

Session Twelve: The Cure of the Blind Man Continued

Opening Prayer

Chapter 9: we come now to the 6th sign of John's Gospel, the curing of the man born blind, in the temple, at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the sabbath.

Quick reminder of the prior themes that have led up to this:

- Living water, light of the world, doing the work of the Father, he is of heavenly origin.

Chapter Nine: the opening actions of the curing of the man born blind

- This is a sabbath day (we learn a few verses in)
- Passes by a man blind from birth and his disciples asked whose fault is it that he is blind- which sin caused this suffering.
- Jesus answers and establishes the whole reason for all that is to come next:
- Neither he nor his parents sinned.
- This situation happened so that I could show you the works of God. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
- Jesus is going to do a sign in order to show who he is. Just like all the other stories.

A reason for sickness?

- Here we have one key piece of Christian theology of suffering: it is allowed so that there can be love, compassion, and so that God can heal when necessary so as to be glorified.

What is Jesus going to do, and how SPECIFICALLY? In order to show his real identity, especially as a fulfiller of yet another festival?

- A man is going to move toward sight, while the Jewish leaders are going to slide further into blindness.

The Healing:

The Healing in the waters of life for the city to bring light:

- Jesus makes mud and puts on the eyes of the blind man, adapting a traditional practice of the healing arts of the day, setting up a situation where the man must go wash.
- The man obeys without question; when the word of Jesus is obeyed, life is possible.
- He washes in the pool whose name means "the sent one." It is not the waters that do the healing, but contact with Jesus the one who is the truly sent.
- Here the symbolism of the feast of tabernacles finds its fulfillment in Jesus: living water, healing waters, light, the new temple, the new source of life. Jesus has replaced what the feast was for.

The argument that follows

- This should have been good news! But the healing leads to a fierce argument.
- The neighbors do not see the good work of God, and they turn the man over to the Pharisees.
- The Pharisees debate his work on the sabbath of making clay, not seeing his true work of healing as a divine act. They debate his origins, not understanding where he is from

- The temple leaders grow in blindness: they want facts, not faith.

The parents:

- They Interrogate the parents because they are hung up on trying to prove if the man was really blind from birth or not.
- The parents affirm the blindness of their son, and the newly cured man is not able to say who cured him. The facts have not disproved the identity of Jesus.
- The parents say their son can speak for himself. They are not willing to accept the authority of Jesus. Their son is on his own.

The cured man teaches the teachers:

- the newly cured man nicely summarizes how the Pharisees are blind and that as leaders of Israel they SHOULD know but they do not. He accurately explains that a sinner cannot do what Jesus is doing.
- They refuse to see that God is at work. They are too bound to their old way of thinking.
- They throw the cured man out of the temple. Much like the Christians were expelled after the resurrection.

Jesus finds the cured man

- Do you believe? The newly cured man who has now lost temple, ritual status, and family finds in Jesus the one who he acknowledges as Lord.
- He does him worship and is someone who truly sees.
- Jesus has revealed his identity and in this man, he has found a response of faith.

Good Shepherds vs Bad Shepherds

- Chapter 9 runs into Chapter 10 with a discourse about how Jesus is the Good Shepherd who truly cares for his sheep, as opposed to the pharisees who are thieves and robbers: who are blind.

Who is Jesus?

- He is the one who is sent. He is the compassion of God the most high who comes among us in person.
- He is of God and his origins are heavenly.
- He is what the Feast of Tabernacles had been praying for and waiting for:
- He is the living water that we seek, and the source of life inside of us. The life of grace.
- Like the springs in a desert, he is the giver of life itself.
- Baptism establishes a bond with him that generates living waters of goodness inside of us.
- He is the light of the world enabling us to see clearly by his teachings.
- He is the source of division over the question of how God enters the world and over what it means to accept and believe in him. He divides families.
- He is our consolation who will not abandon us if we believe in him.
- He is to be worshiped and adored as the cured man did.

Up next: lessons from this story.

End of Session Twelve