John 9:1-41

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[0:00] Father of my children, as well as my very own mother this morning. Glad to have both of those precious women here.! I'm glad for each of you moms. We see you and the hard work you're doing.

It's a picture of God's grace in your life and to our church and for your husband and your children. We're glad for each and every one of you. We have some ground to cover today.
We're going to look at the entirety of John chapter 9. And so I'm just going to get right to it. I'm going to read the chapter. And then we'll go back and work through its content together.
So let's begin John chapter 9, beginning in verse 1. As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?
Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day.
[1:02] Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva.

Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, which means scent. So he went and washed and came back seeing.
The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, Is this not the man who used to sit and beg? Some said, It is he. Others said, No, but he is like him.
He kept saying, I am the man. So they said to him, Then how were your eyes opened? He answered, The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash.
So I went and washed and received my sight. They said to him, Where is he? He said, I do not know. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.
[2:08] Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, He put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see.

Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath. But others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.
So they said again to the blind man, What do you say about him since he has opened your eyes? He said, He is a prophet. The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, Is this your son who you say was born blind?
How then does he now see? His parents answered, We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes.
Ask him, He is of age. He will speak for himself. His parents said these things because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.
[3:22] Therefore his parents said, He is of age. Ask him. So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.

He answered, Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see. They said to him, What did he do to you?
How did he open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?
And they reviled him, saying, You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.

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The man answered, Why, this is an amazing thing. You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.
[4:24] Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. They answered him, You were born in utter sin, and you would teach us, and they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him, he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? He answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?
Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you. He said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.
Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things and said to him, Are we also blind? Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say, we see, your guilt remains.
Okay, there's a lot of text to cover here, and we're not going to look at every single word and every detail found in this chapter, but I promised you, at the beginning of our study, that I was going to follow the chiastic structure through John.
[5:44] All of chapter 9 is chiasm. I'll make a couple of other comments about that later, although not massively significant. This probably, as a text, could be broken up into three sermons.

I'm going to move pretty quick past some of it to not keep us too long today, but I think that the main thing being communicated to us here by John would be lost, you know, the forest for the trees, so to speak, if we spend too much time in this chapter.
So let's look first, before I give you an outline, at the first seven verses and talk just a bit about the setting, where do we find ourselves in the narrative, and the miracle that's performed.
So we see right away in verse 1 that Jesus passes by a man. He's just left the temple where the Jews were looking to stone him.
He hides himself, and he escapes. At the time, we're not totally sure, although we find out later in the text that it's on the Sabbath.
[6:49] So some days have passed. We don't know exactly how many from the concluding words of chapter 8. How many doesn't really matter, but John's setting for us that this is happening on a Saturday, on the Sabbath.

We see Jesus send the man that he heals to the pool of Siloam, which is located in Jerusalem. So they're still in the city, or they're very near the city, perhaps on the outskirts of the city.
Now, do you recall a mention of the pool of Siloam in our previous study? Now, this is the first time that we see the name of the pool in John's Gospel, but you may remember my explanation of the Feast of Booths in chapter 7, and the carrying of water from this pool to the temple as part of their ceremonial tradition.
This is where that water originated from that paraded through the city to the temple for that water ritual performed at that feast. You may remember that it was in that setting, John records, chapter 7, verse 37 and 38, on the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out. Remember, there's all of this water ceremony going on. He says, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.
[8:23] So that's where they're at. On the Sabbath day, encounter this man as he passes by him, performs this miracle, sends him to this particular pool in the city.

It bears some significance. And his disciples ask him in response to seeing this man, rabbi, teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind.
Misunderstood Bible text and poor rabbinical tradition had many first century Jews believing that all disablements were directly tied to either the sin of an individual or the sin of their parents.
To be sure, all ailments are a result of the fall generally, and some sins carry with them consequences, but not in the systematic way the disciples are assuming.
This man born blind, they want to know exactly what did he do or exactly what did his parents do for this to be the case. A lot could be impacted here, but Jesus is making the necessary correction for our text today.

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[9:38] He says in response, it was not this man sinned or his parents. Had they sinned? Of course they had. But that the works of God might be displayed in him.

