

Spiritual Blindness Among the Religious

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John 9:39 And Jesus said, **For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.**

John 9:40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, Are we blind also?

John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, **If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**

Jesus always had a spiritual message associated with His miracles. Sometimes in scripture, we learn the spiritual lesson by simply reading about the act of mercy that He performed; other times, we read His spoken lesson before, during, or following such works. I think there are many lessons in every miraculous act He ever did. It is for us as students of our great Teacher to ferret out those lessons and let them change our lives.

Here in our text chapter, Jesus has just set up a classic confrontation between Himself and the high and mighty Jewish religious zealots; the Pharisees. They came with all their answers and accosted the blind man who had been made to see by our Lord, and as we read about their abuse of him it becomes obvious to us that they missed the entire object lesson of both Christ's miracle and the man's testimony. Even the man saw something astounding in how they responded to the news about him now being able to see. As the legalists that they were, they considered it most offensive that Jesus had healed the man on the sabbath. To them, obviously, it was sabbath-breaking for God to do something on that seventh day, as far as they were concerned. Have you ever noticed that when God forbade the Jews from working on the 7th day that He did not forbid Himself from working on that day, even though He did rest from creation on the 7th day? I believe there has always been self-righteous men on earth who thought God was constrained by the laws He gave to his creatures. If such were true, then God would be in violation of His own principles to hate the wicked, since He has said "love your enemies." He would be in violation of Himself when he takes a life of His creatures, because He has said "thou shalt not kill." The thing that the self-righteous forget is that it is God who makes the rules...and He makes them as a pattern for finite creatures to follow. More than that, they define righteousness and holiness for creatures. But for creatures to attempt to judge God based on their own tunnel vision is blasphemy. The nature and attributes of God dictate His

divine behavior, and it is never in contradiction to who He is.

The man who was given his sight recognized the absolutely ridiculous viewpoint of these Pharisees and said so. His opinion was that since nobody had ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of the blind since the beginning of time, that whoever could do such a thing had to have come from God. He soon became acquainted with this same Jesus Christ and verified immediately that he believed that Jesus was indeed from God. (Narrate how Jesus came back to Him and asked him if he believed on the Son of God; and when Jesus identified Himself the man worshiped him).

So, what we have here is total spiritual blindness of the Pharisees contrasted against the new-found sight of the healed man. And this gave Jesus the perfect setting to preach His sermon of warning against human presumption and self-righteousness. From this we want to take our message and notice:

I. Jesus declared that His very purpose for coming into the world was to reveal the difference between the ignorantly blind and those who think they are informed but are even more blind (v.39).

- ❖ Let's remind ourselves first that one of the most erroneous pathways a human can take is one of religion without God's healing of their blindness.
 - Although the pride of man will almost always cause people to think they know something...that they see something they do not see...it is that pride about knowledge that blinds them.
 - We hear of religious zealots who think they know all about handling of serpents in their religious services...then we hear how they were bitten in the face and die a short time later. Do they really see? Or do they think they see?
 - Steve Irwin, the famous “Crocodile Hunter”, considered an Australian wildlife expert...he was known for his wide range of knowledge about how to handle wild animals. He was killed by a wild sting ray. Did he really see everything about wild animals, or did he think he saw?
 - Horace Lawson Hunley, Confederate marine engineer and inventor of the first combat submarine, drowned in that vessel during a trial run. Did he really know everything about submarines...or did he think he knew?
- ❖ Let's notice next that those who are actually spiritually blind will be the first to question any idea that they are - v. 40 - And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, **Are we blind also?**
 - The arrogance of human nature will deny spiritual blindness

- Remember Paul's rebuke of the Jews in Rome he was writing to: **Rom 2:17-20; 23** Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, **18** And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; **19** And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, **20** An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. **v. 23** Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?
- The arrogance of human nature will practice a religion or a lifestyle completely at odds with the principles of God and will call it righteous and acceptable to God - **John 9:26-29** Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? **27** He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples **28** Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. **29** We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence he is.
- The religion of the self-righteous will misrepresent the truths of God to defend their religion (notice Ch. 9, vv. 16, 32-34). **John 9:16** Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because **he keepeth not the sabbath** day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? **John 9:32-34** (the formerly blind man replies) Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. **33** If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. **34** They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and **dost thou teach us?** And they **cast him out**.
- ❖ It is the arrogance of thinking oneself able to see the deep things without possessing the true sight that sustains the sin of unbelief - John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, **If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**
- ❖ But despite all the self-important arrogance surrounding religious humanity, and despite the blindness of those who think they see how things are, Christ is in the business of giving sight to those who are spiritually blind ("...**I am come into this world, that they which see not might see**")
 - The grace of God can sweep away blindness and give spiritual sight
 - Go back to **vv. 1-7**
- ❖ v. 6: The first step in restoring your sight was done by Jesus:

- A touch
- An anointing
- A command v. 7
 - The sight of the willfully blind will not be restored because they reject the idea that they have such a need.
- The next step was a response of faith and a cleansing that was appointed and arranged: v. 7 “Go wash in the pool of Siloam (interpreted “Sent”).
 - **1Cor. 6:11** “...but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
 - The self-righteous religious scholar rejects the idea of needing faith or a cleansing.
- vv. 30-33: As an enlightened person, you understood what comes from God
 - vv. 28-29; 34: The self-created doctrine of the religious blind rejects the idea that there is true light somewhere else: