Jesus Assembly Church, Erdenet, Mongolia/ Crossroads Dr. Rick Griffith

5 Sept 2010/ 24 Oct 2010 Message #15

NLT 40 Minutes

**Don’t the Blind Know They’re Blind?**

Title

***John 9***

**Topic:** Spiritual Blindness

**Theme:** How can you avoid spiritual blindness—in yourself and in others?

**Thrust:** Respond in faith to what you know now about Jesus.

**Purpose:** The listeners will avoid spiritual blindness (= unbelief) in themselves and others

**Video:** VTS\_01\_4.VOB from minute counter 2:00 to 6:54 (= 4:54 minutes)

# Introduction

### Interest: [Being cured from physical blindness is wonderful.]

Edens

Black

#### For 51 years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn't see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness. And then, he could see. A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation and, for the first time, Bob Edens had sight.

Sight

#### He found it overwhelming. "I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow," he exclaimed. "I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red. I can see the shape of the moon--and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is" (Max Lucado, *God Came Near* [Multnomah Press, 1987], 13).

Black

Red

Yellow

### Interest: Isn’t that great? But the healing of *spiritual blindness* is even better!

S Blind

#### [Play video] Christians have been healed of spiritual blindness and have the best gifts the world has *ever* seen.

Video

#### What can be better than total *forgiveness* of sin—a completely clean slate of all the wrongs that we’ve ever done?

Healing

• Forgive

#### What can be better than the guarantee that we can *live forever*? John’s Gospel repeatedly emphasizes the eternal life Christ gives.

• Eternal

#### What can be better than having the most fulfilling and *satisfying life* possible?

• Satisfy

### Need: But the reality is that most people don’t accept this offer of salvation. Why not? Most people are spiritually blind. We need spiritual sight to see God’s offer.

Black

#### Do *you* have eyes to see him clearly? Can you see what a wonderful offer this is? Are you spiritually blind or sighted?

#### If you *have* spiritual sight now, how can you better help *others* see this clearly?

### Subject: *What must we see to prevent spiritual blindness*—in ourselves & others?

Subject

### Background: InJohn 6–8, Christ declared to be God himself as the bread of life, the one who gives living water, and the light of the world but in chapter 9, today we will see that even though the light was there, the Pharisees still couldn’t see it. So John wrote to show how that spiritual sight can be detected.

Jn 6–8

### Text: Chapter 9 is a story that asks the question, “Who is really blind?”

### Preview: Today we’ll see three views we must have to avoid spiritual blindness. We’ll see Jesus show who he is through a miracle, then a controversy that results, and finally he calls us to decision.

3 views

### Transition: Now the first thing we need to see to avoid spiritual blindness is that...

# I. Jesus makes the blind see (1-7).

MP

**[To prevent spiritual blindness, realize that Christ gives both physical and spiritual sight.]**

## Jesus’ healing a blind man proved he gives spiritual sight too (1-7).

1-7

### This man was born blind to show that God empowered Jesus to give eternal life (1-5).

1-5

#### People today also wonder why defects like these come—is it bad karma?

Why?

#### But where did the Jews get the idea that physical defects always result from sin?

##### The second commandment in Exodus 20:4-5 reads, “4 ‘You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me.’[[1]](#footnote-1)

Ex 20

Ex 20

##### *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* adds, “The **disciples** faced a theological problem. Believing that sin directly caused all suffering, how could a person be *born* with a handicap? Therefore either **this man . . . sinned** in his mother’s womb (Ezek. 18:4) **or his parents** sinned (Ex. 20:5).”[[2]](#footnote-2)

• Sin

### Jesus *proved* He was the way for eternal life by miraculously healing the man (6-7).

Eye mud

#### Why did Christ put mud on the man’s eyes (9:6)?

Why mud?

##### Man was made from this same substance—the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). [[3]](#footnote-3)

Dirt

##### Jesus probably used the clay as an aid to develop the man’s faith, not as a medicine.[[4]](#footnote-4) For one, the irritant in his eyes motivated him to wash it off!

Faith

##### I think Jesus did it to show that no tricks were involved—nor medicine!

#### Also, note that this man had to make the effort to go to Siloam and wash—and that he evidently tried to say thank you to Jesus by returning to where he begged.

