

“BLIND MICE”

John 9.1-41

Are there any of you that remember the children’s song,
 “Three blind mice, see how they run, da, da, ta, ta, ti, ta...”
 It goes something like that.

Well, today we’re going to talk about being blind, spiritually blind,
 and in Chapter 9 we’ll find more than “three blind mice.”

We left off in Chapter 8 as Jesus was teaching about seeing the light,
 seeking and seeing truth.

He even makes the claims that, “he is the light of the world,”
 that he existed before Abraham,
 and that God glorifies him.

This didn’t set to well with the Pharisees and religious leaders.

They were furious.

They even tried to stone Jesus, but the Bible tells us at the end of the chapter
 that he, *“hid himself and slipped away from the temple grounds.”*

Then chapter 9 starts, *“As he went along, he saw a blind man from birth.”*

The blind man is our first blind mouse and he will eventually be able to see.

We’re going to put him aside and talk more about him later.

Right now we’re going to look at the second group of blind mice,
 his disciples, verse 2-5 says, *“His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned,
 this man or his parents, that he was born blind?
 Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus,
 “but this happened that the work of God might be displayed in his life...
 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

The disciples were blind, blind in part because of **WHAT THEY HAD BEEN TAUGHT.**

It isn’t that they were totally blind.

They’re learning, but they still have blind spots in their thinking.

You know, like when you’re driving,

you pretty much know where the cars are around you.

But there is that one spot when a car is behind you and passing you,
 that you can’t see them in either your rear view or side mirrors.

One of the blind spots of the disciples

was the common cultural belief that

if you didn’t have health, wealth, or babies, you’d committed some grave sin,
 you were being punished by God, and God has written you off.

So when the disciples saw the blind man,
they assumed his blindness was punishment for some grave sin.
The disciples didn't understand that God cares about all people and
that" ***this happened that the work of God would be displayed in his life.***"

In Luke 4, we see Jesus is baptized, he heads off to boot camp in the wilderness,
then he goes back to Galilee, and as his custom on the Sabbath, he goes to church.
It's his turn to read, he takes the scroll of Isaiah 61 and reads;

***"The Spirit of the Lord is on me because
he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners,
and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*** Luke 4.18-19

Jesus came to help and heal the blind and spiritually blind to see.

The Makuna people in South America were spiritually blind.
They normally took their deformed babies to a desolate place
where the babies were deserted and exposed to the elements until dead.

But one day the chief's son was reading the Bible to the people.
He began at John 9:1 and started to read about Jesus and the blind man.
(Now note, there would be no blind man in the Macuna culture,
he would have died as a baby.)

When the son read, Jesus says that this man was born blind
"in order that the works of God might be put on display,"
The old chief suddenly saw the light.
He stood to his feet, lifted his right hand of authority, and said,
"We must stop destroying our babies."

He got it. He saw the light.
He realized each and every life, normal or not normal, whatever that means,
every life, well formed, deformed, reformed, or not totally formed
was ***"in order that the works of God might be put on display."***

The disciples missed it. Where do we miss it?
The disciples had blind spots. Where are our blind spots.

OK, some are blind because of WHAT THEY ARE TAUGHT.
Others are blinded by **WHAT THEY THOUGHT, THEY KNEW.**

Jesus appeared in public and healed a blind man.
That attracted another set of blind mice, the skeptical ones.
These mice are blind because for them, "seeing, isn't even believing."
They are the neighbors.

Listen, verse 8 and following,

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 demanded.*

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."*

The neighbors had their blinders on.
Most of them didn't accept his testimony
because of what they already knew about the man.

We all have our bias, prejudices, and preconceived notions, don't we?
We all can be a bit skeptical at times, and sometimes that is ok.
But we often become skeptical when it comes something or someone being changed.

We put the blinders on and miss all kinds of possibilities.
We tend to look at a set of circumstances or certain people
and based on what we know,
we think-no way, no hope, thumbs down.

But one of our Confirmation students reminds us, "***Nothing is impossible with God.***"
We often forget to factor in God,
we forget to see the purpose and potential that God has for people, even for you and I.

Think about it-what are some things that have changed
or some people that have changed
that you thought could never in a million years change?

I'm sure there are probably a few people that still haven't changed,
just be patient, God might not be finished with them yet.
And just maybe God's not finished with you yet.