He's not blind because of his particular sin or their particular sin, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.
I could spend all morning talking about verse 3. What a profound pronouncement this is.
Not ultimately the point of the story, but what Jesus is saying here is that there's divine sovereignty in this man's disability disability that is purposed for the glory of God.
Divine purpose for the glory of God. F.F. Bruce in his commentary on John says this, quote, This does not mean that God deliberately caused the child to be born blind in order that, after many years, his glory should be displayed in the removal of the blindness.
[10:48] To think so would again be an aspersion on the character of God. It does mean that God overruled the disaster of the child's blindness so that when the child grew to manhood, he might, by recovering his sight, see the glory of God in the face of Christ and others.

Seeing this work of God might turn to the true light of the world. God reigns in all things for his good purposes.
He didn't smite the man that he might then heal him, but rather used this tragedy in his life for his glory. The tragedy of this man's life and all the very tragedies of your lives, however major or minor, are not outside the sweep of God's control.
right? So, Jesus goes on. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. There's a work to be done here. Night is coming when no one can work.
There'll be a final judgment when the work will cease. And he says, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
[12:08] So after saying these things, he spits on the ground, makes mud with saliva, and he anoints the man's eyes with the mud and says to him, go wash in the pool of Siloam, which John inserts, which means in the Hebrew, sent.

So, he went and washed and came back seeing. Note the obedience of the man and the complete healing in verse 7.
total obedience, total sight. There's a lot of charlatans in our day that claim to have the gift of healing and somebody's knee is a little bit achy and then it's not achy anymore after the fact. Beware of this. Obedience and then total sight. His sight is restored. But why mud?
I think the thing that happens here begs the question. Jesus certainly could have simply spoken and the man would have been healed.
[13:15] We've seen this elsewhere. Jesus wasn't bound by any formula to enact his power. I thought that blindness required this kind of action. So, why did he make mud with saliva?

And oh, do the guesses abound. some odd guesses out there about this. I'm going to give you two reasons that I believe sufficiently answer the question and are clear and I think textual.
Number one, he is creating contractions for the man to go wash the mud off. This is the Sabbath and the Jews have missed the point of the Sabbath and heaped up extra laws in self-righteous effort.
All of these hedge laws that required all of this particular activity or lack thereof. Do you recall at the beginning of chapter 5 when Jesus first visits Jerusalem in John's narrative, he heals a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years.
Much of his life. Everybody knew the man to be a paralytic. Where? At a pool. The pool of Bethesda.
[14:37] When? On the Sabbath. In the same way, he heals a man known by everybody to have an ailment on the Sabbath. John records in chapter 5 beginning in verse 16, and this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus.

Because he was doing these things am working. this is why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him. Because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God.
The controversy really starts there, and it's carried all throughout. It's reached this white hot fever in chapter 8, and then even as Jesus escapes being stoned, because it's not yet time for him to die, and that's not the way he was meant to die, he goes off, and he continues to poke the bear.
Jesus is God. He is the Lord of the Sabbath, and in perfect obedience to the Father, he is having this blind man with mud on his eyes travel through Jerusalem to a significant location to be healed

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on the Sabbath.
He's sent to a place that people would see him and know that Jesus had healed him. God's love. A second reason that I think is helpful to us, John Piper said this in a sermon on this text, quote, the second reason for the mud is to show that God usually uses means in doing his wonderful works in this world.
[16:16] Jesus could have simply spoken, and the man's eyes would have been opened. But most of the wonders of God in the Old Testament were brought about by the use of human means. God is decisive in the victory, but he uses means.

He doesn't need the horse, but he uses the horse. Ponder this in the bigger picture of life for a moment. What this means is that God does not despise the physical world he has made.
he uses the means of food to sustain life. He uses the means of sex to beget children, and he uses a thousand remedies to bring about healing from sleep to penicillin, from vitamins to radiation, from sunshine on the skin to cough syrup for the throat.
And I will interject here on Mother's Day, essential oils and tinctures of various kinds. Back to Piper.
And lest you think this removes the mystery of God's wonderful work, consider boring down through layer after layer after layer of physical causes for why antibacterials work against strep.
Forty or fifty layers down into the molecular subatomic activities of the smallest particles or non-particles, there comes a point where there is no explanation inside this closed material system.
[17:52] The final explanation is always God. And if our hearts are alive and humble and worshipful, we will not stop until we see God at the bottom of everything.