• Map

## Do you believe that God sent Jesus to cure your own blindness?

You?

### Like this congenital blind man, so we are spiritually blind from birth.

### But let God use this miracle to open your eyes so you can see that he can give you spiritual sight. Have you ever come up with a better explanation for how Jesus could heal disease, make the deaf hear, and give sight to the blind?

### You are not spiritually blind if you believe these signs and acknowledge Jesus is God [e.g., signs in John help us believe].

Signs

(So when we see that *Jesus makes the blind see*, it can help us avoid spiritual blindness. But a miracle doesn’t need to happen to you personally. A second thing we must see to prevent spiritual blindness is that…)

MPI

# II. Jesus changes people’s lives (8-34).

MP

**[Christ works in other people’s lives so we can avoid spiritual blindness.]**

## The blind man increasingly gained spiritual insight while the Pharisees increasingly rejected his testimony and became more spiritually blind (8-34).

Contrast

Rules

### The Pharisees *trusted their rules* more than in the beggar’s witness to the work of Christ (8-16).

#### A fantastic thing has been done—a man freed from the darkness he had experienced for life!

13-16a

#### But the leaders focus on an infraction of their man-made rules (13-16a).

### The Pharisees *showed their unbelief when they persecuted* the blind man for testifying of Jesus’ healing (17-23).

Persecute

#### Here is the first account of anyone being persecuted for Christ.

#### Persecution shows our unbelief—and that we know we’re wrong and afraid.

### The Pharisees proved they were spiritually blind by *declaring that they would not follow Christ* despite the evidence (24-34).

32-33

Evidence

#### I love this beggar’s boldness to stand up to the pre-determined unbelief of the Pharisees. He notes that the fact was that he could see and Jesus was the only one who ever cured a person of blindness (9:32-33).[[5]](#footnote-5)

##### He’s right. There is no OT account of a blind person ever seeing.

• OT

##### Also, none of Jesus’ followers is known to have cured blindness (though Ananias restored Paul’s temporary blindness in Acts 9).

• Disciples

• Disciples

##### However, curing blindness was the *most common miracle* of Christ compared to healing the deaf, sick, those with fever, raising the dead, etc.!

• Messiah

• Most!

##### Why? Giving sight was promised of the Messiah in the OT (Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7) and it was fulfilled in Jesus as a messianic activity (cf. Matt. 9:27-31; 12:22f.; 15:30f.; 21:14; Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52; Luke 7:21f.).

#### So the Pharisee’s unbelief was not due to lack of evidence—but was *disbelief* *despite* the evidence they saw.

## What about you? Does seeing evidence for Jesus help you *gain or lose* spiritual insight?

Evidence & You

### It’s time to really, humbly look at Christ—instead of being like this guy, who says, “I’m not so arrogant as to think I’ve arrived at the truth about anything, but I’m pretty sure everything *you* say is not only dead wrong, but really, really stupid, too.”

Humility

### Belief in Jesus is putting your faith in the Word of God [ILL: Wald rejects evidence].

Wald

#### Dr. George Wald was Professor Emeritus of Biology, Harvard and the Nobel Prize winner in Biology in 1971. He wasn’t stupid! Yet this is what he said,

#### “There are only two possible explanations as to how life arose: Spontaneous generation arising to evolution or a supernatural creative act of God…. There is no other possibility. Spontaneous generation was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others, but that just leaves us with only one other possibility… that life came as an act of supernatural creation by God, but I can’t accept that philosophy because I do not want to believe in God. Therefore, I choose to believe that which I know is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation leading to evolution.”

• quote

#### The same applies to hearing others testify that Jesus offers eternal life—we must act on the evidence by believing it to prevent spiritual blindness.

MPI

(I noted that we must see three things to prevent spiritual blindness. We first saw that *Jesus makes the blind see*, then *Jesus changes other’s lives*. Now the third thing we must see to prevent spiritual blindness is that…)

MPII

# III. Jesus deserves worship as God (35-41).

MP

**[Nonbelievers will not confess Jesus as Lord.]**

## The story ends with directly opposite responses to Christ (35-41).

Opposite

### The former blind man confesses Jesus as God (35-38).

35-38

#### Here is the only place in John’s gospel that someone worships Jesus—declaring him to be God (Morris, 495).

#### He even does this the very first time he sees Jesus!

### Jesus then condemns the Pharisees for rejecting him as God (39-41).

Pharisees

#### Here Jesus gives an incredible answer that causes them to think.

39-41

#### Why did some of the Pharisees ask, “Are you saying we are blind”?

##### The *BKC* notes, “They expected a negative answer because they assumed that certainly they, of all men, possessed spiritual perception...

