



Series: So That You May Believe

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Speaker: Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

Text: John 9

Title: Jesus Heals the Blind

Hey Good Morning Mercy Family! We are heading into John 9 so go ahead and make your way there. For those of you new with us I want to welcome you! So Glad you are here. As a church we are working through a 7-week series of sermons where we are looking at 7 displays of power performed by Jesus that John records in his gospel. We've seen some pretty awesome stuff right?

- He's turned water into wine
- he's healed a boy on his deathbed

- He healed a man who hadn't been able to walk for 38 years
- He fed 5000 with a Hebrew happy meal
- Last week we saw him walk on water

And hey...how about the sermon Pastor Darrick Smith preached for us!?!? OOOOO. What a word! Thank you to Mercy Northeast for sharing him with all of us last week. He and I switched places last week and I had the joy of worshipping with our Northeast Campus. It was powerful! So thankful for you pastor Darrick.

ANYWAY - In this series what we are seeing is Jesus performing displays of power that John calls "SIGNS." And we've said each week the REASON they are called signs and not just miracles is because they have a bigger purpose than just wowing us. As SIGNS they POINT us somewhere to something. And John tells us what they point us to. He says in chapter 20 that Jesus performed a lot of signs, but these specific ones are written in here for a purpose

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. -- John 20:31

That's where the title of our series "so that you may believe" comes from.

The SIGNS point to the SAVIOR. So, each week we've been saying don't miss the point! Don't just focus on



the sign. It's not that the sign is bad. The sign is GOOD! But it's a sign. What you need is what the sign represents. So, the way we've said it is the theme of our series

Signs are good, and Jesus is Better

So, in your life when you ASK for a sign...you don't base God's love or power on his response to your request. You base his love & power on what that sign would point to - the death and resurrection of Jesus. Still Ask. Signs are good. But let's base our HOPE, our BELIEF, in what all the signs point to - the Savior.

Now we come into John 9, and we are going to see Jesus heal a blind man. And that's going to happen pretty quick into the chapter. And the rest of the chapter is going to be a series of conversations where this formerly blind man shares what happened. And we are going to call that his testimony. He is testifying as to what happened to him when he met Jesus. So, we'll call that his testimony. And the simplicity of his testimony is what makes it so powerful.

"I was blind, but now I see." So simple. I was one way, I met Jesus, now I am another way.

And My hope for you is that you leave here with fresh courage that what God has done in YOUR LIFE...you can "testify" to others about it. Your story, your testimony - Do you realize how powerful the story of God working in your life is? You are a walking talking SIGN of GOD'S GRACE. maybe you've forgotten how

AMAZING his GRACE really is. And so, I want to look at his amazing grace today and then equip you to go tell others about what he's done in your life! And then let's go do it.

And what you'll see as this guy tells his story of meeting Jesus is that after you tell it a few times you get more confident and clearer in telling it. So, let's walk through it and see his story unfold then I'll give you **3 building blocks for your own testimony so you can go tell somebody this week.** And maybe God has your story as the one he plans to use to draw somebody else to himself.

As he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

What a question. They see a physical disability, an affliction, and presume that it is a punishment from God for his sin. And before we write off the disciples as crazy for asking the question - remember that one of their Old Testament heroes - King David - lost a son at birth because of his sin. David had an affair with Bathsheba, and they had a son and God brought judgment onto David by taking the life of his infant son. So here they are thinking well, the purpose for his affliction is retribution for his sin or, more likely, his parents. But Jesus offers a very important word to his disciples, and I think to you and me. What is the purpose behind the suffering we are going through?



3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus answered. “This came about so that God’s works might be displayed in him. 4 We must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Now, this is big. Listen - **The meaning to be found in his suffering was not tied to the CAUSE of his suffering.** (REPEAT). That’s pretty important. Jesus says the purpose of his suffering, the meaning to find in the suffering...is not found in the cause. The meaning is in how God will work in it and through it. That is remarkable. Here’s why this matters so much - sometimes your suffering is the result of sin. Maybe your sin or maybe your parents or your friends or a total stranger. And some suffering is not the result of ANYONE’s sin...it’s just the result of the broken world we live in.

