

The Character of Jesus 44
The Man Born Blind
John 9:1 – 41
Dealing with People, not Theories

- Characteristic: Dealing with real people, not theories
 - This could be during the same Feast of Tabernacles. Some put it in the following December (10:22), Hanukkah.
 - (2) The disciples treated the blind man as an object, representative of a theory. Common theory was that bad things happened because of sin.
 - (3 – 5) Many have assumed that God arranged for this man to be in that spot for this purpose, but that would be contrary to the point of the scene. God would be making the blind man an object lesson, just like the disciples and the thinking of the time. Rather, Jesus saw the man as an opportunity for good things to happen, and the time was now because the opportunity was now.
 - (6 – 7) The reason for the clay is not given. Perhaps this was to further incite the Pharisees since clay for medicinal use was forbidden on the Sabbath (verse 14). Perhaps it was to get the man out of the way. Perhaps it was to see if he would go. The importance of “sent” is not given. Perhaps it is just a co-incidental pun.
 - (8 – 12) The man did not return to the place he had been begging, but went home (where his neighbors were). Their confusion is understandable. The man born blind was plain and straightforward.
 - (13 – 34) The reason for bringing him to the Pharisees is not given.
 - The Pharisees stuck with theory and condemned a miracle-worker. The formerly blind man came to the obvious conclusion, as did some of the crowd.
 - Investigating if this were a sham would be prudent. Perhaps the man had not been blind. However, the writing suggests that the Pharisees were not investigating honestly.
 - The parents feared being cast out of the synagogue because it meant financial ruin. No one would sell to you or buy from you if cast out. The parents seem to have been put in a bad light, but they were not there when the healing happened, so maybe they just did not say more than they knew.
 - (24) The Pharisees declared Jesus to be a sinner because of their theories, not considering the person.
 - (25) The formerly blind man stuck with the most important part; he could see.
 - (27) The formerly blind man was intellectually quick, so he played with the Pharisees. Perhaps he felt he had nothing to lose, and maligning one’s healer might not turn out well.
 - (28) The Pharisees made the assumption that they were right, so openly condemned anyone with different conclusions.
 - (31) The formerly blind man’s argument rests on the definition of “sinner.” The Pharisees, when condemning anyone, assumed that one misstep classified one as a sinner, overlooking that they thereby condemned everyone. The formerly blind man cited the whole verse (e.g., Proverbs 15:29, Isaiah 1:15, Micah 3:4, James 5:16 – 17), showing the contrast between sinner and worshipper. Worshippers are not necessarily flawless.
 - (33) The formerly blind man determined that miracles trump theories.

- (34) Clinging to theory, the Pharisees discarded the evidence because the man had been blind, therefore “obviously” a sinner, and because of that had nothing to teach them.
 - (35 – 41) Jesus sought out the formerly blind man. Several Pharisees were still present (40), so they likely heard the first part about Son of Man, also.
 - (35 – 37) Probably, Jesus used “Son of Man” with reference to Daniel 7:13, which He referenced several times and, in those other scenes (Matthew 24:30, 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62, Luke 21:27), people understood the reference.
 - (38) Note that Jesus accepted this worship.
 - (39) Jesus came to enlighten those who were confused, and to confuse those who thought they understood.
 - (40 – 41) Big point. Those who cannot understand will get a pass at Judgment. Those who think a lot of their explanations will not do well.
- Application: Dealing with real people, not theories
 - Do we define sin theoretically and condemn all who fit our definition, or do we help people overcome whatever is ruining their lives? (Examples: divorce, working on Sunday, attire, smoking, drinking, music, entertainments, and so on)
 - Do we bring great events (like miracles) to the authorities for judgment, or do we just go with it?
 - Do we allow the theoretical to condemn obviously good works? (Examples: Mother Theresa, large attendance at other places, faithful people in other groups, and so on)
 - Do we seek out those who have been condemned for keeping it simple?
 - Do we have understandable answers to common confusions?
 - Do we see the person and the person’s capabilities, or do we have one size fits all?
 - Are people with difficulties opportunities to reveal the work of God?