##### “Jesus replied, if the Pharisees were blind to spiritual things absolutely, they might have claimed ignorance as a defense. But their claims and pretentions of spiritual insight… made them culpable. They were responsible for their sins because they sinned willfully.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

## How should we respond when we see that Jesus is truly God Himself?

How respond?

### Before the highest powers of the land who could throw him out of the synagogue, this beggar risked all to declare Jesus as the Son of God. Will we risk less to do the same?

### You will have eternal life when you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10).

# Conclusion

### So what’s the point of this story? Who is the *real* blind man? It’s not the blind “man” (singular) but the blind “men” (plural)— unbelieving Pharisees—don't be like them!

Who’s Blind?

#### The physically blind man not only gains *physical* sight but also progressively sees *spiritual* truth more clearly throughout the narrative. In fact, persecution helped his faith grow. He first only perceives…

Progress

##### “A Man Called Jesus” (1-12): “The man they call Jesus” (9:7).

• Man

#####  “A Prophet” (13-23): “I think he must be a prophet” (9:17).

• of God

• Prophet

#####  “A Man of God” (24-34): “If this man were not from God, he couldn’t have done it” (9:33).

#####  “The Son of God” (35-41) or God Himself, “Lord”: “‘Yes, Lord, I believe!’ the man said. And he worshiped Jesus” (9:38).

• God

#### However, the physically sighted Pharisees refuse to acknowledge what is plain to others—that Jesus really did heal the blind man. Note how the Pharisees become even more unbelieving step-by-step so they end up spiritually blind:

Digress

##### They first doubted that Jesus performed a miracle—suggesting that Jesus was a *con man* who had switched the beggar for another man (9:15, 18).

• Con man

##### Once they saw that he did perform a miracle, they refused to attribute it to God as Jesus was a Sabbath-breaker who violated their Sabbath law (9:16).

• Sabbath

##### Then they sought to prove the blind man was *deceived,* so they tried to get the ex-blind man on their unbelieving side by asking his assessment (9:17).

• Deceived

##### When the beggar disagreed with their unbelief, they sought to discredit this key witness by asking his *parents* who hopefully would say that he wasn’t their son or fully blind after all (9:19).

• Parents

##### They also threatened to *excommunicate* believers of Jesus from the synagogue (9:22).

• Curse

• Excom

##### When the beggar stood his ground against their threats, the Pharisees, hoping to invoke a *curse* on him, required the man to swear in God’s name (9:24a).

##### By this time they were convinced Jesus was a *sinner* (9:24b).

Sinner

##### Hoping to identify Jesus as a *deceiver* with some trick that only made it *look* like he healed him, so they asked the man again how it happened (9:26).

• Deceiver

• Cursed

##### Then they definitely *cursed* him (9:28).

##### They claimed ignorance of where Jesus came from (9:29), but this was a *lie* since they were sure that He was the natural son of Mary and Joseph, and that He was from the city of Nazareth (John 6:42; 7:41–42).[[7]](#footnote-7)

##### In verse 34, “Upstaged by a beggar, they could only insult him again and throw **him out** of the synagogue (cf. v. 22).”[[8]](#footnote-8)

• Lied

• Excomm

### How can you avoid spiritual blindness? Respond in faith to what you know now about Jesus! (MI) Don’t be like the parents who feared making a decision.

MPs
• • •

MI

#### Each of us is on a continuum of spiritual understanding. However, all your questions will *never* be answered. At some point you must cross the line of faith!

#### The more times you hear the gospel and reject it, the more spiritually blind you will become and the less likely you will *ever* accept it.

### MPs: Are you color blind? You are not blind when you see that *Jesus makes the blind see*, *Jesus changes people’s lives, and Jesus deserves worship as God* [MPs].

Keller
• Anne

### Exhortation: Helen Keller was both blind and deaf but one day from her teacher finally understood at a well that *w-a-t-e-r* written on her hand spelled “water.” Likewise, the blind man was cleansed through the water of Siloam. And you can be cleansed through the One called the Living Water.

