

## John Chapter 9 (DDC) – May 18, 2008

### Recap of Last Week (John Chapter 8):

- Chapter 8 takes place during the feast of the tabernacles, and about six months or so before the Passover when Jesus is crucified.
- So in our walk through John we are getting much closer to Jesus's death.
- Chapter 8 begins with Jesus and the events that took place when the woman is brought before Jesus... caught in adultery... and the Pharisee's are asking Him if they should stone her for what she has done.
- really attempting to trap him in what he says...
- Jesus' response is both convicting... and rather ingenious
- He declares:

**Joh 8:7** ... "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

- From there, Jesus AGAIN teaches that He is the light of world which is significant as we move into chapter 9.
- And corresponds to John Chapter 1 continuing that idiom that "Jesus is the light" that illuminates our understanding...
- and sheds light on our nature which is separate from God
- and ultimately convicts us of sin that we may accept a new life through Him.
  
- Chapter 8 ends with Jesus in a dispute with the Pharisees in the temple because of the things He said.
- While his teachings were true (which is easy to see from our perspective) it did not hold to the traditions that the Pharisees and teachers of the law held as truth.
- In Chapter 8 Jesus makes a statement which (from the Jewish perspective) is completely unthinkable for a man to make.
- He says, "Before Abraham was I AM."
- Which is a claim to His equality to God.
  
- Well because of the things Jesus said, and because of his claim to equality with God, the Pharisees began picking up stones to throw at Him in order to kill him.
- Well miraculously (as we discussed last time) He passed by them and escaped.
- As He is escaping Chapter 9 begins.
  - Unlike the rather large time gap between Chapter 5 and 6 there is really no time gap between Chapter 8 and 9. It's just a continuation.
- So men have taken up stones to kill Jesus and as He miraculously passes them by...
- He comes to the temple gates (which is where the poor and the disabled and the beggars would be positioned)

### Chapter 9

- It says starting in the last verse of Chapter 8:

**Joh 8:59** At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

**Joh 9:1** As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.

- So as He and His disciple's slip away... escaping death, He notices a man who was blind from birth.
- Jesus notices this man. And as we will see shortly he heals him.
- I think it's important to note that of the events specifically written and described in the Gospels, this is the only instance recorded where Jesus healed a person of a malady which the scriptures tells us came from birth.
- Now given how John concludes his gospel in Chapter 21, I would not be surprised if Jesus healed many congenital illness.
- But... this is the only one recorded in the Gospels where the condition is recorded distinctly as existent from birth.
- So I think there are some things we can learn.
  
- So... as they pass by (fleeing from death) Jesus notices this man.
- A man born without the gift of sight; he's never been able to see
- And on first consideration that may just seems rather unfortunate for the man.
  - "Wow what a bummer"
- But if you consider this man's state on a little deeper level... some pretty heavy questions begin to surface.
  
- Think about it... This man was born blind
  - Why is it some are born into such disadvantage (by what would appear to be no right or action of their own).
  - Born into poverty... born into abuse... born into disability... born into sickness
  - Why? How is that fair?
  - Or conversely, why are some gifted (by no right of their own).
  - Born smart.... Born into wealth.... Born beautiful... Born healthy...
  - They had nothing to do with being born that way.
  - So why?
  - Think about that a bit as we continue.
  
- So Jesus notices this blind man and it says:

**Joh 9:2** His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned,

- Notice they are assuming his malady was the direct result of someone's sin.

**Joh 9:2** "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

- The question is: Why was this man born blind?
- Who is responsible for the fact that this man was born into such disadvantage.
  
- As I was putting this stuff together I took some time to try and understand the depth of this mans situation.

