

## With Jesus pt6

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Ryan Abernathy / General

With Jesus / John 9:1–38

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We live in a day where everyone wants to make their lives seem as perfect as possible. We use filters and editors and posts and pictures to tell a story about our lives that lets everyone know we have it all together. No one wants to be seen as hopeless. We are all succeeding. Excelling. #Winning

To be hopeless is to be on the outside looking in and to the watching eyes of everyone around us, we don't want to appear that way. Yet, so many people are hiding their hopelessness, their lives of quiet desperation, behind a veneer of success.

Until it all comes crashing down.

When the cracks start to appear, folks start to talk. The flaws were actually more noticeable than anyone wanted to admit. What do we do when someone in our orbit is revealed as hopeless? How do we engage? What hope can we bring them?

Well in Jesus time, there was no hiding, simpler I know, but still a harsh existence. What some today experience only when they are found out, is what some people experienced from the day of their birth. But the hope in the first century is the same as the hope that is available now...an outside intervention, something we could never do for ourselves. Not some thing, but Someone.

Turn with me to John 9:1-38 and let's see how we can join with Jesus to serve the hopeless. (Read vs 1-7)

First, I want you to notice the way the disciples viewed this man...and truthfully the way everyone viewed him. he was someone who had to have done something very wrong to be in this state.

**John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

Human beings generally seek for answers or a rationale that can help them deal with the hard questions of pain, suffering, and evil. **Like most confused human beings, the disciples assumed that the problem would be more tolerable if they could probe the questions of why.** Accordingly, they sought to assign blame for the man's unhappy state in life

We see a lot of people like that. This has to be the result of a bad decision or series of decisions they made to end up like this.

Hey, let's be honest, sometimes that is the case, but so often it is not. Sometimes their circumstances are the result of other's sins against them or forces beyond their control.

I mean, why do we live in a nation where there is relative peace and safety and others live under the constant threat of rockets or terror or abuse or famine? Did they deserve more or better or did we deserve worse?

Even in our own country, why are we in the situation we are in? I had a good education and involved parents and people who helped me along the way. Others don't. Am I more deserving?

And the disciples go even further- this has to be sin.

**John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

Similarly, when the disciples asked Jesus, "Who sinned?" (John 9:2), **they frankly eschewed the role of a caring servant and chose instead to adopt the role of judge**

And they have NO thought of helping him, they are just commenting on this situation like someone would about the weather.

**Folks, that is NOT how Jesus sees us. We are people.**

To be with Jesus and the hopeless, we see everyone- from the best to the worst- as Imago Dei...people who Jesus died for.

Jesus goes even further, He sees this man as a conduit to display the glory of God.

**John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

By contrast, however, Jesus rejected their question as nonproductive speculation and chose instead **the role of a caregiver who recognized that the works of God would be manifested through his Son's work**

Imagine that! This blind beggar? Someone who will display God's glory? Yet that is how Jesus works. **He takes the hopeless and gives them hope and they in turn give Him glory and make Him known.**

**John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

Jesus, however, refused to accept the disciples' alternative of blame and in fact **shifted the base system of the discussion from blame to the grace of God in the face of human need.** The story line thus signals that in this pericope Jesus was going to use the man's tragedy to reveal the works (erga) of God

So what does Jesus do? He not only sees the man for who he is, but He acts to rescue him.

**Church, we can't just see the hopeless. We have to engage!**

**John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The mention of the works of God leads to a further statement on work both in terms of reaffirming the personal mission of Jesus ("Him Who Sent Me") and the role of Jesus with his followers ("We Must Do the Work," 9:4). The emphasis in this verse clearly falls on the earthly work of Jesus

**A passive Christian is a disobedient one.** If Jesus shows you someone who is drowning in hopelessness, He is not taking you on a tour of misery. He is inviting you in to His work- where it is still day- so that the person who you have seen can know hope!

Jesus' interaction with this guy is a little odd- spit and dirt and a wash in a pool is not a normal way to treat blindness, but the man who is blind will do whatever- a spark of hope has been lit!

One common assumption about those who have no hope is they are not willing to do anything to help themselves. **What if the issue they face is no one is willing to tell them how to get the help they need and they do not know where to go?** All doors seem closed?

### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The implication in both stories seems to be that the healer demanded the man in need to obey the healer's instructions. As **such the reader should not miss the close connection between obedience or effectual believing and experiencing the powerful work of God**

That is our day and time. You need a navigator...someone to come alongside you to make your way. We are providing that when we come alongside someone- both physical and spiritual hope. And oftentimes, we meet the physical to address the spiritual.

*(When hunger ends learning begins)*

And that is what happens to this man...the next series of verses chronicle this path...**he now has physical hope, but spiritual transformation is coming.**

Look at verses 8-17

First, they deny it is even the same guy...must be a doppelganger

Then, they want to know what happened and he tells them his story and they want to see this Jesus...and the man has no idea where he is

Next, they take him to the Pharisees, and there is ANOTHER problem...making mud is work! And the religious rules have been violated!

### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The rules of the rabbis, however, did not forbid all acts of mercy on the Sabbath because it was argued that if someone were in imminent danger of death, a Jew could come to the person's aid. But the blind man did not fall under such a rule, and therefore they would have judged the healer here as guilty (see, however, my comments at 7:22–23 concerning the change the rabbis themselves made concerning healing).

Folks this is often the case when we engage with the hopeless...those who would do nothing will tell us we are not doing it right. (Sidewalk back in the day...soup vs tracts)

And even the man's parents are more afraid of violating the community standards than they are of violating the commands of God (Read v18-23)

### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The parents had no problem answering the authorities' first question They identified their son and provided witness to his congenital blindness. But the second question of the Jews they stoutly avoided answering, **like persons who refuse to become involved in assisting helpless victims for fear of the consequences to themselves**. Instead of entering into the hearing further, the parents turned the question back to the questioners. Both pled a lack of knowledge concerning the facts of their son's new condition and insisted on his own competence to bear witness for himself

Church we cannot let the opinions of others deter us from helping the hopeless. **I would rather have a messy church than a dead one. You can clean up a mess, but you have to bury a corpse.**

And the Pharisees have no use for this guy. He is a reminder of the failure of their religious rules. They become increasingly hostile to him, leaning on their own religious traditions rather than seeking to understand the miracle standing before them. (Read v24-29) His testimony in vs 25 is powerful “I was blind and now I see” and they cannot refute it, so they must disparage it. Lest they have to examine themselves rather than this man.

#### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The transformed blind man’s reply here is a classic statement. **What was incredulous to him was that the officials who supposedly represented the perspective of God actually failed to recognize the work of God.** As a result, not only did they not recognize God’s work in this unique healing event (the healing of congenital blindness), but they also failed to recognize the origin of the healer

Ultimately, they cannot explain him away so they kick him out. (Read v30-34)

#### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

But the power brokers of religion in this story would not listen to the common wisdom of a transformed man and instead followed the usual pattern for dealing with challenges to their authority. **They categorized the man with a name, “sinner,” and excluded him from their community**

But the more they push him away, the more he wants of Jesus. (Read v35-38) **(he had never SEEN Jesus...he was blind and was sent away before he was healed, remember?)**

### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The question that Jesus asked him concerning his believing in the Son of Man probed him to the very core of his being. Here believing did not mean the mere acceptance of signs (cf. 2:23–25) but the active commitment of himself to the Son of Man, who brought God's hope and forgiveness to the world. The man had already proven himself to be faithful in spite of his never having seen Jesus

Why is that? Wouldn't it make sense that the man would reject everything? Some in our age do. **But once you have had a real encounter with Jesus, you cannot leave Him.** You may have to seek out His people, but you will not give up on Him.

That is a lot of what I see going on the deconstruction movement here in the US. People who want to know Jesus, but they don't want all the cultural trappings to obscure Him. And I get that. **What you cannot do, and this man does not do, is toss out the truth of who Jesus is and what He says about Himself and us. We don't recreate Jesus in our image. Jesus recreates us in His.**

### **John 1–11 (5) The Powerful Example of the Blind Man (9:1–41)**

The man then responded with a model confession involving both believing and worshiping

That's what we have to offer the hopeless. Someone to meet them where they are and help them to navigate back to hope...and to introduce them to the Source of permanent Hope once they can see again.