God

### Whoever wants healing from spiritual blindness must believe that Jesus is God.

### If you want spiritual sight you can simply express this desire to Christ even right now through prayer like this: “I cannot see you clearly but I want to do so. Thank you for coming to earth to help me see the wonderful truth that you paid the penalty for my sin and now offer me eternal life. I now accept this by faith. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Black

# Study Questions (Step 1)

Adapted from Joseph You

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Jesus had just testified to be the light of the world (8:12), so chapter 9 provides proof of this claim.

### In John 9, Jesus revealed the blindness of the Pharisees by contrasting them with the blind man. Hence, He condemned the Pharisees because of their unbelief.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### It shows that whoever wants to be healed from spiritual blindness must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### John wrote to prove that Jesus was sent by God to forgive sin. According to the Jewish tradition, physical blindness was understood as a punishment for sin, but John showed that Jesus had come to give light to the blind—both physically and spiritually.

# Questions

### Does 9:2 teach reincarnation? Why or why not?

### Where did the Jews get the teaching that physical defects always result from sin?

#### “4You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me.[[9]](#footnote-9)

#### The **disciples** faced a theological problem. Believing that sin directly caused all suffering, how could a person be *born* with a handicap? Therefore either **this man . . . sinned** in his mother’s womb (Ezek. 18:4) **or his parents** sinned (Ex. 20:5).[[10]](#footnote-10)

### Why did Christ put mud on the man’s eyes (9:6)?

#### Interestingly man was made from this same substance—the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). [[11]](#footnote-11)

#### Jesus probably used the clay as an aid to develop the man’s faith, not as a medicine.[[12]](#footnote-12) For one, the irritant in his eyes motivated him to wash it off!

#### I think Jesus did it so that he would realize that no tricks were involved—nor medicine!

### Did the Law prohibit healings on the Sabbath (9:13)? Where?

#### To the Pharisees, healing (unless life was in danger) and making or kneading clay violated the Sabbath Law.[[13]](#footnote-13)

### Why the repetition of asking how he was healed? Wiersbe notes,

#### “Four times in this chapter people asked, ‘How were you healed?’ (John 9:10, 15, 19, 26). First the neighbors asked the man, and then the Pharisees asked him. Not satisfied with his reply, the Pharisees then asked the man’s parents and then gave the son one final interrogation. All of this looked very official and efficient, but it was really a most evasive maneuver on the part of both the people and the leaders. The Pharisees wanted to get rid of the evidence, and the people were afraid to speak the truth!

#### “They were all asking the wrong question! They should not have asked ‘How?’ but ‘Who?’ (Simply rearrange the letters!) But we are so prone to ask ‘How?’ We want to understand the mechanics of a miracle instead of simply trusting the Saviour, who alone can perform the miracle. Nicodemus wanted to know how he could reenter his mother’s womb (John 3:4, 9). ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’ (John 6:52). Understanding the process, even if we could, is no guarantee that we have experienced the miracle.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

### Was Jesus really the only one who ever cured people of blindness (9:32)? Insights below are from Leon Morris, 475.

#### There is no OT account of a blind person seeing.

#### None of Jesus’ followers is known to have cured blindness (though Ananias restored Paul’s temporary blindness in Acts 9).

#### However, curing blindness was the *most common miracle* of Christ! Compared to healings in any other category (deaf, sickness, fever, raising the dead, etc.), Jesus best showed himself to the Light of the world (8:12).

#### Why? Giving sight was promised of the Messiah in the OT (Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7) and it was fulfilled in Jesus as a messianic activity (cf. Matt. 9:27-31; 12:22f.; 15:30f.; 21:14; Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52; Luke 7:21f.)

### What are the basic stages of belief for the beggar? Wiersbe outlines the unfolding of Christ’s true nature in 4 stages:

#### “A Man Called Jesus” (1-12)

#### “A Prophet” (13-23)

#### “A Man of God” (24-34)

#### “The Son of God” (35-41)

### How does the blind man’s faith progress in John 9?

#### “A Man Called Jesus” (1-12)

##### Man with Authority: He had enough faith in Jesus to wash his mud off in the Pool of Siloam, which was on the opposite end of the city (9:7).