But what Jesus is saying is the CAUSE of suffering is not the same as the PURPOSE. The purpose, the meaning, is in how God will work in it. **The meaning we are meant to find in our suffering comes from how God wants to use it for his glory.** And I think that might set some of you free. If you will look to the Lord and offer your suffering to him, whatever it is, you will find good in the work he will do IN & THROUGH YOU. If you will allow his glory to be your heart’s desire. That’s why Romans 8 says

“28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. -- Romans 8:28

So today I hope you will let the words of Jesus bring hope to whatever suffering you have gone through or are going through. I’m not underscoring the cause. Depending on the severity of your suffering you may consider seeing a counselor to help you work through that and we are happy to connect you with counselors to help you process it all.

What I’m saying is that the MEANING. THE PURPOSE. Doesn’t have to be tied to the cause. Don’t let meaning & purpose from here forward be found in “why it happened” but in displaying the glory of God in it. You may be blind, you may be handicapped, you may be divorced. You may be widowed. You may have cancer or another sickness. And you can focus your heart saying WHY GOD or you can spend your time praying HOW GOD? How do you want to get glory in this situation?

6 After he said these things he spit on the ground, made some mud from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means “Sent”). So, he left, washed, and came back seeing.

There is the sign. Right out of the gate. He could have just made him well, but he doesn’t. He uses dirt &



water. Go wash in the pool called “SENT.” I love that. Just as God the Father SENT Jesus the water of life (verse 4) Jesus calls him to go into the waters called SENT. It’s a reminder of who Jesus is but it’s also a foreshadow of this man’s purpose. The REST of this man’s story is him being sent from group to group telling about what Jesus did for him. And it’s still true for us today. Those who are changed by Jesus are sent to tell others about what he’s done for them. We are going to see him sent into 4 conversations where he shares his testimony. Each time slightly different and with each one he gets a little bolder. That’s the rest of John 9. We’ll move through that pretty fast. Ready?

Conversation 1: The Neighbors

8 His neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit begging?” 9 Some said, “He’s the one.” Others were saying, “No, but he looks like him.”

In other words, “Who are you, and what have you done with Joe?” We never get his name, so I just put Joe in there.

By the way this is such a wonderful picture of what happens when someone truly becomes a Christian. God does SUCH a powerful work that the people around them...I’m telling you just ask some of the Christians in the room they will tell you this happened in their lives. The people around them were like...I mean it looks like you, but you are so different It can’t be you. That’s the power of Jesus on someone. It’s

visible. Your countenance changes. Your body posture changes. There is life in your eyes that there wasn’t before. You really are a different person. Then comes his first time sharing his testimony of what happened.

He kept saying, “I’m the one.” 10 So they asked him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” 11 He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So, when I went and washed I received my sight.” 12 “Where is he?” they asked. “I don’t know,” he said.

So simple. The man called Jesus came to me. Told me what to do. I did it. And I can see. Then that funny exchange at the end - Of course I don’t know where he is. I’ve never seen him. Or any people or places. That’s conversation 1.

Conversation 2: Pharisees Part 1

13 They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees. 14 The day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes was a Sabbath.

For those of you new to the bible & to Jesus you’ll start to see a theme as you read the gospels. Jesus keeps performing signs like these on the sabbath. And the religious leaders called the Pharisees keep getting mad about it. Because they had put a bunch of rules around what is allowed & is not allowed when it comes to the day of rest. That’s what sabbath was. The pharisees go and interrogate this guy and watch how simple his testimony is. 2nd of 4 times he shares it.



15 Then the Pharisees asked him again how he received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," he told them. "I washed and I can see."

This is what happened. Jesus came to me. Told me what to do. I did it. And now I can see.

