

1 Samuel 16:1-13 (NIV)

Samuel Anoints David

¹ The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

² But Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.”

The LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?”

⁵ Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.”

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The LORD has not chosen this one either.” ⁹ Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the LORD chosen this one.” ¹⁰ Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The LORD has not chosen these.” ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”

¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Psalm 23 (NIV)

A psalm of David.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths

for his name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk

through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

Ephesians 5:8-14 (NIV)

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord.

¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

John 9:1-41 (NIV)

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

⁹ As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.

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.

⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

¹⁰ “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

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.”

¹² “Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. 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.”

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 perform such signs?” So they were divided.

¹⁷ Then 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.”

¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. ¹⁹ “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”

²⁰ “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. 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.”

²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.”

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!”

²⁶ Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

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?”

²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses!

²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

³⁰ The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

³⁴ To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

³⁶ “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”

³⁷ Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

³⁸ Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?”

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.

1. What is the reason that the disciples believe this man in the story is blind?

The disciples are stating what is the traditional Jewish speculation on the relationship of illness and sin. Since the man was born blind, the disciples assume it was the sin of his parents, although they also question if it was this man’s sin. Because of the conflict of Jacob and Esau in their mother’s womb there was the idea that one could sin before birth. (Theodicy)

2. What is Jesus’ answer to the disciples about the cause of this man’s blindness?

Jesus tells them that it was neither this man’s sin nor that of his parents caused his blindness. Jesus states that this man was blind so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. Jesus moves the conversation from one of causality to that of opportunity. The need in this case is not so much about the man’s blindness, but the need for his blindness to be healed by Jesus so that God is glorified.

3. What does Jesus mean by “work” in verses 3 and 4?

“Work” (erga) refers both to the physical exertion or actions in the literal sense but also that which elicits faith in God. Thus Jesus’ works are signs of God’s power being evident in Jesus which are meant to bring about faith in him.

4. What does Jesus mean by “day” and “night”?

The presence of Jesus in the world is “day” and his absence is “night.” Jesus’ presence makes it possible to do the work that is done.

5. Why do you think did Jesus make clay out of spit and dirt to use in healing the man’s eyes? Why not just touch his eyes or simply command his eyes to open?

Commentator notes that the spit-clay salve was commonly used in that day as a healing salve. But also, when Jesus kneaded the spit and dirt together, this was “working” which was prohibited on the Sabbath (see verse 16) so it may have been intentional to provoke the Pharisees.

6. Why did Jesus send the man to the Pool of Siloam?

Commentator notes that John translates the name Siloam as “sent”, thus Jesus sent the man to wash and, in his obedience, offer an act of faith in Jesus. Jesus self identifies as “the One sent by God” so there is a lesson here of obedience/faith act being to go when you have been sent out in a mission from God as the disciples would be.

7. What is the result of the man’s obedience in washing his eyes in the Pool of Siloam? (vs. 7)

He is able to see, and he returns to the place where he had been.

8. What is the reaction of his neighbors and those who had known him as the blind beggar? (Vs 8-12)

They were divided as to whether or not this was the same man. They kept questioning him as to whether or not he was the man and how he gained his sight. He kept repeating that he was the man and told them that Jesus had spread mud on his eyes and told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. They asked where this Jesus was, and the man did not know. Jesus had left by that time.

9. What is the reaction of some the Pharisees to this man’s healing? (Vs 13-17)

They saw it as a violation of the Sabbath Laws which they interpreted meant that Jesus was in violation of God’s rule and therefore was not acting under the will of God. They called Jesus a sinner.

10. What did some of the other Pharisees say about Jesus?

How can a sinner do such miraculous things?

11. What did the man who was healed say about Jesus when they asked him?

He is a prophet.

12. Some of them did not believe that this man had been blind, so they sent for his parents. What was their testimony?

This is their son. He was born blind. But they did not know how he had been healed.

13. Why does John say the parents tell the Pharisees to ask their son because he was of age and could speak for himself? (22-23)

John is making a narrative commentary here, stepping outside the story line to offer some information to help the reader understand the broader implications of this interrogation. In the early church days, one who confessed Jesus as the Messiah, as their Savior could be thrown out of the synagogue. Thus confessing Christ was a costly price of discipleship for the early believers. John's readers could identify with this liability for Christ's followers. The parents do not want to bear this cost and since their son is "of age" over 12, they distance themselves. (Way to throw your kid under the bus) But one needs to realize that they may have been in agreement with the Pharisees as well and attributed this to the youthful rebellion of a teenager.