- I tried to actually empathize with this man that Jesus notices
- This man is someone who had nothing.
- No hope of anything better.
- To be blind in that culture... is not like being blind in our culture.
- Stop for a second and imagine what it would be like to be blind in that culture.
- Can you imagine that?
- Being blind at that time meant you have no future. You have nothing... nor will you ever have (or be) anything.
- Your existence, your hope, your future, your dreams, your aspirations (many of the things we take for granted)... all boiled down to simply sitting there in darkness begging for something to eat.
- The only reason your life would be sustained for another day was because someone perhaps gave you some scraps of food to eat.
- That is all you could ever be.
- That is the most you could ever wish for.
- Living (if you are lucky)... meant living from hand to mouth.

(Pause)

- And as difficult as that would be...
- This is the real kicker... If you think about it... in that sad lonely rather pathetic state you would never know (to the full extent) what you were missing.
- Having not experienced sight... you would never understand what site is.
- This man would never know what it would be like to simply see something beautiful...
- Things we see all the time... a sunset... a beautiful woman... a simple flower in bloom... or just a tree or a bird.....
- Instead nothing but complete and total darkness.

(Pause)

- From the blind man's perspective, having never seen those things, he never knew what he was missing.
- He would have only known something was not quite right.

(Pause)

- So...
- the disciples (after escaping death) ask a fascinating question as they pass this man by.

"... who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

- So in seeking an answer to "why was this man born blind"... They ask... who sinned?... this man... or his parents?
- As I said before it was implicit in their question that his malady (his blindness) came directly from sin.
- Why is that? Why would they assume that?
- Well... it was common belief at that time that sickness was a direct result of sin, in (or near) that person's life.
- Let's think about what that means for a second.

- If this logic is true one could say... because you and I were blessed with normalcy we... must not have offended God to the extent that this blind man did.
- Or similarly one could say... those rich and beautiful people born into such advantage must have pleased God.
  - If disadvantage comes from sin (or displeasing God)
  - Then advantage (and those people we see enjoying such advantage) must have pleased God
- Is that true?  
(pause)
- Personally, I have a hard time believing that an innocent unborn child has the capacity to sin and thus deserve to be born disabled.
- And likewise I have a hard time believing that those people who were born into such advantage deserve it...
  - Considering the decadent and immoral lifestyles that so commonly surrounds them

So why would the disciples assume this man's blindness was a result of sin?

- Well, it was taught at the time that a child could sin in the womb.
- This was taught from Gen. 25 - if you recall Jacob and Esau fighting in the womb
- And thus they believed that you could literally sin in the womb
- So if you were born blind, it may be the result of "prenatal sin"
  - Sin before you were born
- It was also taught and believed that the sins of the father may result in punishment of the child.
- And this was taught from Exodus 20:5 where it says just prior to God giving the ten commandments:

**Exo 20:5** ... for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

- Thus they concluded that this man's blindness may have come from his parents sin.
  - Understandable
  - By the way I believe that is a completely wrong interpretation of Exodus 20:5 (but we can talk about that afterwards if you guys would like)
  - Nevertheless I can understand why they would think that
- So when the disciples ask "is this man's blindness from his own sin... or his parents sin?"
- Whose sin is it???
- Was it something prenatal like Jacob and Esau
- Or was it punishment for his parents sin
- Can you see their confusion? Are we on board with their question?

So... what is Jesus response?

He begins by saying:

**Joh 9:3** "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," ...

- What?? That response surprises me
- That is a much more succinct and definitive answer than I was expecting.
- He says neither sinned.
- Neither this man nor his parents are responsible for his blindness.
- This man is blind for some other reason.
- So what is that reason? Why are things not always fair?
- Why are some people put at such a disadvantage?

