

# MIRACLES | A Man Born Blind

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## Introduction

In our series called *Miracles* we're looking at the many miracles Jesus performed and hearing stories from individuals in our Grace Chapel family where the Divine intervened in impossible situations and turned them into miracles.

Today we will encounter the story of a man who was born blind. The truth is that we are all blind from birth. Something is terribly wrong with us, and we know it.

There are two kinds of blindness we will be discussing today—blindness of the natural and blindness to the spiritual.

**Personal**—I grew up watching Bob Ross with my Dad on Saturday mornings. Perspective, values, color, hue, atmospheric perspective, learning how to see things and capture light—these aspects of painting changed how I saw the world around me. Painting also taught me about the illusions we create with color—that we see the color we expect to see and not necessarily the color that *is*. And this reminds me so much of what it is like to follow Jesus.

**Sin, like color, is not always obvious to see.  
You have to be taught to see it.**

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## The Miracle

### John 9:1–7

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “**Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**” When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, “**Go, wash in the pool of Siloam**” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

We are just like this man—

- We too are blind until we are saved by Jesus.
- We too are beggars, hungry for the only One Who will satisfy our deepest needs.
- We too are helpless—we cannot save ourselves; only Jesus can save us.

**Question**—What was the purpose of the clay? Was it to . . .

- harken to the Creation story?
- show that the Person, not the method, matters?
- be a rock in the blind man’s shoe?
- show delayed revelation?

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## The Response of Bewilderment

### John 9:8–12

Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?” Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.” He said, “I am he.” Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.” Then they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.”

**Don't be surprised that as you begin to follow Jesus,  
people won't recognize you,  
trust you,  
or even be happy for you.**

Marius von Senden, in his book *Space and Sight*, describes how when Western surgeons discovered how to perform safe cataract operations, they performed dozens of operations on men and women of all ages who had been blinded by cataracts since birth. The results were fascinating. Consider just a couple:<sup>1</sup>

- **Cube and sphere**—Before surgery, blind people could identify these shapes by touch. After surgery, when presented with the objects by sight only, they had no idea which was a cube and which was a sphere. Only after touching the objects while looking at them could they make the visual association of the shape with its name.
- **How tall is your mom?** The doctors would ask patients how tall they believed their mothers were, and before surgery the patients would hold their fingers apart just a few inches to represent their perception of that height. After surgery, they had to visually learn totally new perceptions of height.

We don't see 3D objects at all. We are 3D creatures living in a 3D world, but our eyes can show us only two dimensions. The miracle of depth perception comes from our brain's ability to put together two 2D images in such a way as to extrapolate depth. This is called stereoscopic vision.

**In other words, we have to learn how to see.**

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## The Response of Rejection

### John 9:13–17

They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. They said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

**Question**—Why were the Pharisees so confused?

Because  $A+B \neq C$ . The Pharisees had a “formula” for making sense of things, and Jesus did not conform to this formula. They were angry, threatened, and confused.

We all have formulas to try to make life work. But God doesn't conform to our formulas.

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<sup>1</sup> von Senden, Marius. *Space and Sight - The Perception of Space & Shape in the Congenitally Blind Before & After Operation*. Methuen, 1960.

**What's yours? *If the answer isn't Jesus, go back and reconsider your formula.***

### **John 9:18–34**

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

- Because he can now see, the man has become a disciple, an evangelist, and an apologist!

**This man's eyes were opened  
and now he doesn't just see light,  
he *IS* a light!**

In his book *Space and Sight*, Marius von Senden describes how, surprisingly, a disheartening number of those who were surgically healed refused to use their new vision, preferring instead to continue to go over objects with their tongues or fingers, and lapsing into apathy and despair:

- "She carefully shuts her eyes whenever she wishes to go about the house, especially when she comes to a staircase, and that she is never happier or more at ease than when, by closing her eyelids, she relapses into her former state of total blindness."<sup>2</sup>
- One patient finally blurted out, "No, really, I can't stand it anymore; I want to be sent back to the asylum again. If things aren't altered, I'll tear my eyes out."<sup>3</sup>

**The Pharisees refused to see, and they rejected Jesus and the man He healed.**

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## **The Response of Worship**

**Questions**—Have you ever seen something that changed everything for you? After which seeing you couldn't go back to the way things were before?