##### Simply a Man: “The man they call Jesus” (9:7).

#### “A Prophet” (13-23)

##### Miracle Worker: Jesus is a healer (9:7b, 15, 25).

##### Prophet: “I think he must be a prophet” (9:17).

#### “A Man of God” (24-34)

##### His Teacher: “Do you want to become his disciples, too?” (9:27).

##### From God: “If this man were not from God, he couldn’t have done it” (9:33).

#### “The Son of God” (35-41)

##### Believable, “Sir”: “The man answered, ‘Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him’” (9:36).

##### God Himself, “Lord”: “‘Yes, Lord, I believe!’ the man said. And he worshiped Jesus” (9:38). This is the only place in John’s gospel where anyone worships Jesus (Morris, 495).

### Note how the Pharisees become even more unbelieving step-by-step.

#### They first doubted that Jesus had performed a miracle after all—trying to suggest that Jesus had switched the beggar for another man (9:15, 18).

#### Once they couldn’t doubt that a miracle had happened, they refused to attribute it to God since Jesus violated their Sabbath law (9:16).

#### Then they sought to get the ex-blind man on their unbelieving side by asking his assessment (9:17).

#### When the beggar disagreed with their unbelief, they sought to discredit this key witness by asking his parents who hopefully would say that he wasn’t their son or fully blind after all (9:19).

#### They also threatened to excommunicate believers of Jesus from the synagogue (9:22).

#### When the beggar stood his ground against their threats, the Pharisees, hoping to invoke a curse on him, required the man to swear in God’s name (9:24a).

#### By this time they were convinced Jesus was a sinner (9:24b).

#### They then hoped to find some trick of Jesus that only made it *look* like he healed him, so they asked the man again how it happened (9:26).

#### Then they definitely cursed him (9:28).

#### They claimed ignorance of where Jesus came from (9:29), but this was a lie since they were sure that He was the natural son of Mary and Joseph, and that He was from the city of Nazareth (John 6:42; 7:41–42).[[15]](#footnote-15) “The irony is strong for the reader knows His origin (1:14, 18).”[[16]](#footnote-16)

#### “Upstaged by a beggar, they could only insult him again and throw **him out** of the synagogue (cf. v. 22).”[[17]](#footnote-17)

### Why did Jesus find the beggar again and ask him if he believed in the Son of Man/God (9:35)?

#### Jesus was calling him to commitment.

#### “Son of Man” was the title used of Messiah (cf. Dan. 7:13) and is used in the best and earliest manuscripts (*p*66 a B D etc.).

#### “Son of God” is a reading in later manuscripts (TR *Byz*). However, the idea of Jesus as the Son of God is consistent with the rest of John’s gospel and since the beggar worshipped Jesus (9:38), he obviously saw him as deity (worship which Jesus accepted).

### How could Jesus say he would judge the world when John 3:17 says he *was not* sent to judge the world (9:39)? Is this a contradiction?

#### “Jesus meant He came to pronounce decisions on the ungodly, like a judge (cf. 5:22, 27). **The blind** who come to sight are those who, admitting their helplessness and inability, trust Jesus for salvation. **Those who see** and **become blind** are those whose self-trust and pride blinds them to the wonders of Jesus. He does not condemn them by *making* them blind; they blind themselves by rejecting Him and Satan contributes to that blinding (2 Cor. 4:4).” [[18]](#footnote-18)

### Why did some of the Pharisees ask, “Are you saying we are blind” [lit. We also are not blind, are we]?

#### “They expected a negative answer because they assumed that certainly they, of all men, possessed spiritual perception. Sin constantly deceives people so they live in falsehood. Jesus replied, If the Pharisees were blind to spiritual things absolutely, they might have claimed ignorance as a defense. But their claims and pretentions of spiritual insight (you claim you can see) and leadership made them culpable. They were responsible for their sins because they sinned willfully. It is dangerous to be a teacher of spiritual truths (cf. 3:10; Rom. 2:19-24; James 3:1).[[19]](#footnote-19)

#### “The Pharisees doubtless expected Jesus to say that they were blind. That was only to be anticipated from One they had opposed so vigorously. Instead He says that blindness would have been an excuse” (Morris, 497).

#### But verse 39 seems to pose a problem where Christ says that he came to render judgment. Doesn’t that sound like it contradicts John 3:16-17 where it says Jesus did *not* come to judge the world?