Well, Jesus goes on to say:

- Actually I should note first that depending on the translation you have you may see either a semicolon or possibly a break in the sentence here (as is done in the NIV)
- Greek does not have punctuation in the same way English does
- There are no periods and commas like in English
- The reason this is important here is because scholars believe that Jesus' response consists of two separate but related thoughts.
- In a lot of ways it might be more appropriate to have a period after the first part of Jesus response... because the second part is really a separate thought and it can confuse the meaning reading as one thought
- So.... They ask him who's sin it is that is responsible for this mans blindness
- He responds very clearly Neither
- Then he goes on to say in a separate, but related thought
- He says:

**Joh 9:3** "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

- Now he tells us why this happened.
- It's not because of sin. Sin is not the question.
- But this happened so that the work of God might be displayed
- Think about what this means.

(pause)

- First surely this means God doesn't want us to complain about our circumstance.
- They are there for a reason.
- God doesn't want to hear "the reason I'm so messed up is because of "so and so""
- But rather..... as John Courson says "Misery always opens the door for ministry"

(pause)

- And that means when some one is in hurting... or messed up... or disadvantaged... or whatever... like we all are to some extent
- Our immediate reaction is usually "God what did he do to deserve that??"
- But what Jesus is giving us here is completely practical
- He saying forget your theories....
- Lets help out practically!!!
- This person is hurting... let's help
- This is a chance for ministry, this is a chance to do the work of God
- It's not a time to argue philosophically, it's a time to reach out compassionately

- It's not an introspective analysis, it's an opportunity to do something for His glory
- Jesus says "... it's not sin... that's not the issue... "but that the works of God might be done." ...That something special and unique and deep and powerful might happen
- It's interesting... Tozer said "Before God can use a man greatly; he must allow him to be hurt deeply."

(pause)

- Do you agree with that?
- As I was considering this I began to wonder...:
  - Is it possible that we are almost unusable without us being broken a bit?
  - Is it possible that in our weakness we are actually strong?

(pause)

- The Bible says yes.
- It says our hurts are real and our pain is real... and it says those are the areas where God might be displayed in our lives.
- And those are the areas that God can use us in other peoples lives

(pause)

- Think about it, we can really only relate to a hurting world if we have experienced some hurt ourselves.
- But... we have a comforter, it's with that comfort that we can comfort others as it talks about in 2 Corinthians Chap. 1
- And thus Misery (in our lives, and in others) opens doors for ministry

Jesus goes on to say:

**Joh 9:4** As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

- We only have so much time
- In this period of time that is life... we have a chance to please God
- And through our malady and our pain and our weakness he gives us opportunity for ministry
- He gives us a chance to look to Him
- And let Him shine through us
- Because Jesus says:

**Joh 9:5** While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

- "I am that which illuminates
- That which brings knowledge... and brings life"

(pause)

- So you (and I)... are blind without him!!"

- If we live in a world without light, we may as well not have eyes

**Joh 9:6** Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

- Now, why do you suppose Jesus did that?
- I don't know the answer... although I wish I did.
- It does seem a bit odd and I think it is noteworthy to consider why... because he could have just spoken the word and it would have happened.
- Yet he spits in the sand, and makes mud then wipes it on this man's eyes.
- Why? What is Jesus teaching us here?

(pause)

- Perhaps He is trying to create further controversy with the religious leaders who were on His case for violating the Sabbath day by healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda months earlier.
- This takes place on the Sabbath and it was against their interpretation of the law to make clay on the Sabbath day.
- So His spitting in the ground and stirring it with His finger and making clay out of it was a definite violation of their Sabbath day law.

(pause)

- I spent sometime thinking about this... and I have to believe this man was left in a bit of an uncomfortable situation after having mud rubbed in his eyes.
- I don't know for sure (non of us do we weren't there)
- But I would image he may have felt like, "is it not enough that I am blind... but now you have to make my situation worse...by rubbing mud in my eyes!!"

**Joh 9:7** "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

- So this blind man is in a state that seems perhaps worse than what he was in before
- And the same guy who just rubbed mud on his eyes tells him to go and wash
- And in the midst of probably some feelings of annoyance and irritation...
- The blind man probably catches a glimpse of hope
- Perhaps this will fix what's wrong (I don't understand why... but what if it does)

(pause)

- So he begins to feel his way down to the pool of Siloam... (I can't imagine that would be easy being blind)
- And he sticks his head in, washes his eyes out
- And he opens his eyes and he can see.

