

The healing of the man born blindJohn 9 vv.1-12.

Do you see over there, close to the temple entrance, that beggar sitting on the ground? Poor wretch. He is blind! ... Because of this he is unable to work and he has to earn his living by begging. Daily he sits there, and when he hears people pass by, he raises his pleading eyes and holds out his hand for an alms.

This man has not become blind through some accident or other, no, he has been blind from birth. Oh, just think about that for a moment. How awful that must have been. He has never been able to see his father or his mother. He knows nothing of the beauties of nature.

What a dull, sad youth he must have had. Other children of his age played and romped. He could not do so, for he was blind. For him it was always night. Never has one ray of light penetrated his darkness. Furthermore his blindness was incurable. Anyone who is born blind cannot expect to recover.

The years fled by. Years of suffering and misery. Now he is a man and he sits daily at the gate of the temple, begging.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem know this poor sufferer well. They have so often seen him sitting there, it has become quite habitual.

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So you see, there he sits on this Sabbath day again by the house of the Lord. "Master," ask the disciples, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" It is as though they say: "Master, how is it that this man was born blind? Is it in punishment for some sin or other?"

The Lord tells them that it is not in punishment for some particular or specially grave sin. But, "that the works of God may be made manifest in him. ... I am the light of the world."

When the Lord comes close to him, He stands still. He spits upon the ground and makes of the spittle some clay. Then He spreads that clay upon the eyes of the blind man.

Now, why does the Lord Jesus do this? Surely that is not a suitable means of healing? If Jesus had taken water and washed the blind man's eyes, that would surely be more suitable. But clay is quite the wrong thing to use. Such a *treatment* remedy is more likely to aggravate than to heal the malady. *improve the condition.*

Yet Jesus makes use of this apparently useless means, that His power might

"Go," says Jesus then to the man born blind, "wash in the pool of Siloam."

In the last chapter we told you that Siloam was a pool which lay at the ~~xxxxxxx~~ foot of the temple mountain.

As soon as Jesus has said this, the blind man gets up and hurries, carefully feeling his way down the hill. He obeys at once the Lord's command, believing in Jesus' power to heal him.

A little later he returns. Calmly and quietly he climbs back again, no longer groping and feeling his way, but seeing. Oh, for the first time in his life he can see the blue sky. For the first time in his life he sees the beauty of the temple buildings. He sees the dark green of the trees.

What appeared to be quite impossible has taken place here. He is recovered from his blindness.

Who can describe what went on in that man's heart? ... Just look at his happy gleaming eyes, his joyful smile.

Look over there! ... A man is walking through Jerusalem's streets. He is evidently going to his house. When he gets to the street where his parents live, people look at him in amazement.

"Is not this he that sat and begged?" asks one.

"This is he," says another.

A third says doubtfully "He is like him."

They cannot believe their eyes. Some of them think that he is someone who looks very much like the blind man.

The man born blind, for he it was, hears what the neighbours and acquaintances say. He smiles, and his eyes glisten with joy.

"Yes," he answers, "I am he. You are not mistaken."

Very soon he is surrounded by a group of curious people.

"How were thine eyes opened?" they ask him in amazement.

"A man that is called Jesus made clay," he replies, "and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight."

"Where is Jesus?" they enquire.

"I do not know," he answers.

Then they suggest that he go with them to the Pharisees to tell them what has happened.

Together they make their way to the assembly of the Sanhedrin.

John 9 vv.13-34.

There they sit, these eminent men, the leaders of the Jewish people. Before them stands the restored blind man with his friends and neighbours. They look upon him with doubtful, piercing eyes. They are going to investigate this case very carefully.

"Well now," they say, "you have now received your sight. Tell us just how this happened. Tell us what He did to you."

"Jesus put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see," he informs them.

After this simple story there is a moment's quiet. The Pharisees are embarrassed about the case. They cannot admit that anything great has taken place.

"This man, (and by that they mean Jesus) is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath," ^{say} some of them.

Perhaps some of you will think: "What has Jesus done wrong? ... Well, according to the Pharisees Jesus had worked. After all, He had made clay, had He not? ... And to make clay is ... to work! That is not allowed on the Sabbath day. How ridiculous, don't you agree, boys and girls?"

Others shake their heads and say: "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

The elders begin to argue amongst themselves. They cannot agree together. At last they ask the blind man: "What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes?"

His answer comes at once: "He is a Prophet."

Do you hear what he says? To his friends and neighbours he had said: "A man that is called Jesus," and now he says: "He is a Prophet." Gradually the man is coming to realize who Jesus really is.