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a sinful man perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

So, one of the Pharisees' rules was you weren't allowed to knead anything on the sabbath. And that is why Jesus didn't just say OPEN YOUR EYES. no instead he kneads this mud paste stuff. Because in doing so he was breaking the pharisees rule about the sabbath WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY fulfilling the purpose of the sabbath. The purpose of the sabbath was healing. It was to rest up. Be restored from your days of work. Jesus here is healing on the sabbath. Which the pharisees interpret as sin. AND YET...the others are like well, how could a sinful man do this?

17 Again they asked the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?" "He's a prophet," he said.

He stands up to the pharisees and says this man is from God!

Well, what happens next is a conversation between the pharisees and the parents of this man because they just couldn't believe this happened. They verify he was born blind, and they are like look, you want to know how he can now see you gotta ask him.

22 His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed him as the Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue.

Leads to 3rd conversation

Conversation 3: Pharisees Part 2

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."

Now the testimony stakes are higher. See that? Now it's not just "hey tell us what happened." Now it's - either you deny Jesus and stay with us. Or side with Jesus and we banish you. Many of you - you are going to face this moment. Will you choose Jesus or the pressure of those around you? Then the most beautiful simple reply

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!"



Here's what I know - I was one way, then I met Jesus, now I'm different. I was blind, I met Jesus, now I can see. Simple, POWERFUL!

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

The thick irony of these verses - It's very hard for those who are blind to see. They can't understand what has happened. And their inability to perceive who Jesus really is...it's spiritual blindness. The seeing man gives a wonderful reply:

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?"

So, this is called holy sarcasm & I'm here for it. They had it coming for asking the same question twice.

28 They ridiculed him: "You're that man's disciple, but we're Moses's disciples. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man — we don't know where he's from."

Well at that, the man launches into his first attempt to explain who Jesus is. And it's awesome.

30 "This is an amazing thing!" the man told them. "You don't know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but

if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to him. 32 Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything."

BTW this to me is why we need those of you who are new Christians to be contributing to the body. Because sometimes you see clearly the things those of us who have been Christians for a while have kind of lost sight of. He keeps it simple & the gospel is simple. And at the end of the day, he's choosing the one with compassion & power. I'm going with the guy who made me see.

34 "You were born entirely in sin," they replied, "and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

Conversation 4: Jesus

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."

He had never seen Jesus before this moment.

38 "I believe, Lord!" he said, and he worshiped him.

This is a heart of gratitude. A heart of thanksgiving. A heart eager to worship. And then there's this bonus conversation between Jesus and the pharisees that should serve as a warning to us.



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.

In other words - if you didn't know about sin, then you would be innocent. But because you claim spiritual sight...you claim to know the things of God...you will suffer the consequences of one who is AWARE of their sin but not repentant of it to God. **In other words - You claim sight, but you can't see God right in front of you.** And you will be held accountable for missing him when he was in front of you. If you want to dig further into this idea - study Romans 7.

Ok so here's what I want to do with this. I want to give you the building blocks to be able to share your testimony with the simplicity we see this man do four different times. I was blind, now I see. The simplicity of it is why John Newton referenced this passage when he wrote maybe the most famous Christian hymn ever.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind but now I see.

So, I want to help you share your testimony. Do you know the primary way people come to hear about

Jesus is by hearing the testimony of others who have met Jesus? Happened the other day. Somebody got baptized here. Invited friends to be here for baptism and her story was shared and then one of her friends gave his life to Jesus later that week. I preach the gospel and our other preachers preach the gospel and then you come along to one person that is far from God but close to you and you preach your testimony and God moves!

PEOPLE are God's PLAN A for sharing the good news with other PEOPLE. And yet listen...

A 2021 study by lifeway found that only 29% of unchurched Americans have EVER had a Christian explain the gospel to them.