(pause)

- I wonder what the first thing he saw was
- I wonder what it felt like to have this flood of light coming in and to be able to see for the first time

**Joh 9:8** His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

**Joh 9:9** Some claimed that he was.

Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

**Joh 9:10** "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.

- Demanded... That's a strong word

**Joh 9:11** He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

- Now notice the progressive revelation of Jesus to this man.
- At this point, he just knows Him as a man named Jesus.

**Joh 9:12** "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

**Joh 9:13** They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.

**Joh 9:14** Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

- So actually what Jesus does here violated two Sabbath laws
- It was not lawful to make clay on the Sabbath (as we talked about before)
- It was also not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day. You could do nothing towards the healing.
- If say you sprained your ankle, you could not run cold water on it because the cold water would help keep the swelling down and thus had a healing effect
- You could do nothing towards healing; you could do whatever you have to save a life, but nothing towards curing on the Sabbath day.
- So there are two counts against Him:
  - He made clay on the Sabbath
  - He healed this blind man on the Sabbath
- Do you think he is trying to make a point?

**Joh 9:15** Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

**Joh 9:16** Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

- So they were arguing among themselves.

**Joh 9:17** Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

- Remember what he said before, "A man who is named Jesus."
- Now he is declaring, "He is a prophet."

**Joh 9:18** The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents.

**Joh 9:19** "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

- They are looking for an explanation... looking to explain it away.
- It is always easier for us not to believe that God has done something
- To explain things in terms we can understand
- How is it that he can see if he was born blind?
- It's not possible

**Joh 9:19** "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

**Joh 9:20** "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind.

**Joh 9:21** But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself."

**Joh 9:22** His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ<sup>[1]</sup> would be put out of the synagogue.

**Joh 9:23** That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

- So because his parents are afraid they give an indirect answer, they say..."He's of age, why don't you ask him?" So...

**Joh 9:24** A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God,<sup>[2]</sup>" they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

- What a pompous arrogant statement
- Think about this...God has come in the flesh, and this is what they are saying of him.
- I love his response:

**Joh 9:25** He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

- He responds with his testimony
- He does not enter into an argument over their personal opinions about the matter
- No... he just simply responds with what he knows to be true... what Jesus had done for him
- I wonder how often I have entered into an argument in order to convince somebody intellectually of what I know to be true.
- And in doing so jaded that person against what I was saying when I could have simply told them what God has done in my life.
- How do you argue with that?

**Joh 9:26** Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

**Joh 9:27** He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

**Joh 9:28** Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!

**Joh 9:29** We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

- Not exactly open minded men

**Joh 9:30** The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.

**Joh 9:31** We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

- Now, a lot of people have taken this particular verse as Biblical doctrine.
- Specifically where it says "We know that God does not listen to sinners"
- Simply put, it is incorrect to take that as doctrine.
- We know that God does not hear sinners.
- Think about it, he heard me and he heard you when we were dead in our sin.
- And the fact is we still sin and God still hears us.
  
- So why is it incorrect to take this as Biblical doctrine... considering it is written in the Bible.
- Because this is only part of a conversation between a blind man, who at this point isn't even saved (we will see him accept Jesus shortly), and the Pharisees.
- He is not giving us doctrine... but rather expressing a common belief.
- Which we would obviously not take as doctrine.
- In fact the Bible is clear that God can and does hear anyone.
  
- Yet, there are those who would take this a Biblical doctrine.
- But they shouldn't.
- In my opinion, I think there should almost be a "Right"? At the end of the sentence.
- "We know that God does not listen to sinners... right?? He listens to the godly man who does his will.

