

**Livin' the Life**  
**The Works of God and the Worship of God**  
**John 9:13-41**  
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We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. We pick up today where we left off in chapter 9, Jesus healing of the man born blind, 9:13-41.

Last week we saw that Jesus and his disciples pass a beggar, a man born blind and the disciples want to know whether this man sinned or his parents that he was born blind (1-2)? But Jesus responds, this blindness was so that the works of God might be displayed (3-4). Then Jesus heals the man and when those who knew him don't know what to make of his healing, they take him to the Pharisees for their opinion (13). The miracle creates controversy over Jesus and leads some to blasphemy and others to worship. Let's see how this develops.

Jesus healed the man on a Sabbath (14). When the Pharisees hear the account of the healing, some do not believe Jesus could be from God because he violated their Sabbath tradition. Jesus did not actually violate the Sabbath law, but their interpretation of it. To help the Jews keep the Sabbath, the Jewish rabbis defined what was considered work on the Sabbath. So, for instance, you could not heal on the Sabbath, unless it was life threatening. But other Pharisees had a hard time believing that Jesus could be a sinner when God used him to heal the man.

So, the Pharisees turn back to the man himself to see what he thinks about Jesus. He responds that Jesus is a prophet (15-16). Skeptical, the Pharisees request his parents to verify the facts (18-19). They admit that this man is their son and he was born blind but do not admit who healed him or how he was healed! They want the Pharisees to ask him themselves because he is old enough to testify for himself. Then we learn that they did this because they were afraid the Pharisees would kick them out of the synagogue (20-22). By this time, the Jewish leaders had decided that those who believed that Jesus was the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue, which amounted to being cut off from the Jewish community.

The Pharisees turn back to the man to question him again, demanding that he glorify God, for they know this man is a sinner (24). God gets the glory when you say Jesus is a sinner. They are demanding that he tell what they think is true, Jesus is a sinner. This is blasphemy. The whole gospel tells us the opposite. The man responds, all I know is that I was blind but now I see (25)! Pressing him more, he responds more boldly, suggesting that they want to become his disciples also. But this was too offensive to for them to ignore. They shoot back, we are Moses' disciples! We know God spoke to him but we don't know where this guy is from (28-29). Their point is that this man cannot be greater than Moses. The man finds this amazing, if Jesus is not from God nor a righteous man, he could not do the things they see (32-33)! The man Jesus healed was up against the religious experts of his day yet he gives a bold testimony about Jesus. I think deep down we are often afraid to share the gospel not because we do not know what to say but because we fear rejection. Your ability to be a powerful witness relies more on who you know than what you know. I am not saying knowledge is unimportant. I am saying that God has given us his Spirit and made us his witnesses, to give us the words to say when we need them. Do you take him at his word and believe him? Do you believe he will fill your mouth when you need it? He has just shared his story of how Jesus healed him. We all have a story to tell. It is not about winning arguments but testifying to the work of Jesus in your life. This man is fulfilling the mission of Jesus. Rely on his Spirit to give you the words to say.

The Pharisees attack the man personally, you were born in sin and you dare to teach us? The religious leaders of Israel are spewing blasphemous words and kick the man out (34). But Jesus is not finished with the man yet. He has a greater work to do. Jesus finds the man and asks, do you believe in the Son of Man and the man responds with faith (35-7). The man's faith progresses from

Jesus being a man, to Jesus being a prophet, to believing Jesus is the Son of Man, the Lord. Jesus brings him to a decisive and knowledgeable faith.

Jesus heals him physically as a means to spiritual healing. But to see this as a greater work, we must see spiritual healing as of greater worth than the physical healing. Reconciliation with God, the experience of his love and grace is of more value than the comforts of this life, including seeing. The psalmist testifies to this, your love is better than life (Ps 63:3), Paul testified to this, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil 1:21). If you don't believe that then the promise that God has a good purpose in our suffering and pain and difficulties won't be of much comfort or appealing to you. But if you do, you will find comfort, whether your suffering is relieved or not, and you will be able to comfort others who are suffering. The most important thing for this man was not that he would see physically. Jesus loved the man too much to leave it at that, he wanted him to see Jesus' glory and worship him. Ultimately, physical sight is meaningless in light of eternity. Spiritual healing in salvation is the ultimate healing; it is the greater good. The ultimate reason for this man's blindness is that the works of God might be displayed in him, that he be given spiritual eyes to see the glory of Jesus Christ and worship him. Or as John said "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and by believing have life (20:31). Jesus is the light of the world sent by the Father to give spiritual healing and spiritual sight so we see his glory and the glory of eternal life.

Then we get to the climax of the whole narrative. Jesus said that for judgment he came into the world, to separate light from darkness. That those who do not see, may see and those who see, may become blind (39). That is, those who recognize their blindness and need for sight are given spiritual sight but those who think they see already and are opposed to the truth are blinded by the light. Some of the Pharisees hear this and ask if they are blind? Listen to Jesus' response, if you were blind (no knowledge of God, his law, or Jesus) you would have no guilt of rejecting what they knew and heard him but now that you way we see (reject God's Messiah, Jesus) your guilt remains, still in your sins. (40-41).