OK, we have those that are blind because of WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT
and those that are blind because of WHAT THEY THOUGHT THEY KNEW

Next we hear the squeaky mice. They have the worst case of blindness because
THEY THOUGHT THEY KNEW WHAT GOD WANTED.

Here is what Jesus says about them, lets jump to verses 39-41

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."*

We've heard from and about the Pharisees and religious leaders before.
 Their blindness is a result of their darkened hearts.
 They are callous and controlling, calculated and condescending.

They don't really seek or see the things of God or the needs of people.

If they have a choice to look in a mirror or out a window,
 they chose the mirror almost every time.
 They want to see themselves.
 They need to look out the window once and awhile to see others,
 to see the felt needs of others.

Listen, 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.***

Jesus reminds us that the Sabbath is made for man and that he, Jesus, is our true Sabbath.

There are people blinded by what the culture teaches, by what they think they know,
 by what they think God wants, and, by what they fear.

The parents were blind because **THEY WERE AFRAID.**

They are the quiet blind mice.

They choose blindness because to share the truth, they think, would cost them too much.

Listen to this, verse 18,

¹⁸***The Jews 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."***

There may be good reason for their fear.

²²***His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews,
 for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged
 that Jesus was the Christ^[a] would be put out of the synagogue.***

²³***That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."***

You see if they were expelled from the synagogue.
 It wasn't as easy as just switching church membership,
 like going from a Baptist or a Lutheran church or the FUMC.

It was a loss of a support group, family and friends.
And if you had a business, that business would be boycotted.

So we can understand their fear.
They stood to lose a lot and many of you can identify with that today.

There times we've felt fear when faced with difficult choices?

Remember this, that God is faithful.

Jesus promises us that ***"the truth will set us free."***

John reminds us that ***"perfect love casts out fear,"*** and

Paul encourages us by telling Timothy,

"God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline."

So there are those who are blind because of WHAT THEY HAD BEEN TAUGHT

there are those who are blind because of WHAT THEY THOUGHT THEY ALREADY KNEW

there are those who are blind because of THEY THINK THEY KNOW WHAT GOD WANTS

there are those who are blind because THEY ARE AFRAID

And then there was the one who was blind but now he sees.
He sees things much clearer than the disciples, the neighbors,
the Pharisees, and even his parents-the things of God that is.

At first, his sight is a bit fuzzy, as clear as mud.
But there is no question that he has seen the light
and that he has embraced the light by the end of the story.

We're going to cover four conversations and
we'll see him grow in his understanding of who Jesus is.

After he was healed he made his first appearance to the neighbors.

¹⁰***"How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.***

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."

Man is the operative word.

That gets bumped up a notch after the blind man's first interrogation with the Pharisees.

Verse 17, ***"Finally 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.'

OK, first a man named Jesus, now at least a prophet.

Let see what happens in the second interrogation with the Pharisees,

²⁴***A second time they summoned the man who had been blind.***

"Give glory to God,^[b]" 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!"

I'm going to digress here, I can't pass this up.

The line, "I was blind now I see" is from the first verse of "Amazing Grace" written by the heathen slave trader John Newton.

We sing, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,"
But the interesting thing to me is the first verse was written,
"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a rat like me.
I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."
There is no extra charge for that profound piece of information.

OK let's get back to the second interrogation;

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

The guy is getting a little upset, he stands his ground and actually goes on the attack.

²⁷He 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?"

That really ticked the Pharisees off.

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

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

The man gets more syndical but speaks with great conviction, greater passion.

Actually he's really on a roll;

³⁰The man answered, "Now that is remarkable!

You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.

³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

³²Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

³³If this man were not from God (MAN FROM GOD), he could do nothing."

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

Isn't it interesting and good for us to note.

The more he tells his story, the stronger he gets.

The more he thinks about what God has done for him, the more courage he has.

Ok, he discovers that Jesus is not only a man named Jesus, not only a prophet,

Not only just a man of God, but he is his LORD.

He's discovered that in pieces, as he told his story, and so will we, listen;

³⁵Jesus 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."

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

³⁸Then the man said, "LORD, I believe," and he worshiped him.

He saw the light. Literally he saw the light.

That's my prayer for you and that is my prayer for me.

Lets sing the prayer, "OPEN MY EYES THAT I MY SEE."