

Livin' the Life
Jesus is the Light of the World
John 9:1-41
September 9, 2018
David Taylor

We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series on the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. In today's message, Jesus is the Light of the World, we look at the sixth of seven signs with the healing of the blind man in John 9:1-12.

Jesus and his disciples are near the temple in Jerusalem. The twelve disciples traveled around with Jesus just like other disciples did with their rabbis or teachers. They did this to learn from the rabbi, with the goal of becoming like the rabbi, and embracing the mission of the rabbi. But following Jesus involved more than just learning from him. When Jesus called individuals to follow him, he demanded they repent of their sins and turn to him in faith for salvation. Following Jesus is a life of repenting of your sin and turning to Jesus in faith. So, the twelve disciples are following Jesus, learning from him, are being formed by Jesus, and are committing themselves to his mission. One of the ways rabbis taught was by questions and answers as we see today.

They pass by a beggar, a man born blind. The disciples question Jesus about him, Rabbi, did this man or his parents' sin that he was born blind (1-2)? They had a common Jewish belief that there was a direct correlation between suffering and some specific sin they committed. They are looking to Jesus for answers because they recognize that he is more than just a man. Jesus just said that "before Abraham was I am," making a claim to be God so that the Jews wanted to stone him for it (8:58-59). All human suffering, including sickness, disabilities, and death are in the world because of sin, human fallenness (Ro 5:12-14; 8:18-25) but Jesus rejects the notion that some specific sin caused this man's suffering.¹ Jesus had another explanation. Sometimes God, in his mysterious and wise providence, allows suffering to display God's mercy and power. So, Jesus is not so concerned with the source of his suffering as he is about the future purpose of his suffering. Look at verse three, It was not that this man sinned or his parents but so that the works of God might be displayed in him (3). This man's suffering has more than one purpose and that is where the next two verses point us.

He tells his disciples, we must do the works God sent me to do while it is still day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world (4-5). Day refers to his earthly ministry while night refers to his impending death. Jesus is intent on fulfilling the mission the Father sent him on and is intentional about the time he has left. Jesus says works, not work, showing us that this blindness has more than one purpose of God. God is always working in a multitude of ways in our circumstances. Jesus refers to his mission and uses the I am statement again, I am the light of the world. He has a greater goal than the blind man just seeing *natural light*. Jesus also wants him to see *spiritual light*, to see the glory of God (1:14). Jesus is the light that the man needs more than physical light. There are many people who are blind and see the light of the world and there are many who see yet are blind to the light of the world. Jesus wants something better and greater for the man, spiritual eyes and spiritual light. Jesus' life is centered on mission, God sent him to accomplish his mission, do the works God sent him to do, to give spiritual sight to the spiritually blind. Jesus includes his disciples in this mission, when he says, we must do the works of him who sent me. We are sent on Jesus' mission by association with Jesus. This is why he said to his disciples, as the Father sent me, so I am sending you (20:21). Jesus' call to follow him includes the call to embrace his mission. Mission was the center of his life and he intends that it be the center our lives.

Then Jesus addresses his physical need. He heals the man by making mud with his spit and rubbing it on his eyes and telling him to go wash it off in the pool of Siloam. The man trusted Jesus' word and did as he said and his eyesight was restored so that he came back seeing (6-7)! He was

¹ This is not to say that the two are never related. Jesus says that they can be (Jn 5:14) and Paul taught that suffering may be caused by sin (1 Co 11:29-30; 2 Co 12:7) but not necessarily so (Gal 4:13).

healed! Think for a moment how radically different this man's life was from that point forward. Being born blind, he could not support himself so was left to a life of begging, totally dependent upon the mercy of others. But now everything changes. His countenance changed so much that some of his neighbors and those who used to see him begging didn't even recognize him! They questioned whether he really was the blind man (8-9)! But Jesus is not finished. He wants to address his greater need, his spiritual need. So after he is questioned by the Pharisees, Jesus finds him and asks, Do you believe in the Son of Man? He responds, who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you. He said, Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him (9:35-38). The ultimate healing that this man received and that all of us need, is to see the glory of God in Jesus Christ (1:14; 3:3). His physical healing was for a greater good, his spiritual healing. His physical healing got his attention to see his need for his spiritual healing.

Do you see the connection between Jesus claiming to be the great I am and this man's blindness and healing and Jesus as the light of the world? The most important thing for this man is to see the glory of Jesus and worship him. Spiritual healing in salvation is the ultimate healing; it is the greater good. The ultimate reason for this man's blindness is that the works of God might be displayed in him, that he be given natural eyes to see the glory of God's creation and given spiritual eyes to see the glory of the Creator, Jesus Christ and worship him. Or as John said "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and by believing have life (20:31). Jesus does not just give life, Jesus is life. Jesus is the light of the world sent by the Father to give spiritual healing and spiritual sight.