

57. Seeing, but not seeing

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I have two grandsons – 5 year old Micah and 20 month old Elias. Micah, the older one likes surprises and presents like any kids at that age. Some of you still like surprises. My wife Karen and I have learned one thing in the last couple of years. We must not mention the word “Surprise” before we actually give or do to Micah, because he will drive us crazy by repeating the same question, “When do I get my surprise?” In the meanwhile, he doesn’t hear any other words at all. He has selective hearing like all of us often have spiritual selective hearing when it comes to the answers from the Lord.

2000 years ago, Jesus was confronted by a large group of the Jewish religious leaders who had selective hearing and eye sight. They faced the truth and facts of Jesus being the Messiah whom they’ve been waiting for a long time, but since He didn’t fit into the mold of their Messiah, they decided that He was a fake and wanted to kill Him. They were seeing, but not seeing the Savior who was in front of them.

A. GENERATIONAL CURSE?

John 9:1-3 Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Their pop-quiz for Jesus revealed that they were dreadfully out of step with their Master’s heart. In fact, lurking beneath their question had been an already-made judgmental spirit – a desire to know whom to blame – as if that would make anyone feel better.

The ancient Jewish rabbis had a theology that they called ‘Prenatal Sin.’ They insisted that in the fetal stage, even all the way back to the embryonic stage, a baby could sin in the womb. I don’t know if they thought when a baby kicks in the womb, that was considered as rebellion and an attitude problem. The disciples of Jesus were taught that way also before they met Jesus.

The idea of ‘Prenatal Sin’ has not changed a whole lot. But it has a new name now – ‘Generational Curses’. This theology is adopted by many charismatic Bible teachers, especially those who are on Christian TV programs. For those who are not familiar with ‘Generational Curses’, let me explain it to you.

These teachers insist that “Generational Curses” mentioned in several places in the Bible, such as Exodus 20:5; 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9. However, there are two major flaws in this theology.

1) The scriptural references of Generational Curses are out of context.

When you read the Scriptures that I mentioned before, in context, you will know that the Lord was speaking to the Israel people as a nation regarding their idolatry, not individual sins. The Israelis disobeyed the Lord and worshiped the gods of the nations which they previously conquered. What happened to them? They ended up in exile in Babylon for seventy years – the third and fourth generations.

2) Generational Curses theology contradicts other Scriptures.

God knows that the effects and the results of sin are passed down from one generation to the next. When a father has a sinful lifestyle, his children are likely to have

the same sinful lifestyle as well. A good example is an alcoholic family – the father or mother is an alcoholic and their children learn from their parents to be one.

The Bible specifically tells us that God does not hold children accountable for the sins of their parents.

Deuteronomy 24:16 Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.

Let me make this very plain and simple: The theology of Generational Curses is flat out UNBIBLICAL. When we become Christians, we are new creations. Old things have passed away; all things have become new, amen?

This man's blindness was not a result of personal sin. His blindness was the result of sin in general. For that matter, natural disasters, disease, and suffering are the result of sin in general. God told our first parents, Adam and Eve, that if they eat of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden they would surely die, both spiritually and physically.

Before we move on, we must pay attention to an important thing Jesus did for this man – Jesus had compassion on him. The blind beggar didn't expect anything from Jesus, nor did he request anything of Him. He was minding his own business – begging. Out of the blue, Jesus came to him. The beggar was not a mere object of His lesson for His disciples, rather he was a person who needed the compassion of God.

B. WORKING THE WORKS OF THE FATHER

John 9:4-5 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

As all the Gospels show, Jesus was working under the shadow of the coming cross which was less than six months away. While He had the opportunity, He must let His light shine on the darkness around Him by healing both bodies and minds. We get to see that in this chapter 9.

There are many born-again Christians who do absolutely nothing for the Kingdom of God. They go to church as their Sunday morning routine and they go home. That is the extent of their idea of serving God. To them, evangelizing to the lost sinners is something for pastors, elders, and deacons; to them, serving other Christians is something for other Christians to do for them; to them, giving to the Kingdom of God is giving a few dollars to the church once in a blue moon, not because they don't have money, but because they are greedy and disobedient to the Word of God. They expect others to carry the load and they expect others to pay for the expenses to run the church.