End quote. So this miraculous thing happens and it happens in a particular way to incite the controversy that we're going to see more of in this chapter and on to the day of the Lord's crucifixion, but also that we might see that there's means at play.
Now for the rest of the text, let's look at four categorical characters. So here they are. Number one, the confused. Number two, the fearful.
Number three, the proud. And number four, the believer. First, the confused. Verses 8 through 17.
The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, is not this the man he used to sit and beg? Because he was blind, he begged for his income.
[19:03] Some said, is he? Others said, no, but he is like him. He kept saying, I am the man. So they said to him, then how were your eyes open?

So we see this confusion about the blind man from the neighbors. So he goes on to explain in verse 11, the man called Jesus made mud and amoyed to my eyes and said to me, go to Siloam and wash.
Rehearsing this pattern. So I went and washed and received my sight. They said to him, where is he? He said, I do not know. So then we see this confusion about the location of Jesus, which I believe John is using to highlight the confusion of the Pharisees.
He's like building this confusion pattern leading up to verse 13, where they bring to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.
And this is where John tells us in verse 14, it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. First century Jewish readers would have gone, oh, he's got a problem now.
[20:10] So now the Pharisees asked the man, and he said to them, he put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see. His explanation is getting more condensed. He put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see.

Some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath. Their reasoning begins with the Sabbath must be kept in a particular way.
They miss the point of the Sabbath. Their presupposition is wrong and so their conclusion is wrong. This man is not from God. He can't be sent from God if he doesn't keep the Sabbath the way we believe the Sabbath should be kept.
But others of the Pharisees said, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? Is it even possible that if a sinner categorically a sinner John records and there was a division among them.
And we see this John does this throughout his narrative pressing to us putting before us constantly in our reading of it who is Jesus?
[21:26] What are you going to do with him? He makes such astounding claims about himself. He does miraculous works that are recorded here for us.

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You may be a person who rejects the Bible entirely as God's word, but at least accept it as a historical account. Very few academically honest people will deny that this is not a good historical record.
If you can't believe that the Bible is a historical book, then you can't believe any historical work. There's so much more evidence that this is in fact a good sound record of what happened in history. So you've got to do something with this Jesus. We've said again and again the trilemma. He's either a liar, he's a lunatic, or he is in fact Lord.
And so there's this confusion amongst the Pharisees. What do we do with him? He's either from God or he's not from God. So in verse 17 they say again to the blind man what do you say about him since he has opened your eyes.
[22:35] They look to him for some judgment to settle their dispute and he responds he is a prophet. At this point I say that not even the formerly blind man fully grasps who Jesus is.

Perhaps some unfolding revelation to him but he doesn't quite understand yet but he at least believes that he is sent from God.
So there's some confused individuals in the text. We then secondly see some fearful people in the text verses 18 through 23 we find in these verses the center of the chiastic structure of this entire chapter.
I believe that John is presenting to us a new category of respondent to Jesus' miracles and claims. We've seen throughout the narrative so far a reject or receive pattern.
There's sometimes some confusion but there's reject receive reject receive reject receive but here's a new response. The Jews didn't believe he'd been born blind and received his sight but they call the parents so they come to believe it when the parents come they ask them is this your son and the report back is yes this is our son and he was in fact born blind but verse 21 says but now how he sees we do not know nor do we know who opened his eyes ask him he is of age he will speak for himself but the chiastic center is verse 22 where John inserts some interpretive help for us his parents did know who had opened his eyes we know this because his parents said these things because they feared the
[24:40] Jews for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ the anointed one of God he was to be put out of the synagogue they're avoiding the question altogether because they can't say it was the man Jesus who healed our son he is the Christ they're saying just don't ask us any more questions our son is old enough ask him he will speak!

