

Overcoming Blind Spots - Physical and Spiritual John 9:1-41

As a driver of a car, I know I have to reckon with blind spots that exist. These are those areas of a car coming up alongside me from the back that I cannot see. I have been one who has tried to change lanes and more than once have been honked at by the motorist coming up from behind in my blind spot. I'm thankful now that in my current car I have indicator lights in my side mirrors signaling an approaching car. Although efforts have been made to provide visual cues for such spots, one still needs to be cautious!

Our Gospel reading has to do with blind spots or let me say the inability to see. Such blindness can exist in a physical sense and also in a spiritual sense. Looking at both the physical and spiritual we discover is characteristic of John's Gospel as we read this story of the blind man being healed by Jesus.

Let's look first at the physical level. There is this man who was born blind from birth. The question arises from the disciples: *Who sinned...this man or his parents?* You wonder why such a question would even arise? It sounds tragic to even think in this way...doesn't it? However, that was the thinking in that day and we ought not be surprised if it still persists in some form today.

The disciples it seemed in their questioning here were following the thinking of their day. Here was an innocent man born blind having to endure such scrutiny and even be part of the blame game!

In the midst of all of this, this blind man stood up for himself. He had a name, even though not mentioned here. It's important to understand that no matter what our physical state, every single one of us is made in the image of God; every single one of us is a full and complete human being regardless of our limitations. Hopefully, there is becoming a greater acceptance of those with disabilities in our own day.

We note Jesus' response. This man was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. Jesus states at the outset that he is the light of the world...almost as if something is in the works in his response to his disciples. Then, he spat on the ground and with some mud he put it on the man's eyes and the man was healed...he could now see!

I have tried to emphasize at Savior Divine that healing was a significant part of Jesus' ministry, just as much as preaching and teaching. His healing was to show the kingdom of God being present in a broken world. Also, it was to show Jesus' lordship over all illness. In addition, it showed his compassion over those who were suffering.

As we observe further on in the story, the conversation actually goes to another level - the spiritual level. The blindness of the Pharisees is revealed; yes, they had their blind spots! First, they refused to believe the eyewitness accounts of the healing of the man. Then, they saw a problem with healing on the sabbath, as opposed to showing love toward a human being even on that day. Furthermore, Moses was the legitimate prophet to them; not so much Jesus. We note as well that the neighbors had a problem in believing the miracle as it occurred!

The spiritual blindness of the Pharisees was confirmed by their remarks. They had a closed system, standards set only for themselves. I find it kind of comical the comment the Pharisees made to the blind man: *"You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?"* The Pharisees drove out the man who was healed; probably meaning that he was expelled from the synagogue!

The question for us is: What wonderful works can God do in our world today...am I open to them? Shall I not believe anything that looks too far-fetched and readily to admit it can't be the work of God? What if God *is* working and I don't see, or I refuse to *believe* it?

What blind spots might exist in your life today? Are there such spots perhaps in terms of what God can do in your life? Or what about how you relate to others? Are you relating in a way that Jesus would desire of you? Your blind spots are where you are not fully in tune with what God is doing or God's way of life. Here's the point: I believe sometimes we need to stop and do a reality check. We need to look at what we do or have failed to do in the context of Jesus and Scripture. Jesus wants his light shine into those blind spots of your life where it is needed.

Are you holding back on really witnessing your faith? We observe in the story that the blind man, unlike his parents, has the courage to say what he knows, to speak truth to those in power, to tell what he can about the amazing grace by which he has been touched and can now see.

At the center of this story, standing before the healing, during it, and eternally after it, is Jesus. He is the true light that enlightens our world as we live in the shadows of darkness and sin. He sheds true light on the nature of God, sheds light on the way to live in a godly fashion, and sheds light about what happens after we die. He wants to bring the light of love and truth into our lives.

Were we to have had our worship on this Sunday, we would have had the individual prayer for health and healing being offered. It is a prayer for the mending of our bodies and the renewal of our minds and spirit. I would ask you to keep in your prayers those might be suffering from the coronavirus not only physically, but also living in anxiety and fear.

May the light of Christ shine in your life at this time. Amen.

Pastor Marty