And sometimes we can think evangelism is some big scary thing and I'm telling you it's as simple as sharing your testimony and making Jesus the Hero of it. Yet studies tell us the majority of Christians will never share their story of how Jesus saved them. In fact, HALF of all millennials who calls themselves practicing Christians...believe it is WRONG to evangelize. Wrong to share the good news of what Jesus did for you and then say that what he did for you he did for that person too! Man, not only is it commanded by Jesus (so he should decide what is right and wrong) but it is my PRIVILEGE to pass along the story of how God changed my life!

Guys I believe God is doing something incredible here in you at Mercy Church. I'm seeing it. And it's





happening one person at a time. And the way it happens is not complicated. It's you PRAISING GOD for what he's done in your life and then telling somebody about it.

OK, 3 building blocks to your testimony I want you to go home and write it out. And then tell one person before next Sunday. Pretty Simple. Maybe as a part of that, you invite that person to come to church. We are going to talk about Lazarus next Sunday it's going to be awesome.

Our outline is simply taking the blind man's testimony and letting it be our example:

25 One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!"
Before I met Jesus, When I met Jesus, After I met Jesus

Before I met Jesus I was _____

This is where you talk about your spiritual blindness. For me I met Jesus when I was 13. I was always anxious and insecure. I was an average athlete & a good student and got picked on a good bit for being a good student. On top of that I had TERRIBLE acne. And so, I felt insecure and anxious and like I didn't fit anywhere. On top of that, I felt guilty a lot for the things I did wrong. I was really good at lying. And man, it started weighing on me. Listen that was me, a 13-year-old boy. Everybody is different.

The point here is - Before I met Jesus I was BLIND. And this is what my blindness looked like. Depending on your story maybe it's - I was an addict. I was obsessed with money. I was obsessed with my career. I can't tell you how many college and pro athletes whose testimony starts with - "Before I met Jesus all I cared about was athletics. I WAS my stat line. my batting average. My handicap. My shooting %. My time." Listen Romans 3.23 says ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Not some. All. So, you are just talking about what that looked like in your life.

Then I met Jesus

Here's where you give your simple story of who shared with you or what situation you were in when you first heard the gospel. And share the gospel! I heard the gospel - Maybe it's that you were overcome by fear but then I heard the good news of John 3.16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life." John 3.16

And I know for some of you, maybe it's hard to identify the exact moment. You had parents who raised you in the church and you feel like you've kind of grown up with Jesus. Well, I promise God calls you child, not grandchild. So, at some point your faith becomes your own. When did salvation transition from your heritage to your testimony? Talk about it. And share the gospel!

Now, after meeting Jesus, I am _____



This is where you talk about spiritual sight. I was blind, but now I see. I was lost, but now I'm found. I am different. One of the biggest reasons people give for not being interested in Christianity is they don't see how it could positively impact them. And here you come along and say well listen - I am a new creation. The old me is just gone. Fear doesn't run my life. Lust doesn't run my life. Anger doesn't run my life. Money doesn't run my life. There is a throne, as there is in everyone's heart. But the one on the throne is JESUS and he is a much better king than any of those other things. Not only that, I am secured for all eternity.

I was blind but now I see!

Listen and this is important - you don't say now I'm good! I'm perfect. I'm sinless. No no no. We are works in progress and never want to come across like we've got it all together. But we are changed. We have hope, peace that passes understanding, the presence of God

with us, and life everlasting. So, no we are not perfect, but we are changed. We can see now.

Before Jesus I was blind, then I met Jesus, now after meeting Jesus I can see. I am a new creation. I am different. Listen you go sit down and write this out and do you know that the person most impacted by this will be YOU?

I say this all the time - when we stop sharing about Jesus it's because we've forgotten just how amazing his grace really is. We've forgotten how much of a wreck we were, just how lost we were, until he stepped in.

You know we have baptisms again this week? I love it. I think 6 people are getting baptized. And this is their story.

Maybe it needs to be yours. Let's pray.