for himself being expelled from the synagogue was a serious form of religious and social exclusion since synagogue life was central to Jewish community identity this is where they would have held the teaching the temple was for sacrifice the synagogue was like outposts of God's people gathering together they existed all over the place this one likely in Jerusalem it's where they would have had social gatherings being put out of it would have meant a loss of social standing separation!
from the religious community economic consequences public shame being treated as outside faithful Israel essentially it would have been a loss of identity to be put out of the synagogue my reading of John's parenthetical reminded me of Jesus' parable of the soils a sower goes out to sow this is Mark chapter four as he sowed some seed fell along the path and the birds came and devoured it later never takes root this is satan coming and snatching away that seed so it never takes root other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil and immediately it sprang up since it had no depth of soil and when the sun rose it was scorched and since it had no root it rizzled away Jesus tells us later that this is the ones who endure for a while and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word they immediately fall away verse seven says other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it and it yielded no grain
Jesus says those are the thorns people who hear the word but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word and it proves unfruitful and if you're familiar with the parable you know there's a final seed that falls on good ground and that soil are those who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirtyfold and sixty fold and a hundred fold I don't know how to categorize this man's parents if they are rocky soil or if they are thorny soil but at least at this point they are not responding to the reality that Jesus is the Christ because they're fearful they do not want to be put out of the synagogue and so they dodge the question altogether therefore his parents said verse 23 he is of age ask him there's a fearful category of people in this text thirdly there's the proud verses 24 through 34 and 39 through 41 so

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what do they do for the second time they call the man who had been blind and said to him give glory to
God we know that this man is a sinner which is to say honor God by aligning with the truth that we have already settled in our own minds they are done looking for what truly happened they've asked him once they've asked his parents they're back to him now just saying get on board with what we've said is true but he answers whether he is a sinner I do not know one thing I do know that though I was blind now I see they said to him what did he do to you how did he open your eyes can you believe that the question is being asked once again he answered them I have told you already and you would not listen why do you want to hear it again do you also want to become his disciples I am grateful for a bunch of reasons that I get to preach regularly one of those reasons is I get to read really good commentaries I get to spend my week reading things and often I'm dispelling them and bringing them to you but from time to time it's good for you!
[29:31] share brilliant words not written by me I will try to read them carefully for you D.A. Carson if you're going to buy one commentary on John's gospel this is the one I would buy D.A.

Carson in his commentary said this just listen to the beauty of this language quote the healed man hitherto polite now discovers that the professed impartiality of his inoculators is nothing more than show as a result he begins to deploy a quite marvelous gift for sadonic repartee since he has already answered all their questions before what could possibly prompt them to hear his answers all over again mere cynicism with judicial procedure might suggest that they were trying to trip him up in his testimony instead with a show of innocence he asks if their desire to hear a repetition of his testimony is bound!
up with a secret desire to become disciples of Jesus themselves end quote not a good paragraph he just wrote like that I would never let's learn how to write like that once again that's what he's doing he's being sarcastic with them as he asks these questions what are we doing here guys is it that you want to follow Jesus and they are totally picking up on what he is!
putting down I did write that sentence verse 28 says and they reviled him this is not a kind response they get what he's doing to them they say you are his disciple but we are disciples of Moses we follow Moses we follow the law you are but as for this man we do not know where he comes from the man answered why this is an amazing thing you do not know where he comes from and yet he opened my eyes we know that God does not listen to sinners but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will God listens to him never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened!
where was put out this cast out language means that they forcefully removed him look at that picture of him being tossed out the door and tumbling down the steps not a kind action on their part they have started confused but now they have settled in their minds that Jesus is not from God they no longer want to hear any testimony to that effect and so we're going to see
[32:57] Jesus then encounter the man but after that he says what he says to the man in the hearing of some Pharisees verse 39 for judgment I came into this world that those who do not see may see and those who see may become blind some of the Pharisees verse 40 near him heard these things and said to him are we also blind have no guilt but now that you say we see your guilt remains Jesus having healed a blind man of his physical disability and as we will note more fully in a moment of his spiritual disability uses this sight language to expose the prideful Pharisees they think they see they think they have the law and understand how to be in a right relationship with God but though they think they see they are actually blind they're speaking here with great irony remind me of