Listen, in heaven you'll never witness to unbelievers, because there's no unbelievers. In heaven you'll never pray for somebody who is sick, because there's no sick people. In heaven you'll never wipe away one's tears, because there's no tears in heaven. The only time we have to do God's work and show His compassion is now. Please do not waste your limited time on earth. Serve the Lord and do His works for His glory NOW.

By now, you should know that I don't teach what is comfortable for you to listen to, but helpful for your spiritual growth. I am not trying to be mean to you or putting a

guilt trip on you, rather I am waking up some of you from your lethargy and complacency which are two deadly traps in the Christian walk. God cares more about your faith than your health, and your character more than your comfort.

C. ONCE HE WAS BLIND, BUT NOW HE SEES

John 9:6-12 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. 8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" 9 Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." 10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." 12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

Our Lord's method of healing was unique: He put clay on this man's eyes and told him to go wash. Once Jesus healed two blind men by merely touching their eyes in Matthew 9, and He healed another blind man by spitting on his eyes in Mark 8. Though the healing power was the same, our Lord varied His methods so that people would not focus on the methods of healing and miss the message in the healing.

From Genesis to John, no prophet, priest, or apostle ever gave sight to blind eyes, but only Jesus did this type of healing more than any other miracle. Opening the eyes of the blind was a specific work of the Messiah.

Psalm 146:8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; The Lord raises those who are bowed down; The Lord loves the righteous.

4 times in this chapter people asked, "How were you healed?" They were asking the wrong question. They should have asked "Who?", not "How?" We want to understand the methods of a miracle instead of simply trusting the Savior, who alone can perform the miracle. Though the questions sounded official, they, in reality, were nothing more than a most evasive maneuver of these religious rulers. They didn't want to face the true Messiah who could reveal the truth about them.

D. ON THE SABBATH, NO!

John 9:13-23 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these things because they feared the

Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

They, that is the neighbors of this former blind man, brought him to the Pharisees. Because he was healed on the Sabbath. According to this man, Jesus spat on the ground and made clay from the dirt and put it in his eyes. We may say, "OK, that's gross, but he got his eyesight. Cool, praise God!" But to the orthodox Jewish people that was, "NO, NO," because it was a Sabbath.

According to the Mishnah, a collection of writings of what to do and what not to do for the Jews, there is an entire section of their writing devoted to the Sabbath day. 39 different kinds of work were forbidden on the Sabbath. Here are a few examples:

- On the Sabbath day, it was forbidden to heal.
- On the Sabbath day, you can't knead. Kneading dough or kneading clay is considered working.
- On the Sabbath day, you cannot spit on the ground. Because if you'd spit on the ground, the spittle might roll in the dirt and make a furrow in the earth. And that's plowing and that's work.

These are three of the 39 regulations that their Mishnah forbids – against their Sabbath, but not against God's Sabbath.

Jesus not only broke one of their regulations, but three. He didn't forget that it was a Sabbath. He knew and He intentionally broke them. Because He didn't care about their religious traditions and rules, but doing His Father's will.

The parents of this former blind man were in a serious dilemma. The ancient Jewish synagogue was more than a place to gather together for their religion – Judaism. It had functions of a court house and Better Business Bureau with Mafia power.

E. THE GLOWING TESTIMONY OF THE FORMER BLIND MAN

John 9:24-34 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." 25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." 26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" 28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

This former blind man did not debate the character of Jesus Christ, because that was beyond his knowledge and experience. But one thing he did know: "I was blind, but now I see." Listen to me, my brothers and sisters. The theologies of Christianity can be ignored and ridiculed by the skeptics and atheists. But the testimonies of changed

lives by Jesus cannot be ignored. It is that important. Because you are the living evidence of God's life changing power.

Like these Jewish religious leaders, there are many, many people made up their minds regarding Jesus. They don't want to face the overwhelming fact, evidence, and logic of the void of their unbelief. They'd rather put their trust in fantasy, vain hope, and self-made religion than facing the Master of the universe who is the Ultimate Judge. Though they have eyes to see, but they choose not to see.

F. QUESTIONS and APPLICATIONS

1) Have you examined your spiritual eyesight lately? Have you intentionally chosen to put your blind eyes on the things that the Lord is doing because they are inconvenient to you? Open your eyes and see.

2) Do you generally feel more comfortable doing your own Christian things that you don't want to see what God is doing outside of your realm? Open your eyes and see.

3) God cares more about your faith than your health, and your character more than your comfort.