

Dear Friends in Jesus,

How good is your eyesight? At my last eye checkup, I was told that my eyesight had improved as far as seeing things in the distance. It wasn't a miracle. The eye doctor said that happens often with people in their middle years. I would expect that the part that has improved will not stay that way forever. There will be more vision checkups in the future, not only for me, but for you too. We do this because we care about our eyesight.

What about our spiritual vision? Have you had it checked lately? Jesus and his disciples encounter a blind man as they are walking. The disciples ask if the man was born blind because of his own sin or because his parents sinned. Their spiritual vision was lacking. They were not the only ones.

The question presents Jesus with the opportunity to open their eyes. He talks about people's sin and God's grace. His words bring spiritual understanding, therefore spiritual vision. We need this too. What Jesus shows us today is that spiritual vision is a gift of God and in fact **Seeing Jesus—A Miracle of God**. If we are going to have good spiritual vision, we have to understand what Jesus is telling us. Let's watch Jesus in John 9.

1. Jesus reveals himself as the Light of the World. 3-7

We are not sure of when or where this miracle happened, but Jesus had been in the area of Judea and Jerusalem in chapter 8. As he is walking with his disciples they come near a man who was born blind. The disciples think sin was involved. Jesus says that neither the man nor his parents sinned. He says instead, **“but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”**

A. What was the work of God? There would be a miraculous healing, but that was not the main work. We have an answer in Jesus' words, **“While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”** God's plan was that while Jesus was in the world, he wanted people to see him for who he was.

1. What Jesus does not say, but is implying is that the world is filled with darkness and it needs light. Jesus tells us in John, chapter 3, **“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”** (19) People might say, “When I was born, I could see just fine.” What Jesus is referring to is that we

are born into this world as selfish sinners. The only way we can see life is selfishly. That selfishness not only brings all kinds of trouble, but we do not give glory to God and so we are in trouble with God. We deserve punishment for our selfish sins.

2. God is unselfish. He chose to love us and he sent Jesus his unselfish, perfect Son into the world to save the world. Jesus is a saving light for a dark world. While he was in the world, God wanted people to see this.

Notice that Jesus says that “we” must work while it is day. When Jesus returned to his Father, his disciples were to spread the light that Jesus had brought into the world. However, the disciples had more to learn. So, Jesus helps a blind man and he teaches his disciples at the same time about the blindness of sin. It all serves the mission.

B. Jesus made some mud and put it on the blind man’s eyes. He tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. We are told afterwards he went home seeing.

Jesus actions show that the healing was no coincidence. It was Jesus’ mud and the man didn’t see until he washed.

Jesus unquestionably performed the miracle and demonstrated that he was the Son of God and the Savior.

This was God’s way of saying to them and to us, **“Pay attention to my what my Son does and what he says. It is for your salvation.”**

2. Sinful humans cannot see the Light. 13-17, 34

The account continues in verses 13-17 and verse 34. God wants to teach us that when sinful humans are in the darkness, they cannot see the Light on their own.

A. People brought the blind man to the Pharisees. They were the religious leaders and they knew the Scriptures. The people wanted to know if they approved of Jesus and what he had done. The Pharisees reveal their own spiritual blindness.

1. Jesus had done something only God can do. So you would think they would a) celebrate the man’s being able to see or b) nicely ask Jesus what his ministry was all about. Jesus’ deserved that much.

Instead they question the miracle looking for something wrong that they could use to attack Jesus. The only thing that they could come up with was that Jesus had broken the Sabbath law that a man should not work. That was a real law of Moses, but it pointed to the regular, day long work that people engaged in. There was nothing forbidden about emergencies, helping the

sick, feeding yourself, etc. They were being extremely picky, my guess is decent people knew that their accusation was a stretch.

2. It is with the decent people that we see how bad the darkness is. They don't stoop to the level of the Pharisees when they ask, "**How can a sinner perform such signs?**" They didn't have the answer either. They didn't know who Jesus was. Even the man born blind when questioned only gives a partial answer. "**He is a prophet.**" It is a good answer, but it is incomplete. Jesus is still a bit of a mystery even to him.

B. What we learn is that the darkness of sin is thick and all encompassing. That suggests two things.

1. We have nothing to brag about. If we are a longtime Lutheran or longtime Christian we might feel that we are better than others. I would say, in the **first place**, we all come from the same place, the darkness of selfish sinfulness. **Secondly**, we still lean towards darkness at times and we even can stumble and fall into darkness. So while we repent of any feelings of superiority, we can also repent of our everyday failings and sins. **Thirdly**, none of us should ever feel like we have arrived. The Light is not only beautiful, but the wisdom of God runs deep. We can spend a lifetime studying it learning and we have barely scratched the surface.

2. The **work** that Jesus referred to included repentance. People needed to be called to repent of their sins, including the blind man. His blindness at birth may not have been from a specific sin, but he was still a sinful human being.

The **best part** of the work sharing the good news that in Jesus there is forgiveness. All of a sudden the darkness of guilt and misery melts away and we live in the light of peace and his love. Jesus is the Light of the World because he brings us out of the darkness into the light of salvation. Through his work with the blind man, he teaches them and us about our wonderful salvation.

3. God opens the eyes of the spiritually blind. 35-39

We are not surprised when we see Jesus finding the man born blind after he had been thrown out of the Synagogue. Jesus is not finished working miracles for this man. He is now going to give him spiritual vision.

A. Jesus works the miracle of faith.

1. In verse 35, "**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**" This is title for the Messiah or Savior used by the prophet Daniel. The fact that Jesus does not need explain suggests that the man knew Jesus was talking about Messiah.

Jesus' asking this question removes any thought that all a person has to do is believe in God and be a good person and they can get to heaven. This man clearly believed that God had worked a miracle in his life. Jesus comes back, because simply believing that God exists and works miracles is not enough. The man understands because he responds, "**Who is he...so that I may believe in him.**"

Jesus confesses, "**You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.**" Jesus is the Savior that was promised to Abraham. This is the Savior that Moses and the prophets wrote about. The angel announced it when Jesus was born and the Heavenly Father said it when Jesus was transfigured. He is the Messiah, the Savior.

2. The Holy Spirit used the words and work of Jesus to create faith in this man's heart. He said, "**Lord, I believe,**" and he worshiped him." This is the second miracle and the greater one. A man living in spiritual darkness now has seen his Savior and he believes in him.

After Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world and rose again, this man along with the rest of the disciples would have had even sharper spiritual eyesight. We have the benefit of Jesus speaking to us through the entire Bible. When we hear his voice and believe, this is a miracle that God has worked. We see Jesus as our Savior.

B. Jesus summarizes a truth. "**For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.**" (39) God gives sight to the blind so they can see God. Those who stubbornly refuse to listen to God remain blind and are under God's judgement. Salvation is by grace and it is a gift of God.

Conclusion: It is great if our eyesight improves. It could be that the health of our eyes has gotten better. The Lord might bless our physical eyesight to improve through surgery or medicine. We should always thank the Lord.

Jesus shows us that when we have spiritual sight, it is only because of the gift of God. We are naturally born blind. We are lost in the darkness of sin. God comes with his word and shines into our hearts. We see Jesus as the one who has taken away our sins and given us life with God. Now we live in the light through his word. For all this we give thanks to God for Jesus the Light of the World. Amen.