Mark chapter 2 verse 16 and following in the scribes of the Pharisees when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors said to his disciples why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners and when Jesus heard it he said to them those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick I came not to call the righteous but sinners is Jesus communicating that anybody acts fair that they actually see that they think they see that they think they see which is the problem they're so full of pride they're not willing to even behold the light of the world ask honest questions get real answers they've made up their minds they think they have it all figured out so the confused the fearful the proud but then praise god we see a believer verse 35 through 38 35 says Jesus heard that they had cast him out and having found him he said do you believe in the son of man first note that Jesus goes and finds this man what a merciful thing to seek him out in verse 1 as he passed by he saw a man blind from birth and he heals him physically now he seeks him out for

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his spiritual well-being notice that he does not coddle him he doesn't say oh I'm so sorry that they were mean to you because I healed you he's not curious about how life has improved since he can see for the first time in his life he doesn't strike you at all he's born blind he's never seen anything right it's so interesting that the bible's records of physical healing are only ever hurrying us to hear how we can be spiritually healed!
today, we come to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is always much more concerned with eternal well-being than temporal well-being. And so he is direct with him, right? No coddling.
The man's just been thrown out the door of the synagogue, and he asks him the question, do you believe in the Son of Man? Now, I've told you a number of times why Jesus refers to himself in this way.
[37:11] And in case you've forgotten or you've just never heard this, this is a really important title, most common way he refers to himself, the Son of Man. And it comes from Daniel chapter 7, right?

This guy's imagination would have lit up as that question is being asked, right? It doesn't hit for us the same way it would have hit for all of these first century Jews. Daniel chapter 7, verse 13. I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man. There's the title right there. And he came to the ancient of days and were presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. He is the Christ, the one sent from God, the Son of Man, who would establish a kingdom and rule forever. This is the question he asks. Do you believe in the Son of Man? Of Man? Now, this man could have just said like, oh, sure, I'm familiar with Daniel chapter 7, verse 13 and 14. Like, yeah, there's going to be a guy. But he says instead, and who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? Maybe he's figurative. Help me understand. And Jesus says, you have seen him, sight language, and it is he who is speaking to you. And that's all it takes. He said, Lord, kingly language, Lord, I believe, and then we get this amazing four-word little summary, and he worshipped him. Right? Not just, I give some assent to the fact. He says, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. Now, I'm going to read you one more commentary quote today, a part of one. This is commentary inception. This is John MacArthur quoting Charles Spurgeon. So here we go.
John MacArthur says, Charles Spurgeon summed up the joy and delight the man must have felt at that moment. Now, Charles Spurgeon. Then further he acted as a believer, for he worshipped him. This proves how his faith had grown. I should like to ask you, who are the people of God when you are happiest?
My happiest moments are when I am worshipping God, really adoring the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the nearest approach to what it will be in heaven, where, day without night, they offer perpetual adoration unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Hence what a memorable moment it was for this man when he worshipped Christ. Now, if Christ was not God, that man was an idolater, a man worshipper. If Christ was not God, we are not Christians. We are deceived dupes. We are idolaters, as bad as the heathen whom we now pity. It is making a man into a God if Christ be not God.
But blessed be his holy name, he is God. And we feel that it is the supreme delight of our being to worship him. So let me ask this morning, are you confused? Don't be. This book was written that you would know that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing in him, you would have eternal life. Are you fearful?
[41:14] Don't be. There is nothing that the world can do to you that will take the joy found in Christ away from you. There is nothing that this world has to offer you that can eclipse the satisfaction found in him. Are you prideful? Don't be. One day, every person will be humbled. We will all bow the knee to the Son of Man. Be humble now. Recognize your need of a Savior. Perhaps today he will find you.

Are you a believer? Keep on believing and worship. Bend your whole life Godward. You will not be disappointed at the end. Let's pray together.

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