14. The Pharisees interrogate the young man again, this time telling him to "give glory to God, (swear an oath of truth) and want him to concede that Jesus' action was sinful. What is the man's response? (vs 25-27)

It is suggested by the commentator that this additional interrogation was to see if they could find any inconsistencies in his testimony (like police do by repeatedly asking questions trying to find inconsistencies in witnesses or criminals they interrogate) and also to see if they can find anything else to charge Jesus with to discredit him.

He proclaims that he does not know if Jesus is a sinner or not, but he does know that he was blind but now he could see. He then goes on to ask why they wanted to hear this again, did they also want to become one of his disciples. (I don't think he was being smart-alecky with them, he probably really thought they wanted to know more to become disciples. Evidence that this young man is innocent and perhaps naive as a young person might be). Ironically it is the young man who "give God the glory" for the healing work of Jesus and the Pharisees who fail to acknowledge it.

15. What is the Pharisee's reaction to the young man's suggestion that they would want to become Jesus' followers? (vs 28-29)

They "hurled insults at him" and proclaimed their discipleship of Moses and their distrust and distance from Jesus whom they do not know.

16. How does the young man answer their insults? (vs. 30-33)

He calls them out using their own evidence as stated in verse 16 citing that only a man of God could do such a miracle. He was not fooled by their mock interrogation. It was evident to the young man that Jesus was of God and so he turned the tables on the Pharisees and interrogates them, revealing their true intentions. Note the irony in the man's identity of Jesus' origins being "from God" as compared to the Pharisees' meaning that they did not know where he came from geographically.

17. What was the reaction of the Pharisees to the young man's rebuttal of them? (vs 34)

They told him he was "steeped in sin at birth". They chastised him for lecturing them and "threw him out of the synagogue." A couple of notes here. First. "steeped in sin" is a throwback to the introductory discussion of the disciples with Jesus as to the cause of this man's blindness and Jesus teaching that such correlations are unfounded. Interesting that earlier they were trying to dismiss the validity of his blindness as a way of dismissing the reality of his healing; but now they confirm his having been born blind as the means by which to condemn him as a sinner (making it obvious that the real point of their investigation is not to verify God's healing but an attempt to discredit Jesus.)

18. Why does Jesus return to find the man he had healed? (vs 35)

Because he had heard that he had been thrown out of the synagogue.

19. What does Jesus ask of the man whom he had healed? (vs35)

Do you believe in the Son of Man?

20. How does the man reply to Jesus? (vs 36-38)

He asks Jesus to point him out and when Jesus self-identifies, the man professes his faith, falls down and worships him.

21. What is Jesus' proclamation about this episode of healing and coming to faith? (vs 39)

The blind will see and those who see will be blind, metaphor for those accepting/rejecting faith in him.

22. What was the Pharisee's response to Jesus proclamation? (vs 40)

They challenge Jesus by asking if he is calling them blind.

23. And what is Jesus' reply to them? (vs 41)

"If you were blind you would not be guilty of sin, but since you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

Once again, the irony of the opening question of the cause of infirmity being sin is played against those who profess it. The Pharisees proclaim the man a sinner because he is born blind. Jesus refutes that and removes the man's blindness, noting that this was an opportunity to glorify God, not a matter of sin being punished. So using their own condemnation, he invokes the reflective reasoning, that if sin causes sickness, then sickness causes sin.... if they proclaim sight, yet their behavior is outside of God's will, (sinful) then they must by their own reasoning be guilty of sin without excuse, for their lack of blindness to the truth means they are willingly disobedient and unbelieving. They proclaim sight, but they cannot see the light which is Jesus.

(Remember though, that Jesus forgave a man his sins when he was paralyzed, and his friends lowered him through the roof to be healed. Jesus equated the healing and the forgiveness in that incident, implying a causality there it would seem.)

24. Why did the Holy Spirit want John to share this account of Jesus and this man born blind? What do you glean from it that helps you in your walk of faith?

It helped correct some thinking about sin and illness being absolutely correlated.

It gives us a metaphor for understanding Jesus' work in saving us – that it “opens our blind eyes” to the reality of who Jesus is and our need for faith in him.

It can show us how we can be blinded by religious practice and traditions that have more sway in our lives than God's will and direction.

*There are none so blind as they who will not see. – Everything is Beautiful by Ray Stevens
(From Jeremiah 5:21*