##### “John 9:39 does not contradict John 3:16–17. The *reason* for our Lord’s coming was salvation, but the *result* of His coming was condemnation of those who would not believe. The same sun that brings beauty out of the seeds also exposes the vermin hiding under the rocks.

##### “The religious leaders were blind and would not admit it; therefore, the light of truth only made them blinder. The beggar admitted his need, and he received both physical and spiritual sight. No one is so blind as he who will not see, the one who thinks he has ‘all truth’ and there is nothing more for him to learn (John 9:28, 34).”[[20]](#footnote-20)

### What is the point of Christ healing the man born blind?

#### The physically blind man not only gains *physical* sight but also progressively sees *spiritual* truth more clearly throughout the narrative.

#### However, the physically sighted Pharisees continue to degenerate in their spiritual sight throughout the account. This is because they refuse to acknowledge what is plain to those who believe—that Jesus really did heal the blind man and really can help us see spiritually too.

# Outlines (Steps 2-5)

**Don’t the Blind Know They’re Blind?**

***John 9***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Exegetical Idea: The way Pharisees showed themselves spiritually blind was by rejecting Jesus as Son of God when they rejected the healing of the blind man.

# I. The way Jesus proved He was the God was through His own declaration and by healing a man blind from birth (1-7).

## The way Jesus proved God sent him was by *declaring* His deity (1-5).

## The way Jesus proved God sent him was by *healing* a man blind man from birth (6-7).

# II. The way Pharisees proved they were spiritually blind was by rejecting the testimonies of the blind man and Jesus’ Lordship (8-34).

## The way Pharisees proved they were spiritually blind was by *rejecting Jesus* as the one who was sent by God to heal the blind man on the Sabbath (8-16).

## The way Pharisees proved they were spiritually blind was by *persecuting the blind man* for believing that Jesus was sent by Christ (17-23).

## The way the Pharisees proved they were spiritually blind was by *declaring that they would not follow Christ* (24-34).

# III. The way the blind man proved he was spiritually healed was through believing Christ as the Son of God (35-41).

## The way the blind man proved he was *spiritually healed* was through *confessing* the deity of Christ (35-39).

## The way Pharisees proved they would be *spiritually condemned* was through *rejecting* the deity of Christ (40-41).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will avoid spiritual blindness (= unbelief) in themselves and others.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)—Steps 5-6

# Subject: How can you avoid spiritual blindness?

# NOTE: This chapter might be better preached with the simple inductive form.

# Introduction

### Interest: [Being cured from physical blindness is wonderful.]

### Subject: *What must we see to prevent spiritual blindness*—in ourselves & others?

# I. Jesus makes the blind see (1-7).

## Jesus’ healing a blind man proved he gives spiritual sight too (1-7).

## Do you believe that God sent Jesus to cure your own blindness?

# II. Jesus changes people’s lives (8-34).

## The blind man increasingly gained spiritual insight while the Pharisees increasingly rejected his testimony and became more spiritually blind (8-34).

## What about you? Does seeing evidence for Jesus help you *gain or lose* spiritual insight?

# III. Jesus deserves worship as God (35-41).

## The story ends with directly opposite responses to Christ (35-41).

### The former blind man confesses Jesus as God (35-38).

### Jesus then condemns the Pharisees for rejecting him as God (39-41).

## How should we respond when we see that Jesus is truly God Himself?

# Conclusion

### Who is the *real* blind man in this story?

#### The blind man becomes sighted.

#### The sighted Pharisees become blind.

### How can you avoid spiritual blindness? Respond in faith to what you know now about Jesus! (Main Idea).

**Sources**

1. Borchert. Gerald L., *John 1-11*, The New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman Publishers, USA, 2002
2. Burge. Garland M., *John*, The NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000.
3. Michaels J. Ramsey, *John*, New International biblical Commentary, Hendrickson Publishers, USA, 1989.

# Tentative Theme/Thrust Statements (Step 5)

Text

# Possible Illustrations (Step 6)

### Interest: [Wrong priorities cause people reject a great product that they actually need.]

#### When I was a marketing major in business school, one day my professor spoke on how important it is to attractively package your product. For example, you can have the best perfume in the world, but the packaging is vital. In fact, most perfume companies spend far more money on the bottle and package than they do on the perfume itself. Why? Presentation is important!

