

John Chapter 9

BLIND MAN SEES THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Read John 9:1-30

Few afflictions are more difficult to bear than blindness. And in Jesus' day, a blind person held little hope for anything more than a lifetime of begging. In the passage we're considering today, our Lord, the Light of the World, releases a blind man from the constraints of darkness. But because the healing is performed on the Jewish Sabbath, the Pharisees are critical. This leads to yet another public conflict between organised, legalistic religion and a vibrant life-giving relationship with the person of Christ. Toward the end of the chapter it becomes clear that the real blind men are the Pharisees whose spiritual darkness substitutes the pride of religion for the humility of faith.

Paul wrote of the "god of this world 'blinding people to God's truth'" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Christian faith is not merely something which is obvious once the basic facts are explained. It is not so rational as a railway timetable. For that reason, prayer for God to open people's inner eyes is a vital part of sharing the faith with them. It is not enough for us to desire impressive presentations of the faith for unbelievers; we need to pray that their spiritual sight will be healed.

- What idea lies behind the disciples' questioning (v.1) curiosity? Guilt-tripping? A trap compassion?

- What does Jesus' answer (vv3-5) reveal about how he views the man's pain?

- What is one key quality that Jesus had but the Pharisees didn't regarding the man born blind? Discuss.

- When other Christians try to talk to you about God from a different angle to what you're used to, how do you respond to them?
 - a. Are you open to learning?
 - b. Do you feel threatened?
 - c. Are you excited to discover something new?
 - d. Do you respond angrily, rejecting both the person and their message?
 - e. Is it extremely important for you to be right at all times?
 - f. Are you willing to prayerfully reconsider your position?

The Mute Eloquence of a Changed Life

No testimony is quite as compelling as that of a changed life. People can argue theology and dispute interpretations of the Bible, but they are rendered speechless when confronted with the reality of a changed life. It is the unarguable apologetic. Cardinal Suhard give us a convicting definition of such a life:

To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist.

Certainly this could be said of the blind man's life after he met Jesus ... and of so many people whom Jesus touched. Can it be said of you? Is your life a cold monument to religious duty - or is it "a living mystery"?

Read 9: 35-41

- Why does Jesus wait until now to fully present himself?

- How is the man, only now, able to affirm Jesus as Lord?

- How has this chapter illustrated verse 39?

- What blindness is the result of sin (v39-41)? How do such guilty people "see" again?
