

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 27

THE TRUTH OF HIS KINGDOM



MARK; LUKE; JOHN



MEMORY VERSES

“Today salvation has come to this house,”
Jesus told him, “because he too is a son
of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come
to seek and to save the lost.”

—Luke 19:9-10



BLIND TO SEEING

CORE PASSAGE: JOHN 9:24-27,35-41

CONTEXT

John's Gospel contains seven "I am" statements in which Jesus assumes the divine name of God found in Exodus 3:14. The second of these appears in John 8:12 and 9:5, where Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world." What comes next is a demonstration of His light breaking into the darkness. Christ's light healed and saved a man born blind while also revealing the blindness of those who refused Him. The conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities intensified as evidence of Jesus's divinity and messiahship grew.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus opens people's eyes to the fact that He is the Messiah, but we can choose to believe or not.

As you examine John 9:24-27,35-41:

- Contemplate that Jesus makes blind people see, both literally and metaphorically.
- Recognize that the Pharisees were able to see with their physical eyes but still chose to sin in their spiritual blindness by not believing who Jesus was.



TIMELINE

Jesus Feeds the Five
Thousand (John 6:1-15)

**SESSION STUDY: Jesus Heals
a Blind Man (John 9:1-41)**

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Walks on Water
(John 6:16-21)

Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus
(Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus's Triumphal Entry into
Jerusalem (John 12:12-19)

Daily Readings

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|---|---|
| ☐ Day 1: John 7:1-52 | ☐ Day 4: John 9:24-41 |
| ☐ Day 2: John 8:12-59 | ☐ Day 5: John 10:1-42 |
| ☐ Day 3: John 9:1-23 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 82 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

JESUS BRINGS LIGHT TO THOSE IN DARKNESS (JOHN 9:24-27).

Circle the statement that gives glory to God.

24 So a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and told him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” **25** He answered, “Whether or not he’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!” **26** Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” **27** “I already told you,” he said, “and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don’t want to become his disciples too, do you?”

The story of the man born blind starts in verse 1, and it is a story about responding to Jesus. The Pharisees’ searching question, “What did he do to you?” (v. 26), lies at the heart of every conversion story. When God saves a person, He changes them at the deepest level of their being, transferring them from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of His Son (Col. 1:13). Such life change becomes obvious, like a man born blind who can suddenly see, and it demands an explanation.

John’s Gospel offered that explanation not only to the man born blind but to the world blinded by sin that regains its spiritual sight in Christ. Before healing the man, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). As the light of Christ shines in the darkness, there are two possible responses: go toward the light or flee from exposure. The gospel never leaves room for ambiguity. There are no “neutral” reactions to it.

Light is an exposing element. It reveals what is truly there. In the darkness, we can only guess what’s there. When Jesus came as “the light of the world” (John 9:5), the natural response was to step into His light and trust Him as Savior. But not all responses were so favorable. Some, like many Pharisees and religious leaders, refused to see what the light exposed.

LEADER NOTE: In John 3:19, Jesus told Nicodemus: “The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.” Why do people deny Christ? Obviously, it’s not a matter of evidence. In the case of the blind man, wouldn’t his healing be persuasive enough for all witnesses? Rejecting Christ is a matter of an evil heart. The human heart by its sinful nature doesn’t love the light; it loves the darkness. To become lovers of the light, Jesus must come into our hearts and drive out our darkness. As He did with the blind man, Jesus must do a miracle in us. Otherwise, we will never believe.

Key Concept: Jesus opens people's eyes to the fact that He is the Messiah, but we can choose to believe or not.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus opens people's eyes to His messiahship, but they can choose to believe in Him or not. Those who recognize their sin and need for a Savior will believe; the hard-hearted will not.

How have you experienced the light of Christ exposing the darkness in your own heart?

When commanded to “give glory to God” (v. 24), the healed man did just that, proclaiming what Jesus had done for him. He had been blind, and now he could see, and Jesus was the cause. He could tell the Pharisees his story again—and no doubt he would tell it the rest of his life—but he would not come up with a narrative that didn't involve Jesus opening his eyes. There was no other explanation for him, and there isn't for any Christian. The only question left is this: Do you want to become His disciples too?

LEADER NOTE: The man born blind was real, yet John also used his situation to represent our own spiritual blindness. Just as Jesus opened the man's physical eyes, He must open our spiritual eyes. The reason anyone becomes a Christian is not due to their moral integrity, mental acuity, or personal holiness but solely by the grace of Christ. Notice the man didn't approach Jesus; Jesus approached him. The man didn't ask for sight; Jesus simply gave it. The action of Jesus came before anything else, and that is how it is in our own lives. Jesus acts, and we respond in faith.

If you were asked, “What did Jesus do to you?” how would you answer?

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“Believers don't need to know all the answers before they can share Christ with others. All they must know is how Jesus changed their lives. . . . We should tell people what Jesus did for us, and trust God to help our words draw others to him.”¹

—Bruce B. Barton

Notes



JESUS CAME TO JUDGE THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SEE THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH (JOHN 9:35-41).

