this your son?" "Yes," they answered; and he was born blind." Why were these parents not killing themselves with joy over their son's healing and Healer? Answer: if anyone confessed that Jesus was the Messiah they would be excommunicated.

OK, back to the son, the healed man. The Pharisees said, "Give God the glory", that's shorthand for "do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" The man makes this poignant statement: "*He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."*" (John 9:25, ESV). The Pharisees continued to press him to explain his healing, trying to

get him to discount Jesus' role. But he stood his ground and continued to assert that Jesus' miracles proved him to be a prophet. Finally, in their anger they cast him out of the Synagogue (v34).

But Jesus hadn't rejected him. He went looking for him. And in that encounter of mercy, this healed man went from not knowing who healed him, to maybe he's a prophet, to Jesus is the Messiah. He became a disciple, a follower of Christ.

Now Jesus explains the whole story in vv 39-41. Let's read it again:

*"Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.'" (John 9:39-41, ESV)*

### **THE POINT OF THE STORY ACCORDING TO JESUS**

Jesus summarizes his mission: "For judgment I came into the world." "Now wait a minute," Someone will say, "In chapter 3, Jesus said that he didn't come into the world to condemn the world. Is this contradicting that?" Of course, the answer is of course not. "Jesus' point in 9:39 is not that the very purpose of his coming was to condemn, nor even simply to divide the human race. He came to save, not condemn (12:47). But saving some entails condemning others. In that derivative sense, Jesus has indeed come *for judgment*."<sup>1</sup>

John 3:17 emphasizes the truth that the primary reason for the incarnation is not judgement but salvation. However, it is simply a point of logic that "but for those who reject his offer of life, he becomes the judge, as here."<sup>2</sup>

Some eavesdropping Pharisees immediately got the point. As they have rejected Jesus' claim as their Messiah, they must be under judgment. They must be blind. Now Jesus makes this earth-shaking statement:

*"If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."* (John 9:41, ESV)

Now it is confirmed that Jesus is talking about spiritual blindness. Jesus came to cause the spiritually blind to see. But to those who fail to admit their blindness, but are certain that they do see – these are passed over and remain in their blindness – their guilt.

Here's the point: **Indispensable to receiving sight is the acknowledgment of blindness!**

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<sup>1</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 377). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

<sup>2</sup> Osborne, G. R. (2018). [John: Verse by Verse](#). (J. Reimer, E. Ritzema, D. Thevenaz, & R. Brant, Eds.) (p. 245). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Stated otherwise, Jesus said in another setting, *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”* (Mark 2:17, ESV). There are two sides to spiritual blindness. From God’s vantage point the spiritually blind are totally and completely incapable of knowing Him, loving Him and serving Him. But there’s another vantage point – the view of the blind person. Spiritual blindness is the essence of self-righteousness.

Charles Spurgeon was right: *“The greatest enemy to human souls is the self-righteous spirit which makes men look to themselves for salvation.”* When Jesus told the story of the Tax Collector and Pharisee that prayed in the temple, he did it for this purpose: *“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. . . .”*<sup>3</sup> It is in our sin nature to try to do something to merit our salvation. The costly freedom of grace, bought for us by the blood of Jesus with no contribution from us, is difficult for our prideful hearts to understand or appreciate.<sup>4</sup>

## **APPLICATION**

As Paul taught the Galatians in his epic letter: Every manmade effort to achieve salvation is a repudiation, refutation, rejection of the Cross<sup>5</sup>. The substitutionary life, death and resurrection of Christ stand opposed to any notion that we can contribute to our justification. *““Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 5:3, ESV).

For the most part I have the privilege of preaching God’s Word to Christians. We have acknowledged our sinfulness and our need for a Savior. But until we reach glory we still battle with the sinful nature. There is in all of us latent feelings of self-righteousness. Even the Church at Corinth needn’t to be reminded:

*“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:26–29, ESV)

How humbling! Our only boast is found in verse 30: *“And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.””* (1 Corinthians 1:30–31, ESV)

Why are you in Christ? Answer: *“Because of Him.”* Our only boast is *“in the Lord”*. The Gospel Song, Without Him, is the Christian’s repose:

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 18:9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/self-righteousness.html>

<sup>5</sup> *“I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”* (Galatians 2:21, ESV)

Without Him I could do nothing  
Without Him I'd surely fail  
Oh, Without Him I would be drifting  
Like a ship without a sail

Without Him I would be dying  
Without Him I'd be enslaved  
And without Him my life would be worthless  
But with Jesus, thank God I am saved