

Remnant Life Church

September 17, 2017

John

The Sixth Sign: The Healing of the Man Born Blind (pt 1)

John 9:1-12

- First sign – turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-12)
- The second sign – clearing the temple (John 2:13-25)
- The third sign – the healing of the official's son (John 4:43-54)
- The fourth - the healing of the lame man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15)
- The fifth – feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-15)

There are 2 basic types of preaching: topic-centered and scripture-centered

- In the first type, a topic is chosen and Scripture is then applied to support, explain, or develop it
- In the second, a passage of Scripture is selected and then each verse or several verses are examined through study, original language, commentary, etc... and then an application is made for life situations
- This second style is called exegesis or exegetical teaching
- This morning, we are going to look at a passage of Scripture in that way as we examine the 6th sign John uses for proof of the authenticity of Jesus' Messianic calling – the healing of the man born blind

Reason for doing this:

- There is so much going on in this passage
- The variety of meanings for what is done and said
- It all comes together and forms an incredible picture of Jesus, His compassion, and His power

READ – John 9:1-12

Setting

- Jesus in Jerusalem the same place the cleansing of the temple (chap 2) and the healing of the lame man (chap 5) took place
 - The healing of the lame man in chapter 5 closely parallels this healing
 - The lame man is healed by the pool of Bethesda (5:2); the blind man at the Pool of Siloam (9:7)
 - In both men the circumstances of their infirmities duration is extensive – the lame man for 38 years (5:5); the blind man since birth (9:1)
 - Jesus chose unique methodology to heal – the lame man is ordered to walk without using the waters of the pool (5:8-9); the blind man has mud made from spit and dirt put on his eyes (9:6)
 - Both healings take place on the Sabbath (5:9; 9:14)
 - But from here we see stark differences also appear
 - The lame man reports Jesus (though he does not know it is Him) to the authorities (5:11, 15) and then disappears into the crowd

- The blind man knows who Jesus is and stands his ground against the Pharisees (9:11)
- Now there were others healed from blindness in the NT
 - **Matt 9:27-31** – healing of 2 blind men
 - **Matt 12:22-23** – blind and mute man possessed by a demon
 - **Mk 8: 22-26** – healing of a blind man in Bethsaida
 - **Lk 18:35-43** – healing of 2 blind men near Jericho (including Bartimaeus)
- In John’s account, he presents this healing as symbolism of darkness and light
 - Those who are spiritually blind
 - Those with spiritual sight

Segment 1 - verses 1-5

- We begin with Jesus and His disciples simply going from one place to another
 - God is always at work in our lives and the lives of others regardless of where we are or what we are doing
 - We need to always be ready (Peppermill Diner)
- (vv 1-2) The disciples assume in their question, like most Palestinian Jews, that sin and suffering are intimately connected
 - The Rabbis of the day argued there was no death without sin (**Ez 18:20** – *The one who sins is the one who will die...*)
 - Also no suffering without guilt (**Ps 89:32** – *I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging*)
 - The importance of context – written and verbal
 - Where this thinking goes wrong is in taking the generalization of sin as the genesis of mankind’s struggles to the issue of the suffering of an individual due to their actions
 - We can see this in what Paul writes in **Gal 4:13** – *Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.*
 - Also the entire book of Job
 - The disciples were holding to the teaching of the Jewish leaders even with regard to someone born blind
 - To be born blind meant either the child sinned in the womb (something they actually regarded as possible)
 - Or the parents – i.e. if a pregnant women worshipped at a pagan temple, her unborn child was also viewed as having participated in the activity as well
 - In this way, the disciples are no better than Job’s 3 miserable friends who came to being him “comfort”
- (v 3) Jesus immediately dispels that erroneous teaching and further separates Himself for the religious thinking of the day
 - Healing on the Sabbath; telling the healed lame man to carry his mat
- (v 4) ...we must do the work of Him who sent Me...
 - Jesus’s words utilize what, in terms of language, are a double pronoun (we) and a singular pronoun (me)

