

Teaching Points

The miracle of Jesus healing the man who had been blind from birth did not go unnoticed. However obscure his life had been, the man was now the center of attention. Those around him are understandably confused until he confirms, "I am he...the one who was blind and sat begging all those years." Then those who knew him before and after the miracle, took him to the religious leadership (see verses 8 & 13).

Discussion Questions: Why do you think the people brought this man to the Pharisees? What is significant about the comment in verse 14 that it was on the Sabbath that the man received his sight?

Thoughts: The people are bringing their curious concern to their religious leaders in the hopes of finding some help and clarity about what just happened. They want to know what to think about this Jesus. They want to know what those "in charge" and "in the know" think about all this. The crowd is most likely going through some inner turmoil: "This is wonderful! We know that a miracle was performed, but we know what the Pharisees think about it being done on the Sabbath. What are we supposed to think?" Remember the Pharisees' reaction to one of Jesus' miracles in John 5:16.

At this point, the man knew very little about Jesus. He didn't seem to know that Jesus was from Nazareth, or was the Messiah, or claimed to be God, or the Light of the world. He didn't even know where Jesus was. The man seemed to know nothing except His name (v.11) and that Jesus was the Man who healed him. Interestingly, the blind man never even saw Jesus until later in the story. Jesus was not there when he washed his eyes in the Pool of Siloam.

Yet, for all of his ignorance of Jesus, he knew some very key things. This man who was once blind could clearly see things about Jesus that the Pharisees refused to see. Their obstinance toward Christ was a demonstration of their spiritual blindness. Notice the contrasts:

(1) The Pharisees said Jesus is not from God, but the man who had been blind claimed Jesus is more than a mere man—he is a prophet (verses 16-17).

-Read 4:19 to see what the woman at the well said about Jesus.

-Read 6:14 to see what was said about Jesus after He fed the multitude.

(2) The Pharisees said Jesus is a "sinner" (verses 16 and 24), but the man who had been blind claimed He must not be a sinner because of the miracle He performed. Notice the progression in the text on the question of whether or not Jesus is a sinner:

-The Pharisees say, "He is a sinner!" (v.24)

-The man says, "Is He a sinner? I don't know." (v.25)

-The man says, "He is not a sinner—He can't be!" (verses 30-33)

(3) The Pharisees reject Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker and therefore reject Him as someone who could never be the Messiah, but the man who had been blind and is now healed stands in front of them as proof of Jesus' Messiahship.

-How ironic that they are blind to this truth! When "the eyes of the blind shall see" (Isaiah 29:18) and "be opened" (Isaiah 35:5, 42:7) that will be evidence that the Messiah has come. The Pharisees should have known that. No wonder there was "a division among them" concerning Jesus.

Counting the Cost

Following Jesus is costly. This man received his sight from the Lord, but was then "cast out" by the religious leaders (v.34) for defending Jesus and refusing to align himself with the Pharisees. The leaders reviled this man (v.28), they insulted him (v.34), and they rejected him by casting him out (v.34). Casting him out meant his excommunication from his religious rights in the Temple and synagogue.

Dods wrote of the practice in the ancient Jewish world: "Of excommunication there were three degrees: the first lasted for thirty days; then followed 'a second admonition,' and if impenitent the culprit was punished for thirty days more; and if still impenitent he was laid under the Cherem or ban, which was of indefinite duration, and which entirely cut him off from intercourse with others. He was treated as if he were a leper." (Dods)

Fear of the Jews and this type of rejection is what gripped this man's parents (verses 20-23). And even many of the rulers in Jerusalem believed in Jesus, but were afraid to say it because they didn't want to be cast out of the synagogue (John 12:42).

Discussion Question: Why cost do people pay today for following Jesus? How does simply acknowledging that He is Messiah, the Prophet, the Sinless One result in opposition? Have you faced any of that?

Next time we will see how this excommunication actually brought this man to a point of being far more connected to Jesus. It turned out to be a good thing!

Prayer Focus

Praise the Lord for His wonderful works which demonstrate His true identity. Praise Him for His mercy and His power. Pray for those who are suffering for identifying with Christ. Pray for one another as we "count the cost" for following Him and pray that we would not be ashamed to be called children of God.