He goes on:

**Joh 9:32** Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

- In other words what Jesus did was impossible
- And so this man tells it like it is. He says:

**Joh 9:33** If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

- That's his conclusion.
  - First He was a man named Jesus,
  - And as he begins to process the events...
  - Next He was a prophet
  - Now He is from God.

- Now in retaliation they claim this man's blindness was the result of this man's sin.
- They basically revert to name calling

**Joh 9:34** To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

- Remember what Jesus said "No, no.... It's not sin... that's not it at all. It's that through this mans weakness God would be glorified."
- Nevertheless what this man was saying did not please them so they would not listen and they kicked him out of the synagogue.
- He was excommunicated for giving his testimony, for merely stating what had happened to him.
- Now here is something we don't hear enough as Christians
  - Like this man we will be rejected at times.
  - People will reject us for speaking the truth.
- But, I think this next part is really great.
- So often under even the smallest amount of persecution, we can feel like God has abandoned us.
- Look at what happens after this man is bold in the face of persecution.
- He says what is true... and he bears the consequences
- Look what it says:

**Joh 9:35** Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him,...

- So Jesus went looking for this man
- When Jesus found him:

**Joh 9:35** ...he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

- He's asking him what he asks us
- Do you believe?
- That is the provision through which God saves us
- And Jesus is asking... do you believe?

He responds:

**Joh 9:36** "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

**Joh 9:37** Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

- This is similar to back in chapter 4, when Jesus is in Samaria and he is talking with the woman at the well .

- She says to Jesus (before she knows that he is the messiah), "I know when the Messiah comes He will explain all things to us."
- And Jesus responds, "I who speak to you am He."
- So Jesus reveals who He is to this man.

And it says:

**Joh 9:38** Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

- So this man who was put out by organized religion.
- They put him outside the fold.
- They cast him out,
- But Jesus... found him and took him in.

**Joh 9:39** Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

- There is a deeper reason that these things happened.
- There is a reason why Jesus found this man, healed him, and John recoded these events in his Gospel
- This is really an illustration of salvation
- You and me... all of us... we were that blind man spiritually

It says in:

**Eph 4:18** They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

- That is our state apart from God.
- In John 3 it says: "unless a man is born again he cannot see"

It says in:

**Rom 3:11** there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God.

- So, why is there no one who understands and no one who seeks God?
- Think about that.

(pause)

- It's because we were born spiritually blind.
- Born separated from God
- Born separated from the Light
- We sat there completely blind
- And like this man we were begging for something
  - Can "pleasure" satisfy me momentarily
  - Can you materialism satisfy me

- Job
- Can hobbies
- Can a relationship
- We were begging outside the temple
- But just like this man begging, we were blind as a bat
- And he could have remained a tolerably happy beggar
- He never saw... it's like we talk about before he didn't know what he was missing.
  - A little food here a little food there
  - A few shekels here a few...
  - A little satisfaction here a few .....
  - He could have remained tolerably happy... never understanding what he was missing
- And likewise we didn't understand what we where missing
- BUT, Jesus saw us as he passed by and said:
  - "I'm going to save you from your own poverty and misery.
  - The poverty and misery that you don't even know you're in."

(pause)

- One of the frustrations I have when witnessing is I can't explain very well what it is like to be a Christian
- How do you explain to a blind man what it is like to see?
- (food example)
- We were that blind beggar, and in believing we (like the beggar) can see

**Joh 9:40** Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

**Joh 9:41** Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

- There is a saying I came across while preparing for tonight
- "There are none so blind as those who will not see."
- That was the condition of these Pharisees.
- They said they could see, they claim to have superior understanding of the scriptures, and yet, they refused to see.
- None so blind as those who will not see. Jesus said, "If you were really blind then you can be forgiven, but because you say you see (because you claim to have that which you don't), you're in big trouble."
- A man will be held responsible for that knowledge that he has.
- They had the knowledge, they saw the light, but they would not walk in that light.

**Closing Prayer**