- In doing this Jesus is continuing to emphasize the exclusiveness of His life and His ministry as Messiah
 - This was the purpose of John including these 7 signs in his book
 - Jesus verbally says – we must do the work; He sent Me.
- (v 5) – Jesus also provides a sense of urgency in the work of His Father
 - ...*as long as it is day* – in other words, while Jesus is with them because He is the light of the world
 - This does not mean that Jesus stopped being the light of the world when He ascended to heaven
 - Rather the light would shine brightest while He is performing His earthly ministry
 - Throughout that period He is the one who shines light on or exposes the sin of the world, the one who judges the world, and the One who save the world
 - Then, *night comes when no one can work...*
 - Those who only knew Him in that physical way will once again be engulfed by darkness when He leaves
 - But God provided a light to come in His place that would not be as physically bright as the Son but would still shine for the work to continue
 - The Holy Spirit (*Acts 2*)
 - Jesus is teaching His disciples, not only correct theology, but to know the difference between spiritual light and spiritual darkness

Segment 2 – verses 6-12

- (v 6) These words by Jesus are then demonstrated by what Jesus does next – He heals a blind man
 - The method is unusual but not completely unique or isolated
 - *Mark 7* – Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man by using his saliva
 - *Mark 8* – He heals the blind man in the same way
 - Why is this significant?
 - There is not one clear explanation
 - Scholars have made several conjectures...
 - There is the easily applied association with creation in Genesis since man is made from the dust of the earth and Jesus used a little bit of the original material to make new eyes
 - The mudpack is applied to double the intensity of the infirmity in order to magnify the power of God in the cure
 - Similar to the way Elijah poured the 12 large jars of water on the altar at Mt. Carmel (*I Kings 18:33-35*)
 - In that day, human bodily fluids were used exclusively in pagan rituals
 - Perhaps Jesus is yet again digging into the Jewish leader's taboos and the excessive verbal laws they had wrapped around the people (again like the lame man and his mat)
 - Saliva would never be tolerated by the religious leaders as something from God used to heal

- Jesus continues to pull back the social, religious, and cultural curtain allowing the people to see something they have never experienced before – the unconditional love of the Father through His Son
- (v 7) While we may not know for sure about the saliva, we do know about the pool of Siloam where Jesus tells the man to go wash –
 - The word Siloam means “sent”
 - This pool has as its source a channel which carries (or sends) water from the spring of Gihon in the Kidron Valley
 - Does the name of that spring sound familiar?
 - It is one of the 4 headwaters that divided out of the river that ran through the Garden of Eden
 - The Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates (Gen 2:10-14)
 - The name of the pool aptly describes Jesus as He says of Himself in John 8:42, *I have not come on my own; God sent me.*
 - We even continue to see the feasts interwoven through John’s writing as the water-pouring rites for the Feast of Tabernacles are drawn from the Pool of Siloam
 - So the One who was sent, sends the man to be healed physically just as Jesus was sent to heal the world spiritually.
- (vv 8-12) The man now returns dramatically and fundamentally changed – he can see!
 - Begging was a congenitally blind man’s only source of support
 - Same places, same people
 - His neighbors are understandably interested, confused, and bewildered
 - Like the Pharisees, who are about to enter the narrative, the neighbors are divided on what has happened
 - Isn’t that the same man? (9:8)
 - No, it only looks like him! (9:9)
 - The man then begins to very accurately describe what has happened (unlike the lame man in chapter 5)
 - Identifies Jesus as the one who healed Him (9:11)
 - He would of heard of Him but obviously not seen Him
 - Yet even here, a measure of faith is being demonstrated and an assuredness of where the miracle came from
- In these first 2 segments:
 - Jesus dispels the inaccurate teaching and belief of the Jewish leaders regarding suffering and sickness
 - He teaches the disciples a spiritual lesson that reveals more of His messianic mission
 - He demonstrates what He is teaching by healing the blind man – blindness to sight; darkness to light

NEXT WEEK - The Pharisees now come onto the scene and encounter more than they bargained for...