#### But let’s suppose you had the best product in the world—and it was even one that every person *needed*. And it had the *best packaging*—and it was even *free* so they all could afford it! Do you think people would still want it?

#### Well, that depends. In part, it depends on what they might *have to give up* in order to receive this product. People reject a great product that they actually need if their *priorities* are out of order.

### As Christians, we have the best product the world has *ever* known.

#### Who else but Jesus offers total *forgiveness* of sin—a completely clean slate of all the wrong that we’ve ever done?

##### This is offered to each of us through simple trust in Christ paying for our sins on the cross.

##### You can’t earn it or work for it. Forgiveness is absolutely free—at least it is free to *you* though it cost Jesus his life.

#### Who else but Jesus guarantees that we can *live forever*?

##### In the book of John, we repeatedly see that Christ came to offer us eternal life—a life that lasts forever in heaven with God.

##### Who *wouldn’t* want to be in a perfect place after they die?

#### Who else wouldn’t want the most fulfilling and *satisfying life* possible?

##### Jesus promised to give us an abundant life—that’s a life that has more joy, meaning, purpose, and love than any of us can imagine.

##### Further, he has done that for hundreds of millions of people already, so we know he can deliver on his promise.

**BLINDNESS**

Matt. 9:16,17    John 12:37-41

In his book, An Anthropologist on Mars*,* neurologist Oliver Sacks tells about Virgil, a man who had been blind from early childhood. When he was 50, Virgil underwent surgery and was given the gift of sight. But as he and Dr. Sacks found out, having the physical capacity for sight is not the same as seeing.

Virgil's first experiences with sight were confusing. He was able to make out colors and movements, but arranging them into a coherent picture was more difficult. Over time he learned to identify various objects, but his habits--his behaviors--were still those of a blind man.

Dr. Sacks asserts, "One must die as a blind person to be born again as a seeing person. It is the interim, the limbo . . . that is so terrible."

To truly see Jesus and his truth means more than observing what he did or said, it means a change of identity.

Terry Seufferlein Norman, Oklahoma.

In his brilliant new book, Catching the Light, quantum physicist Arthur Zojanc writes of what he describes as the "entwined history of light and mind" (correctly described by one admirer as the "two ultimate metaphors of the human spirit"). For our purposes, his initial chapter is most helpful.

From both the animal and human studies, we know there are critical developmental "windows" in the first years of life. Sensory and motor shills are formed, and if this early opportunity is lost, trying to play catch up is hugely frustrating and mostly unsuccessful.

Prof. Zajoc writes of studies which investigated recovery from congenital blindness. Thanks to cornea transplants, people who had been blind from birth would suddenly have functional use of their eyes. Nevertheless, success was rare. Referring to one young boy, "the world does not appear to the patient as filled with the gifts of intelligible light, color, and shape upon awakening from surgery," Zajoc observes. Light and eyes were not enough to grant the patient sight. "The light of day beckoned, but no light of mind replied within the boy's anxious, open eyes."

Zajoc quotes from a study by a Dr. Moreau who observed that while surgery gave the patient the "power to see," "the employment of this power, which as a whole constitutes the act of seeing, still has to be acquired from the beginning." Dr. Moreau concludes, "To give back sight to a congenitally blind person is more the work of an educator than of a surgeon." To which Zajoc adds, "The sober truth remains that vision requires far more than a functioning physical organ. Without an inner light, without a formative visual imagination, we are blind," he explains. That "inner light" -- the light of the mind -- "must flow into and marry with the light of nature to bring forth a world."

National Right to Life News, March 30, 1993, p. 22.

On November 30, 1991 fierce winds from a freakish dust storm triggered a massive freeway pileup along Interstate 5 near Coalinga, California. At least 14 people died and dozens more were injured as topsoil whipped by 50 mile-per-hour winds reduced visibility to zero. The afternoon holocaust left a three-mile trail of twisted and burning vehicles, some stacked on top of one another 100 yards off the side of the freeway. Unable to see their way, dozens of motorists drove blindly ahead into disaster.

Today in the Word, August 16, 1992.

