

Title: “Received, not Achieved”

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John 9:39-41

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Service Readings: Isaiah 42:14–21, Eph. 5:8–14, **John 9:1–41**

Jesus does not wait for the blind man to ask for healing. Sight is given before understanding, confession, theology. Sight is received, not achieved.

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

What did the blind man see?

The beggar was blind since birth. He did not see Jesus; he did not seek Jesus. He did not cry out for mercy. He is simply there: blind, helpless, and accustomed to darkness. But Jesus sees him.

Before the man ever sees Jesus, Jesus sees him. The Lord kneels in the dust, makes mud with his own saliva, presses it on the man’s eyes and sends him to wash in the pool of Siloam, which means “sent.” The man goes. He doesn’t ask for proof of this healing but rather lays aside his assumptions and does what Jesus commands. He washes and comes back seeing.

But an even greater miracle unfolds. First he says, “The man called Jesus.” Then, under pressure he says, “He is a prophet.” Later, he confesses, “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” And finally, when Jesus seeks him out a second time, when Jesus reveals Himself as the Son of Man, the beggar says, “Lord, I believe,” and worships Him. His physical eyes were opened in an instant. His spiritual sight grew as Jesus revealed Himself. Notice how this man didn’t reason his way to faith. He didn’t defend himself into belief. He didn’t climb toward God. Jesus came to him. Jesus found him. Jesus revealed himself. And the man believed.

This man, born blind, comes to see what the Pharisees refused to see: that God has come near, God who makes mud and touches eyes is the God who gives sight.

What did the Pharisees see?

The Pharisees were seeing a promise made to Abraham that a savior would come and restore them as God’s people. They longed for God, waited for Him in hopeful expectation. They considered themselves God’s people, but a people who had turned away. And they were a people who were repenting, turning back. They kept the laws, performed the ceremonies, and held each other accountable. They were a people who desired to see, actually *thought* they could see, but were a people who turned out to be blind. Blind because they refused to see the things of God; blind because their eyes were opened only to themselves. Blind because all they saw were a list of expectations they had made for God; a list comprised of their wrong understanding of His Word:

- They saw a God of glory, but not a God who kneels in the dust

- They saw a Messiah of victory, but not one who makes mud and touches eyes
- They saw Moses, but not the One greater than Moses standing before them.

They saw a blind man physically healed. They investigated the miracle, they interrogated the man, they appealed to Moses, but they refused to see the one to whom Moses pointed. The ministry of Jesus was about opening their eyes so they could see. But they refused, so Jesus pronounces His verdict: "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."

What did Jesus see?

Jesus saw what no one else saw. He didn't see a theological debate; he didn't see a Sabbath concern. He saw a man, blind from birth, sitting in darkness. And so the light of the world came to him and knelt down into the dust. The same Lord who formed Adam from the ground bends low again. He takes dust and makes clay. He restores what is broken. But this sight is much larger than one man's physical sight.

Jesus came into a world blind from birth – a nation certain it could see, yet stumbling in darkness. He came not merely to correct vision but to reveal the Father. He came not merely to perform miracles but to show mercy. He came not to speak of light but to *be* the light. And the tragedy is that as he came into the world to give sight, some close their eyes tighter. As he reveals the Father, some claim they already know him. As he stands before them as the One Sent, they refuse him. Yet, Jesus does not withdraw the light.

He keeps speaking. He keeps revealing. He keeps seeking the blind. And he keeps working his way to the cross, where he will be lifted up. And there the world will believe that it clearly sees what it is doing. But it is there that the deepest blindness will be exposed and true sight will be given.

What do you see?

You have been baptized into Christ. You confess the creed every Sunday. You know all the right answers. But do you see clearly? Or do you, like the Pharisees, carry around quiet expectations about who God is and how he should act? Do you look for power but ignore humility? Do you seek glory but resist the cross? Do you assume that you see well enough that you no longer need Jesus to open your eyes again?

Where have you grown confident in your vision? Where have you reduced him to a concept, a scholarly subject mastered, rather than a living Lord who still actively seeks the blind? Because here's the truth: without him, we are not partially blind, partially seeing, we are blind from birth. Totally. We have no desire to climb toward light, no ability to clear our own vision. We are unable to reason our way into faith. But Jesus still sees. He sees you before you see Him. He comes before you ask. He speaks, he washes, he opens your eyes. In your baptism he speaks light into your darkness. In his supper he places himself in your hands. He does not wait for you to first see clearly, he gives you sight.

And so the question remains, not as an accusation but as an invitation: now that your eyes have been opened, what do you see?

Let us pray

O Christ, our true and only Light,
Enlighten those who sit in night;
Let those afar now hear Your voice
And in Your fold with us rejoice.