### **John 9:35–38**

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "**Do you believe in the Son of God?**" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" And Jesus said to him, "**You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.**" Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshipped Him.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Marius von Senden also describes how some blind children, after they were surgically healed, responded with awe and worship:

- A little girl visited a garden. This was her response: “She is greatly astonished, and can scarcely be persuaded to answer, stands speechless in front of the tree, which she only names on taking hold of it, and then as ‘the tree with the lights in it.’”<sup>4</sup>
- A twenty-two-old girl was dazzled by the world’s brightness and kept her eyes shut for two weeks. When at the end of that time she opened her eyes again, she did not recognize the objects, but, “the more she now directed her gaze upon everything about her, the more it could be seen how an expression of gratification and astonishment overspread her features; she repeatedly exclaimed: ‘Oh God! How beautiful!’”<sup>5</sup>

**What you see is what you get.  
Fix your eyes on Jesus!**

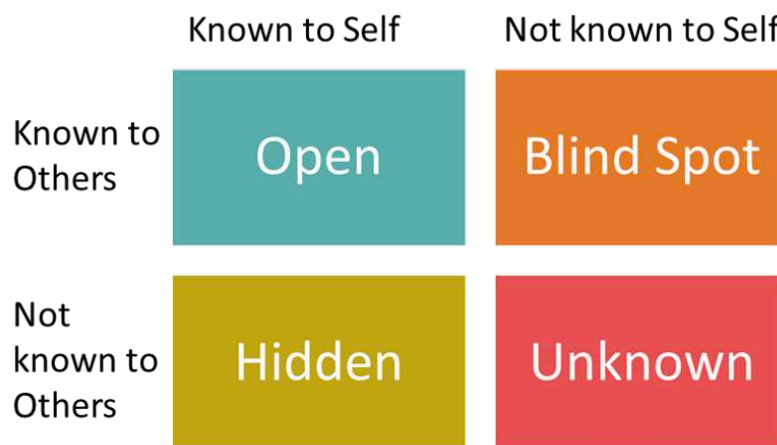
### **John 9:39–41**

And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.” Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.”

- Jesus wants us to open our eyes to the spiritual reality of what’s going on inside us and with the people around us.

**Application**—The longer you follow Jesus, the more exposed you become. Sanctification is painful and hard. You become more aware of your sin, and more grieved by it. The closer you get to Jesus, the more He shows you these things, but the more He shows you, the more He brings you healing and freedom.

### **Johari Window**



- **Hidden**—These are things you need to bring into the light with God and with others you trust.
- **Blind Spot**—Be in fellowship with others and with the Lord so that you can see your blind spots.
- **Unknown**—These are things that only God know about you. Trust Him to reveal them in His timing.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

If you see the miracle of healing or the miracle of salvation and stop there, you will miss out on the most profound and dangerous adventure with God.

If all you see is what you expected to see, you will miss out on knowing God intimately.

**When we come face to face with Jesus—  
when we see Him for Who He is—  
we can face the world and ourselves honestly.  
When we truly see Jesus,  
we can fall at His feet  
and worship the only One  
Who can teach us how to really see.**

### Prayer

*Lord, I confess that I am blind. I have so many ways I try to manage You, but You will not fit into my religious formulas. I cannot find my own way. I come to you, Lord, begging like the man born blind. You heal me, You save me, and You send me. I will stand for Your Name. I will walk in persecution and with the darkness all around me as long as You are with me.*

*Open my eyes, Lord. I want to see You, Jesus. I fall at Your feet and worship You. Teach me how to truly see. I beg for Your healing, Your restoration, and Your presence. I am desperate for You to open my eyes. I want to see Your face. Take me by the hand and lead me into the light.*

*In Your Name I pray,*

*Amen.*

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## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think was the purpose of the clay in this story? Why did Jesus choose to heal this way?
2. Discuss from a spiritual perspective: We have to learn how to see.
3. What formulas do you use to try to make life work? How well have these formulas worked for you?
4. Compare and contrast the man who was born blind but became a disciple, evangelist, and apologist with the Pharisees. Do they share any similarities? How are they different? In what ways are you like the man who was born blind? The Pharisees?
5. Reflect on the idea that the longer you follow Jesus, the more exposed you become—the more you see. Has this been true of your experience? In what ways? How is sanctification hard? How is Jesus always faithful through it?

## NOTES