Review:

1. Jesus baptized (Matthew 3:13 – 17, Mark 1:9 – 11, Luke 3:21 – 22, John 1:29 – 34) Unconcerned about position
2. The temptation (Matthew 4:1 – 11, Mark 1:12 – 13, Luke 4:1 – 13) Trusting God
3. Calling His first disciples (John 1:35 – 51) Flexibility
4. At the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1 – 11) Balance
5. First cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13 – 25) Personal responsibility
6. Talking with Nicodemus (John 3:1 – 15) High expectations of others
7. The woman at the well (John 4:5 – 42) Taking opportunities outside the plan
8. Public teaching in Galilee (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14 – 15, Luke 4:14 – 15, John 4:43 – 45) Simplicity
9. Healing a Nobleman's Son (John 4:46 – 54) Challenging
10. Calling the First Four Disciples (Matthew 4:12 – 22, Mark 1:16 – 20, Luke 5:1 – 11) Developing future leaders
11. Healing a Demoniac in a Synagogue (Mark 1:21 – 28, Luke 4:31 – 37) Competency
12. Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law and Others While Preaching in Galilee (Matthew 8:14 – 17, Mark 1:29 – 39, Luke 4:38 – 44) Purposeful
13. More Healings in Galilee (Matthew 8:2 – 4, 9:2 – 8, Mark 1:40 – 2:12, Luke 5:12 – 26) Love
14. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (John 5:1 – 47) Evidence
15. Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1 – 8, Mark 2:23 – 28, Luke 6:1 – 5) Consistency
16. Healing a Withered Hand on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9 – 14, Mark 3:1 – 6, Luke 6:6 – 11) Love – doing what is best – doing good
17. Healing the Multitudes beside the Sea (Matthew 12:15 – 21, Mark 3:7 – 12) And Choosing the Twelve (Matthew 10:2 – 4, Mark 3:13 – 19, Luke 6:12 – 16) Proactive
18. Healing the Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8:5 – 13, Luke 7:1 – 10) Seeking Faithful Spirits
19. Raising the Son of the Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11 – 17) Compassion
20. John the Baptist's Question (Matthew 11:2 – 30, Luke 7:18 – 35) Expectation of Discernment
21. Jesus' Feet Anointed in the House of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36 – 50) Forgiveness
22. Accusations by the Pharisees (Matthew 12:22 – 37, Mark 3:19 – 30, Luke 11:14 – 23) Logic
23. Mindsets out of Step (Matthew 12:38 – 50, Mark 3:31 – 35, 8:11 – 12, Luke 8:19 – 21, 11:24 – 36) Addressing hidden assumptions
24. Exposing Contradictions (Luke 11:37 – 54) Addressing logical flaws
25. Contentment (Luke 12) Contentment
26. Expanding the Question (Luke 13:1 – 9) Addressing the Root Problem
27. Jesus Stills the Storm (Matthew 8:18 – 27, Mark 4:35 – 41, Luke 8:22 – 25) Challenging incomplete thinking
28. Jesus Heals Two Demoniacs and Eats with Matthew (Matthew 8:28 – 34, 9:10 – 17, Mark 2:15 – 22, 5:1 – 21, Luke 5:29 – 39, 8:26 – 40) Responding to the Heart
29. Jairus' Daughter, an Invalid Woman, and Some Blind Men (Matthew 9:18 – 34, Mark 5:22 – 43, Luke 8:41 – 56) Responding to Faith
30. Third Circuit in Galilee (Matthew 9:35 – 38, 10:1, 5 – 42, 11:1, 13:54 – 58, Mark 6:1 – 13, Luke 4:16 – 31, 9:1 – 6) Realistic Expectations
31. Around the Northeast Side of Galilee (Matthew 14:13 – 36, Mark 6:30 – 56, Luke 9:10 – 17, John 6:1 – 21) Challenging Others to Step Out in Faith
32. Spiritual Food (John 6:22 – 71) Lifting understanding out of the physical
33. Tradition (Matthew 15:1 – 20, Mark 7:1 – 23, John 7:1) Thinking through Tradition
34. Lebanon and Decapolis (Matthew 15:21 – 38, Mark 7:24 – 8:9) Meeting Faith Where It Is
35. Signs, Peter's Confession, Hard Times (Matthew 16:1 – 28, Mark 8:11 – 39, Luke 9:18 – 27) Expecting People to Think
36. The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1 – 13, Mark 9:2 – 13, Luke 9:28 – 36) Pushing for Greater Understanding
37. Healing a Demon-Possessed Boy (Matthew 17:14 – 23, Mark 9:14 – 32, Luke 9:37 – 45) Revealing Hindrances to Faith
38. False Ambition Versus Childlikeness (Matthew 18:1 – 14, Mark 9:33 – 50, Luke 9:46 – 50) Humility
39. Forgiving Others (Matthew 18:15 – 35) Forgiving Others
40. Doing the (Unexpected) Right Thing (John 7:2 – 10, Luke 9:51 – 62) Focus
41. Pointing to God (John 7:11 – 52) Letting the Spirit Work
42. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:12 – 59) Convicting Legalism
43. Countering Typical Accusations (John 8:12 – 59) Confronting Convenient Excuses