Circle the words referring to sight in this passage.

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, and when he found him, he asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” **36** “Who is he, Sir, that I may believe in him?” he asked. **37** Jesus answered, “You have seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” **38** “I believe, Lord!” he said, and he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind.” **40** Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and asked him, “We aren’t blind too, are we?” **41** “If you were blind,” Jesus told them, “you wouldn’t have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

The Gospels present Jesus as a man who always went to the outcasts. Verse 34 tells us the Pharisees, unhappy with the response to their inquiry, cast out the once-blind-now-sighted man from the synagogue. When Jesus heard the news, He went and found the man. Imagine the emotional rollercoaster! The man experienced a miracle that resulted in his excommunication. One kind of suffering was relieved only to be cast into another kind. Was his physical sight now a spiritual problem? No, and Jesus wanted him to know that.

Jesus found the man and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” (v. 35). Jesus often used the phrase “the Son of Man” to refer to Himself as the One who reveals God to man.² Seeing Jesus, the man now saw his God. His response was immediate and profound—“I believe, Lord!” (v. 38). He then worshiped Jesus, the only right response to the revelation of the Messiah. The man’s physical blindness had already been healed, and to the man’s delight, Jesus healed his spiritual blindness too.

LEADER NOTE: Jesus gave the man a simple invitation: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” And the man only knowing that Jesus was possibly a prophet, but someone who gave him sight, asked for more insight: “Who is he. . . that I may believe in him?” Jesus identified Himself as the one, and the man responded in belief in His Lord. It all started with a simple invitation, a question, “Do you believe in Jesus?” It’s as simple as that.

How does Jesus’s miracle and pursuit of the man relate to our gospel mission as believers in Christ?



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

NEW IDENTITY OF THE BELIEVER: When a person places faith in Christ, that person undergoes a fundamental change of identity. He or she goes from being an enemy under God's wrath (Eph. 2:1-3) to being welcomed into God's family as a beloved child (Eph. 2:19). The believer in Christ is declared righteous on account of Christ's perfect life and substitutionary death and resurrection. No longer is the person a slave to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. The person has been delivered from the realm of darkness and now belongs to the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). Anyone who is in Christ is a "new creation" in whom the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

While the man worshiped Jesus, some Pharisees stood in judgment. Yet in the end, it is not their judgment that matters—it is Jesus's. In verse 39, Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment." By that He meant He came to show the truth of things, to which some will respond with faith and worship while others respond with rejection.

Some are blind and know it, and some are blind but don't know it. What a warning this is to all who read John 9. We can have the gift of physical sight and not see our spiritual need, and we can be physically blind and see Jesus clearly. This is why Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18-19 that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength."

LEADER NOTE: The extreme danger the Pharisees highlighted is that they believed they could see when they were spiritually blind. They claimed to have true knowledge of God but denied Him when He stood before them. We must never be wise in our own eyes but ask for God's divine light to see who He really is. There is always a danger of making God into our own image—to create an idol—rather than receive Him as He has revealed Himself in the Word, and in Jesus in particular. The question at the heart of every person's life is the one Jesus asked Peter in Matthew 16:15: "Who do you say that I am?"

What do we need to "see" in order to be saved by faith?

Notes

ARRIVAL

PREPARE: Before your group arrives, make a few minor adjustments to your room's setup. You may want to rearrange chairs, take down a wall hanging, replace a curtain with a new one, or something similar.

INTERACT: As you interact with your group, don't ask if they notice anything different, but pay attention to see who notices your adjustments. As the group settles down, explain that you've made a few changes and see if anyone, now prompted, can identify what you did.

TRANSITION: Sometimes we see details and changes on our own, but sometimes we need someone else to point them out to us.

CONTEXT

SAY: After leaving the temple in Jerusalem following a debate with the Pharisees (John 8:12-59), Jesus's disciples saw a man who had been born blind. They asked Jesus whether it was the man's sin or his parents' sin that caused his disability. Jesus explained that neither was the case; rather, God had ordained his blindness so that God could be glorified in him (9:1-5). Jesus made mud from dirt and spit, placed it on the man's eyes, and instructed him to go wash; when the man returned, he could see (9:6-7)! Everyone was astounded at the man's instant recovery. The Jewish leaders, however, refused to believe the truth, choosing instead to accuse the man of lying and sinning (9:13-23). But Jesus was right: this miracle would bring to light the truth of who He is.

RECAP

RECAP: Recall **Pack Item 8: John's Seven Signs** and highlight the varied responses of the Jews to the signs of Jesus's power and authority. Ask: "As you read the text this week, how did the word play between sight and blindness draw you deeper into the story?" Then say: "The man was healed by Jesus, and he recognized Jesus is the Son of Man. But the Pharisees refused to see the truth even though no one could argue the man had been miraculously healed."

