

**Scripture: John 9:1-41 (NRSVUE)**

**9:1** As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. **4** We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” **6** When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, **7** saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. **8** The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” **9** Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” **10** But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” **11** He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” **12** They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

**13** They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. **14** Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. **15** Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” **16** Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. **17** So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

**18** The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” **20** His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, **21** but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” **22** His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. **23** Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

**24** So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” **25** He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” **26** They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” **27** He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” **28** Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. **29** We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” **30** The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. **31** We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. **32** Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. **33** If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” **34** They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

**35** Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” **36** He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”

**37** Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” **38** He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” **40** Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” **41** Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

## Sermon

Just when you think that there is no possible way a scripture could be longer than last week, here we are. Today’s scripture beat it by a hundred words. There is so much in this chapter.

I believe that we can once again see that the man that was blind was on a journey. If you remember, last week, we talked about how the Samaritan Woman was on a journey. Throughout this story, we can see that he shows growth in his understanding and of who is this man that healed him. Here is a quick snapshot:

In verse 11, he names him as Jesus

In verse 17, he names him as a prophet

In verse 33, he names him from God

Let us attempt to peel this story back and see what we can learn.

If you would grab a pen or a highlighter and circle or mark blindness or sight, you would find those words in twenty-four of the forty-one verses. Now, it might be interesting to note that the man who was born blind never asked to be healed. In other stories, we hear individuals coming to Jesus to be healed. Even though he did not ask, Jesus healed him and we hear the story four times in these forty-one verses because of all of the interactions. Jesus put mud on his eyes and he regained sight. I think that it is also very permissible to go a little deeper and realize that there are theological insights in this text that go beyond a healing story and here is the theme: Jesus, the giver of sight and the very light of the world in which true sight becomes possible.

If we are going to take a look at theological insights, we need to take a look at how the story begins. Jesus and his disciples are walking and they see a man that was blind from birth. A discourse on sin occurs. Jesus rejects the interpretation of the man’s blindness. Instead of sin, we see God’s glory being revealed.

Now, even though, we can see God’s glory being revealed and we hear Jesus rejecting the sin narrative; the theme of sinfulness remains. It is in the whole episode. However, the sinfulness does not just stay with the man, it is also thrown at Jesus. They believe that he was a sinner because of his Sabbath actions. Sinfulness continues to be a thread as it travels from the man to Jesus back to the man and then finally to the Pharisee’s.

For me, the turning point of the story is in verse thirty-four when they drive the man who was blind out of town. They have had enough of his witness and did not want to hear what he had to say any longer. He was abandoned by everyone. The story, however, does not end when he is driven out of town though.

Jesus hears that the man has been driven out of town and he goes looking for him and he finds him! They have a beautiful conversation and at the end of the conversation, the man's journey is complete. He now believes that Jesus is truly the Son of Man. He was definitely on a journey of growth throughout the episode.

Now, I make the shift and take us from the original story to our lives here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What does it mean for you, for me, and us a community of believers?

The parents, in our story, were scared. They let fear grip their lives. They were being questioned and those questions caused them to have great fear. They deflected the questions back to their son. They were afraid that if they answered truthfully that they would be kicked out of the synagogue.

There are some places in the world where being a Christian is risky. For us, in the US, this is usually not the case. However, I do believe that many times, we play it safe and do not stand up for the injustices that are occurring in our society. Then on the flip side, even though it may not be life-risky to be a Christian, it is no longer socially desirable to be a Christian. With it being less desirable, our priorities have shifted and God is not in first place.

This really should not be the case. One of the images that we have in our arsenal is that of a vine. With us being the fruit of Jesus vine, we are on display and we need to stand for the other. The blind man was completely different than his parents. Time after time, he showed courage. He stood his ground. He shared what he knew. He was willing to speak the hard truth to the power players. He then shared about the amazing grace in which he was transformed by.

The song amazing grace, is the fundamental truth about grace. The blind man and the song sum it up beautifully: "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

The last two weeks, we have seen Jesus connecting with the Samaritan woman and the man that was born blind. Jesus shows us the importance of relationships. He shows us how to love. He shows us how, at times, we need to break through the boundaries to be there for the other individual. Jesus was constantly inviting others into this beautiful story of redemption. May we have the courage to reach outside of our comfort zone and show unconditional love to everyone that we meet. AMEN.