The famous agnostic Thomas Huxley was once lovingly confronted by a very sincere Christian. This believer stressed to Huxley that he was not in any way impugning Huxley's sincerity. Nevertheless, might it not be possible that mentally the great scientist was color blind? That is, some people cannot see traces of green where other people cannot help but see it. Could it be that this was Huxley's problem--that he was simply blind to truth that was quite evident to others? Huxley, being a man of integrity, admitted that this was possible, and added that if it were, he himself, of course, could not know or recognize it.

 Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 8, p. 708.

For 51 years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn't see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness. And then, he could see. A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation and, for the first time, Bob Edens had sight. He found it overwhelming. "I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow," he exclaimed. "I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red. I can see the shape of the moon--and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is."

Max Lucado, God Came Near, Multnomah Press, 1987, p. 13.

At the very time Stalin was liquidating millions, the Rev. Hewlett Johnson of Canterbury spoke of him as bringing in the kingdom of Christ.

Paul Johnson, Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties, Harper and Row, 1983.

The captain of the Titanic refused to believe the ship was in trouble till water was ankle deep in the mail room. Only then was it apparent the multi-layered hull had been pierced and the unsinkable ship was going to sink. Ships that could have arrived before the great ocean liner went down weren't summoned until it was too late.

*Leadership*, Vol. X, No.3, Summer, 1989, p. 27.

|  |
| --- |
| [Sermon Help](http://www.esermons.com)|[Illustrations](http://www.sermonillustrations.com)|[Church Resources](http://www.pastoralresources.com)|[News](http://www.christianglobe.com)|[Seminary](http://www.seminary.com) |

# Possible Applications (Step 6)

### Text

For Bulletin with blanks filled in

# Introduction

### Interest: [Being cured from physical blindness is wonderful.]

### Subject: *What must we see to prevent spiritual blindness*—in ourselves & others?

# I. Jesus makes the blind see (1-7).

## Jesus’ healing a blind man proved he gives spiritual sight too (1-7).

## Do you believe that God sent Jesus to cure your own blindness?

# II. Jesus changes people’s lives (8-34).

## The blind man increasingly gained spiritual insight while the Pharisees increasingly rejected his testimony and became more spiritually blind (8-34).

## What about you? Does seeing evidence for Jesus help you *gain or lose* spiritual insight?

# III. Jesus deserves worship as God (35-41).

## The story ends with directly opposite responses to Christ (35-41).

### The former blind man confesses Jesus as God (35-38).

### Jesus then condemns the Pharisees for rejecting him as God (39-41).

## How should we respond when we see that Jesus is truly God Himself?

# Conclusion

### Who is the *real* blind man in this story?

#### The blind man becomes sighted.

#### The sighted Pharisees become blind.

### How can you avoid spiritual blindness? Respond in faith to what you know now about Jesus! (Main Idea).

Bulletin with Blanks

# Introduction

### Being cured from physical blindness is wonderful.

### *What must we see to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ spiritual blindness*—in ourselves & others?

# I. Jesus makes the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1-7).

## Jesus’ healing a blind man proved he gives spiritual sight too (1-7).

## Do you believe that God sent Jesus to cure your own blindness?

# II. Jesus ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (8-34).

## The blind man increasingly gained spiritual insight while the Pharisees increasingly rejected his testimony and became more spiritually blind (8-34).

## What about you? Does seeing evidence for Jesus help you *gain or lose* spiritual insight?

# III. Jesus deserves \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (35-41).

## The story ends with directly opposite responses to Christ (35-41).

### The former blind man confesses Jesus as God (35-38).

### Jesus then condemns the Pharisees for rejecting him as God (39-41).

## How should we respond when we see that Jesus is truly God Himself?

# Conclusion

### Who is the *real* blind man in this story?

#### The blind man becomes sighted.

#### The sighted Pharisees become blind.

### Main Idea: How can you avoid spiritual blindness? Respond in faith to what you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus!

1. Tyndale House Publishers., Holy Bible : New Living Translation., 2nd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), Ex 20:4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:307. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *BKC*, 2:307. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *BKC*, 2:307. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John,* 475. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:309. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), Jn 9:24. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:308. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Tyndale House Publishers., Holy Bible : New Living Translation., 2nd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), Ex 20:4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:307. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:307. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:307. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:308. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), Jn 9:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), Jn 9:24. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:308. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:308. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:309. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:309. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989), Jn 9:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)