TRANSITION: You may not have noticed a slight difference in this room, but once I revealed the truth, I bet you felt your eyes had been opened. As we delve into this week's passage, let's pray that we allow Jesus to open our spiritual eyes so that we may know and believe the truth of who He is.

SIGN	VERSE	MEANING	THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
1. Jesus cleanses a leper	John 4:46-54	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.
2. Jesus heals a paralyzed man	John 4:46-54	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.
3. Jesus heals a man born blind	John 9:1-41	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.
4. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead	John 11:1-44	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.
5. Jesus feeds 5,000 people	John 6:1-14	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.
6. Jesus walks on water	John 6:16-21	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.
7. Jesus turns water into wine	John 6:1-14	Jesus has authority to forgive sins and cleanse from sin.	Jesus is the Son of God.



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GROUP ACTIVITY

CHART: Direct your group to page 92 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find "Seeing Jesus." Recreate the chart on a board in your room so you can record the group's findings as they interact with Scripture.

Notes

Seeing Jesus

Read John 9:1-41. Write in the appropriate space how the man born blind and the Pharisees identified Jesus.

HOW THE MAN BORN BLIND SAW JESUS	HOW THE PHARISEES SAW JESUS
(v. 11)	(vv. 16,24)
(v. 17)	(v. 28)
(vv. 30-31)	(vv. 39-41)
(vv. 35-38)	

ANALYZE: Break up the group into two smaller groups, assigning each group a column in the chart. Instruct each group to read through the verses given and to write down how the man born blind saw Jesus and how the Pharisees saw Jesus. In the last empty space, encourage each person in your group to write down how they see Jesus. Come together as a group and discuss your answers.

ASK: What do you see as significant about the man's answers identifying who Jesus is? (*His understanding or sight grew and progressed as the man grew in his knowledge of Jesus.*) What do you find interesting about the answers in the Pharisees's column? (*The Pharisees declined in their knowledge and became spiritually blinded by their ignorance.*)

ENGAGE: Ask if anyone has had a similar experience of a progression of understanding in who Jesus is on their own journey of faith. Allow some time for the group to share such experiences and to share their own personal responses to how they see Jesus.

DISCUSS: Ask your group: “Based on Jesus’s teaching in verse 39 and the surrounding conversations with the man and the Pharisees, what is the connection between seeing and believing?” Stress that what we believe to be true about Jesus shapes how we respond to Him.

DEBRIEF

What is our role as believers in Christ to help others see, know, and believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God?

SUMMARIZE

Jesus didn’t reveal Himself mysteriously or secretly. He plainly identified Himself as the Messiah, the promised Son of God. His life, His words, and His miracles pointed to the truth of His identity. Today, the world has the Bible as Jesus’s story, testimony, and proof. Even with God’s revelation of His Son, some people simply choose not to believe in Jesus. Each individual chooses to see, know, and believe the evidence presented about Jesus or not.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 93). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Head** section in this week’s study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: God does not ask us to set aside our intellect to become a Christian. Rather, He invites us to think things through carefully. John 9 clearly shows that the truth of Jesus’s power reveals who He is. Yet the Pharisees rejected Him despite His miracles and described Him as a sinner. The difficulty with Christianity is not that God asks us to “take it on faith” without any foundation but that a sinful heart suppresses the truth.

What are your sources of authority for your beliefs about Jesus?



HEART: How Jesus treated the blind man is a window into how He treats His people. The most profound revelation in these passages was not in the healing of the man’s eyes but the salvation of his soul. When he was kicked out of the synagogue, Jesus went and found him, revealed Himself as the Savior, and saved the man. Jesus knew exactly what the man needed, and He pursued Him, all the way to the cross. We all are blind in our sin, but in Jesus we have a Savior, if we look to Him in faith.

How does Jesus’s pursuit of the man change the way you see the heart of Christ for you?



HANDS: When Jesus rubbed mud on the man’s eyes, He sent him to the pool of Siloam to wash and be healed (vv. 6-7). The man didn’t hesitate. When Jesus later asked him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” the man was

quick to ask, "Who is he, Sir, that I may believe in him?" (vv. 35-36). Then he believed in and worshiped Jesus (v. 38). The call of God to every human heart is to do the same—believe in Jesus and worship Him. Often responses to God's call come in the form of a process; sometimes people need follow-up to make sure they understand the gospel.

Who will you pursue with the gospel of Jesus or follow up to see if they need more understanding?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- Consider writing out your testimony or some examples of how Jesus has changed you. Seek an opportunity to share these words with someone who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for people who have hardened their hearts against the Lord, that they will see Jesus clearly in His Word and in your life.
- Respond to Jesus's identity in the Bible by journaling. Start a list of Jesus's descriptions of Himself complete with Scripture references as you read through the Gospels.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 93 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 82:5-8 with your group. Invite your group to pray silently or vocally for people they know to be healed from spiritual blindness.

References

1. Bruce B. Barton, *John, Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 199.
2. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 376.

Notes

