

gives us the ability to respond. We then have the choice to respond. If that were not true, we could take credit for simply being smarter or more willing to respond to the Gospel than those who are not, and grace would no longer be sufficient without our added merit.

8. In v.37 Jesus revealed himself as the “Son of Man.” How is this revelation different than what the blind man perhaps thought all along?

9. Note the progression of the blind man’s belief in Jesus; from prophet, to teacher, to miraculous healer, to trusting in his grace, to understanding of his divinity, to ultimately worshiping him as Savior! Belief is a process. What belief has deepened in you through this passage? How does that impact your relationship with Jesus?

John 9:1-41

Lesson 15
For January 11 2009

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LEADER’S GUIDE

For discussion following the sermon on January 11, 2009

Blind Man

Imagine for a moment being born blind. You know people only by their words and voice inflexions without the benefit of your eyes to assist. You know objects only by their shape, scent and texture. There is no beauty to behold. What you “see” is left to your imagination without supporting facts. People born blind are told they are blind, but they don’t really understand what it means-- unless they somehow gain sight. When light enters their darkness and illuminates the world around them, everything changes. In this passage we will discover the transition from:

- Blindness to sight
- Darkness to light
- Death to life

The blind man is living life in darkness, unable to experience the beauty of a sunset, the simple pleasure of a smile, or happiness in the face of a child. But he isn’t seeking change. He manages life in the dark, for it is the only world he knows. But Jesus changes all of that. Without his asking, Jesus seeks out the man, makes mud out of dirt, gives him a task and an opportunity to respond, and restores his vision. But Jesus does much more! As the light of the world, Jesus not only redeems his sight, but more importantly, he redeems his soul! Through these remarkable series of events, this man’s belief steadily increases- from thinking Jesus is a prophet, to following him as teacher, to believing his divinity, to trusting in his grace, to ultimately worshiping him as Savior!

Conversely, there are those men who investigate this healing with perfect vision but who live in spiritual darkness. They cannot see Jesus for who he is. They are blinded by self-sufficiency, unknowingly disabled by law, heritage, and arrogance. Their works-based system is working for them, and while they long for a political deliverer, they reject a spiritual Savior. To follow Jesus will cost them everything. The light of the world is too bright. They choose darkness instead. That darkness leads to hatred, malice, and death, and they eventually perish in their unbelief.

All of us are like the Pharisees if Jesus doesn't intervene in our lives. He initiates everything, but we must respond. Once again sharp lines are drawn. We are either the blind man redeemed, or the Pharisee lost. There is no middle ground. Where are you?

Leader's Guide

Personal Preparation

The Gospel of John continues to challenge the depth of our belief. While it might seem redundant, we trust that you are growing in your love and appreciation for who Jesus is. Write down a few brief statements on what you know about Jesus after this lesson that perhaps you have forgotten or didn't know before. How has this new (or remembered) belief impacted your relationship with Jesus? Like the blind man, take time to worship Jesus!

Group Preparation

As noted, belief is a process. It is likely that the man did not truly believe in Jesus until v. 38. The people in your group may be in varying stages in their faith walk from unbelief to truly placing their trust in Jesus. Even after saving faith, our process of belief continually deepens. There is a tension between encouraging those who think they should be further along in their faith, and those who excuse themselves for their unbelief. Pray that God will give you discernment and wisdom in order to navigate this tension effectively.

Discussion Questions

1. The man born blind was not seeking Jesus. Jesus found him. How is this true for us today? Do we seek Jesus, or does he seek us?
2. Jesus said that the man was born blind "so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (v. 3). To what work is Jesus referring?
3. Jesus did something out of the ordinary, and asked the man to do something very specific, but very ordinary. How did the blind man respond to Jesus? What ultimately gave the man his sight?
4. Under the same circumstances, how might you have responded to Jesus?
5. The Pharisees were relentless in their cross-examination of this man and his family. What do you think they hoped to uncover through his testimony? What did they uncover? Describe their attitudes and responses.
6. Unlike his parents, the blind man isn't intimidated by the Pharisees. (Perhaps being socially ostracized wasn't a viable threat to him because he most likely lived his life that way.) What gave him the courage to speak to this powerful group? Would we be as able, under similar circumstances, to answer questions about our belief in Jesus as this man is?
7. What are the characteristics of someone in total spiritual darkness? Why do they remain in darkness? Is it their choice? *Note: This passage once again raises the issue of effectual calling. Remember: Jesus initiates everything and*