

### Encounters with Jesus III - The Blind Man

At first all I heard was a crowd. It was big, from the sounds of it. Babies crying, people yelling at one another through the marketplace, and the constant dull thumping of feet against the dirt. As they approached, I couldn't quite make out their conversation. There was a group of them that seemed to be arguing about something. Finally they came right up to me, and I heard someone ask, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"†

Ooh, I wanted to hear the answer to this. So I raised my eyebrow and turned my face toward them.

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said the rabbi, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."†

I nodded my head. That's right. It wasn't my fault I was born blind. How could I have sinned before I was even born? I suppose it could've been my parents' fault, but apparently not.

And then I heard someone spit. The person leaned down to the ground, and started moving the dirt around. All of a sudden, I felt one of the man's hands on my shoulders. And then I felt him pressing a plaster of dirt and spit onto one eye. He bent again to the ground, and then did the other eye.

And then I heard, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."†

I turned my face toward him for a second, wondering. And then I heard someone shout "Jesus!" and the group began to walk away. Hmm... even more interesting. I'd heard about this guy before. He was getting a reputation for stirring up trouble. And... for healing people.

Healing people? Did he heal me?

I jumped to my feet and left my cup on the side of the road. With my hands extended, I went as fast as I could to the pool of Siloam. As I raced there, I called out for directions, "Which way to the pool of Siloam? Which way?"

Finally, I made it through the crowds and found the pool. But instead of running and splashing headlong into the pool, I paused. This was the moment of truth. Had he really healed me? What if I washed off the mud and was just as blind as before? But what if I could see? In the end, I decided I had nothing to lose. So I washed the mud off and opened my eyes. And I could see! I could see!

I ran home and began telling everyone around me that I could see. My neighbors didn't all believe me. Some agreed that I was the man who was born blind. But others doubted it. I just kept saying, "It is me. I am the blind man, but now I can see." They asked me how it happened, and I told them that the man called Jesus had spit on some mud, rubbed it on my eyes, and that was that.

So my neighbors brought me to the Pharisees. The Pharisees were concerned that this happened on a Sabbath day, so they repeated the question, "How did you receive your sight?"

"He put mud on my eyes," I replied, "and I washed, and now I see."†

This spurred a huge argument. Some of them claimed that he could not have been from God because he did this on the Sabbath and it is against God's law to heal anyone who is not in

mortal danger on the Sabbath. But others wondered how a man could heal someone born blind unless the man was from God.

So they turned again and asked me, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."†

I said, "He is a prophet."†?

So then they sent for my parents. They still weren't sure that I was really born blind and had really been healed. My parents must have realized what all the controversy was about and were afraid of being kicked out of the synagogue. So when the Pharisees asked them about how I was healed, they said, "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself."†?

So again, they asked me, "Give glory to God by telling the truth. We know this man is a sinner."†

By now I was getting aggravated. They simply didn't want to believe what had happened to me. So, with my new sight, I looked them straight in the eyes, one by one, and said, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"†

Then they asked, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"†

"I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"†

I might have gone too far there, making fun of them, but after what happened next, I wasn't sorry. They turned on me and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from.."†

I said, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."†

And then they said that I was steeped in sin at birth, and threw me out.

Well, now I was angry. Jesus had already said that it wasn't because of my sin that I was born blind. And I think he was right. Those Pharisees were just worried that Jesus was going to take all their religious power away from them. It wasn't really fair, them kicking me out like that, just because I was defending Jesus.

So I decided I would walk around town and see all the things I had never seen before. It was amazing to put the awesome colors and other sights together with the sounds and feelings that I had experienced my whole life. Then I walked over to my old corner to see the place where I had sat to beg for all those years. It was there Jesus found me again. He asked me, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"†

The Son of Man? He was talking about the Messiah? The one we had been waiting for all these years? So I asked, "Who is he, sir? Tell me so that I may believe in him."†?

He said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."†

I said, "Lord, I believe."†? And then I bowed down and worshiped him.

Jesus turned to his followers and said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."†

Some Pharisees were standing there and asked him, ““What? Are we blind too?”†  
Jesus looked at them and said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”†

So the day I got my sight I found more than the world around me. I found the Messiah. From that day on, I never stopped telling my story to anyone who would listen.

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† Quotations taken from John 9.

This story is found in John 9. The portions that are not quoted from the Bible are a fictionalized account of the blind man based on the Bible and commentaries that interpret and explain his story.

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## Discussion Questions

- What did you notice about this story?
- What did you wonder about?
  
- What do you think the blind man felt like when Jesus put mud on his face?
- What do you think it was like to run through town looking for the pool, wondering if he was healed?
- What do you think that moment of truth was like, when he opened his eyes for the first time?
  
- Why do you think Jesus asked him to go and wash instead of just healing him outright?
- What do you think would have happened if the man had not gone to the pool to wash?
  
- What do you think of the community's response to the man?
- What did the controversy seem to be about?
- What was the significance of healing on the Sabbath?
- Why do you think the boy's parents wouldn't commit to saying anything about Jesus?
  
- What did the man say about Jesus? How did that change over time?
- Why do you think the man bowed down and worshiped Jesus when Jesus said he was the Son of Man?
- Why didn't Jesus stop the man from worshiping him?
- How did that compare or contrast to the religion of the Jews?
  
- Why do you think that Jesus came back to find the man that was blind? What does that tell us about Jesus?
- What do you think about what Jesus said about blindness to the Pharisee? What kind of blindness do you think he was talking about?

What do Jesus's claims about being the Messiah mean to you? If you believed he was the Messiah, how would that change your life?