The Pharisees still cannot agree.

All at once the thought springs to mind with one of them: "Is this man indeed the one who was born blind. May not the whole thing be a deception?"

The members of the Sanhedrin want to be quite certain. "Call the father and mother of this man," they command.

Shortly afterwards his parents enter, surprised and neither knowing nor guessing what they are wanted for.

~~XXXXXX~~ "Is this your son, whom ye say was born blind?" they ask the couple sternly. "How then doth he now see?"

These simple folk are in a very difficult position. What must they answer? They dare not speak the whole truth for they fear the Pharisees. Why is that? ... Well, the elders of the Jews had determined that any who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and said so, should be cast out of the Synagogue. They would be excommunicated. Henceforth they would not be permitted to enter the Synagogue. That was a severe punishment.

So they answer very carefully: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself."

What do you think? Would that father and that mother really not have known how their son had received his sight? ... Of course they knew, but they did not dare to say. Fear made them keep silence.

The elders however are not getting anywhere like this.

"Come here," they command the man born blind.

He obeys, and the Pharisees tell him sternly: "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." As much as to say: "You have not been restored by this Jesus. You must have no respect for Him for He is a sinner." Read again what it says in John: "this man" they say contemptuously.

The man born blind answers them somewhat annoyed: "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

"What did He do to thee? How opened He thine eyes?" they enquire yet again. Oh, they would gladly diminish the wonder which the Lord Jesus has wrought. If only they could make mockery of that Nazarite. Once more they ask about the miracle, hoping to find something. Perhaps he will say something contradictory.

Then the voice of the man born blind replies: "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples? ... mischievously, half jeering, he looks at the elders."

They cast angry looks at him and snap abusively: "Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

Their voices betray unbelief, mistrust, scorn.

The man born blind hears this. He sees it in their evil eyes. He reads

it in their wrathful faces. But that is something he cannot bear. What? ... Will they still blaspheme Jesus? ... He can no longer hold his peace.

Frankly, and indignantly he replies: "Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that ~~Ye~~ know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God answereth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing."

Fearlessly he looks at the furious members of the Sanhedrin.

But just look at the Pharisees! They are white with rage. Their eyes blaze ominously. They clench their fists.

"Thou was altogether born in sins," they burst out in anger, "and dost thou teach us?" They mean: "Who do you think you are? You are merely one of the ordinary people, and we are the teachers, we are the elders."

Do you know why it is that the Pharisees have become so furious? ... They feel inwardly that this simple man is speaking the truth. They have got from him a tremendous lesson, but they will not admit ~~ix~~ it. They will not listen to the warning voice of their conscience. They harden themselves against it. And what then? ...

They finish up by casting him out of the Synagogue. He is excommunicated. He is thrust out. Nobody is allowed to speak to him, none may be his friend. Everybody must treat him with contempt.

John 9 vv. 35-41.

Look, again the man born blind is walking through the streets of Jerusalem. He is an outcast. He is not even allowed to give thanks in the house of the Lord God for his miraculous healing. Cast out! And why? ... Because he had spoken up for Jesus. Because he had defended Jesus' name.

While he thus walks on, sunk in thought, all at once he sees Jesus. No, that is not quite what it says. Just read it. In John's gospel it says: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him..." So it is not he that finds Jesus, but Jesus finds him.

The Lord then knows that they have cast him out, and now the Lord Jesus searches him out. The Good Shepherd searches for His sheep, which has been

Jesus asks him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

"Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? asks the man born blind, meekly.

And then comes the Saviour's answer: "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee."

For one moment the man stares at Jesus. Then with a trembling voice he says: "Lord, I believe."

Yes, more than that! He does not only say it, but he worships the Lord Jesus. Oh, it is as though the eyes of his soul are now opened. He believes the word which Jesus speaks unto him. His soul is filled with sacred joy. Gone is his sadness over his shameful treatment ^{by} from the proud Pharisees. Gone are his worries. A wonderful peace fills his soul, a peace which the elders of the Jews can never take away. It is the peace which God gives to His people, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

The man born blind was thrust out by the Pharisees, but he was embraced by Jesus. The blind beggar was not only healed from his bodily ailment, but his soul also was redeemed from everlasting ruin.

Do you know anything of that peace, anything of that joy in your soul? ... No? ... Poor children. Ask the Lord Jesus to open your blind eyes also. Ask Him to bestow upon you too that peace which the man born blind received. That same Jesus still lives. He granted it to the blind man, and He can also grant it to you. How happy you would be then.

Happy for time and for eternity.
