

THE LORD'S SPITTLE (Jn. 9:1-12)

This is the only occasion of any sufferer in the Gospels having been afflicted from birth. It caused the disciples a problem, and they looked to Jesus for the answer, **Jn. 9:2** *Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* ... That's the way they thought ... The Jews believed a condition such as this was the punishment for something the person had done, or something their parents had done. ... But neither was the case, as God had explained to Moses, **Ex. 4:11** *Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?* ... And then Jesus went on to explain how God had a purpose to demonstrate through this blind man, **4** *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* **5** *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

The Saviour then bent down on His knees beside the man and took the oddest course of action. He spat on the ground, and He mixed His spittle into the dust until it became clay. He then lifted the clay on the tip of His finger and anointed *ἐπιχρίω, spread the clay on to* the eyes of the blind man with the clay (v.6). After He had finished that strange action He told the blind man to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. And, when he did, he could see.

Why did Jesus rub clay into the blind man's eyes? I don't know for we are not given any explanation. ... He could just as easily have commanded the man to see, and he would have seen. So, what *is* the purpose of this miracle in the Gospel of John?

HIS CONDITION The blind man had never seen *anything*. ... He had never seen his parents, the people around him, the streets of Jerusalem, the countryside ... He had never seen anything! He could not see Jesus, - he couldn't even make out the shadow of Jesus! Nonetheless, He knew Jesus was there because he *felt* His presence ... but he could not *see* Jesus!

Such a condition sounds awful to us, but I wonder how much value the blind man put on the ability to see. I would imagine the idiom 'you never miss what you never had' might apply. On other occasions, - as with Bartimaeus, for example, - he asked specifically that he might see ... **Lk. 18:41** *Lord, that I may receive my sight.* He had been able to see previously, but that was not the case with this blind man. This blind man couldn't see since he first opened his eyes as a little baby ... he was blind from birth ... he was *never* able to see!

He *must* have known he was missing out though. However, he had accepted his condition, and was sitting saying nothing. Besides, he couldn't really value sight, having never seen. You will notice, too, he didn't ask for sight. After all, why ask for something you don't believe you will ever have?! The point is ... the blind man did not expect a miracle. ... In fact, what *does* his silence tell us about him? How did he manage to keep silent for so long? Why didn't he say something?! Throughout the short proceedings he did not utter a single word!

... There are many people, - like the blind man, - who cannot see, or make out, spiritual truths. They have heard the Gospel. They could repeat it to you, but its truth has never penetrated their hearts. They read their Bible, but they cannot understand what it is all about. They know the Bible stories, and yet they cannot see Jesus as the Saviour! ... And, to take it a step further, ... like the man who didn't know what he was missing, not being able to see, so the person who cannot see Jesus does not know what they are missing. The blind man could not value what he could not have and therefore, he never considered for his condition to be met. His circumstances were as they were for that was all he knew ... and he could never envisage anything else.

Do you see where we are coming from? ... A person can listen to the Gospel time and again without any response. That is a 'spiritual blindness', and it is particularly serious when the person, - like this blind man, - has no desire to ask to see. ... Most every other person around this man could see, but he himself had given up on his life ever changing. ... It is a dilemma for those who *want* to see, but who can't. They *want* to understand the Gospel and be saved but no matter how they try ... they cannot see it. They *want* to, but they cannot overcome their blindness. ... Have you ever met anyone like that? They are not able to see because they believe their religion is sufficient, or they are not able to see because they hope to work their own way into Heaven ... when God's Word makes it abundantly clear Jesus Christ is the only way, the truth and the life, - there is no salvation outside of Him ... Well, the simple truth is ... if you're blind, you will not see the way, and you will not know what direction to take.

The simple place to begin is the place where this man found himself, at the feet of Jesus. He did not know Jesus was coming his way ... but here is the beautiful part of the story ... Even though the man could not see Jesus, Jesus could see him. And this man was going nowhere he would find Jesus, but Jesus came and found him. Jesus was looking at him sitting on the ground, in

the dust, in his rags, with nowhere to go, staring into the darkness, with nothing to say.

Before you became a Christian, the Bible draws the picture of how you were dead in your sins. That means you couldn't see, nor hear, nor understand the spiritual truths surrounding the Gospel, and it made no impact upon your soul.

That was **this man's condition**, but when Jesus came ⁵ **the light of the world** began to shine into and overcome his darkness ... **The man's condition.**

HIS CONSENT I would imagine if I met someone down the High Street who was sitting begging on the pavement, ... with a notice beside them indicating they were blind ... as you sometimes see, ... and I got down beside them, spat on the pavement, wiped some of the dust and dirt onto my finger, and rubbed it into their eyes ... I can't imagine them remaining silent! I would find it difficult to believe they would let me do it.

After all, who would want somebody's spittle rubbed on them?! I wouldn't! It is offensive! However, the spittle which came from the Lord Jesus, ... that He mixed into the soil of the earth, and formed with His finger ... it is written of that same One, **Col. 1:16** *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* That same finger was the very finger of God the magicians saw in Pharaoh's court (Ex. 8:19), and the finger Moses saw writing on the two tablets of stone on Mount Sinai (Ex. 31:18), and the finger that wrote the message on the wall for King Belshazzar (Dan. 5:25). The finger of the Saviour was the finger of God ... and the finger of God with the saliva of the Saviour was wiped in the dust of Jerusalem.

... Wiped in the dust of Jerusalem ... There is how our Saviour was, - as it were, - 'wiped in the dust' of Calvary. That which came from the very heart of Heaven was sent into this world and 'wiped' in the sin which crucified Him on the cross! ... "Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood" ... He knelt in the soil and in the dust that blind eyes would see ... blind eyes that were well content in their darkness! They looked on Him Whom they pierced, but they could see no beauty, - no attraction. There was nothing about Him that appealed to them. He became despised and rejected by all who looked upon Him. He was a Man of sorrows ... and the testimony of

those who saw Him was, **Is. 53:3** we esteemed him not. ... He was nothing to them, of no value.

On the cross He pleaded with them, **Lam. 1:12** Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger ... The Father *dipped* His Son in the clay of the earth to apply the healing to the blind who would never, - of their own ability, - be able to see.

I have used the title, **His Consent** ... how did this blind man *consent*? Well, he *did* consent for had he not he could have stopped what Christ did to him. Short of the disciples holding him down for Jesus to *force* the clay into his eyes, he could have fought off Jesus ... but nothing like that happened. Why? ... because this man became willing in the presence of the Saviour ... He experienced the peace that comes only with meeting Jesus for that was how he explained it when people came along later and asked him how he could now see, **Jn. 9:10** How were thine eyes opened? **11** He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes ... and I received sight ... **15** He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

And that is how the blind man freely gave **his consent** for his heart was stirred to trust in the Saviour. ... And that is what God does when the sinner believes in Him for salvation, otherwise the sinner would *never* see ... “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me ... I once was blind but now I see” ... **The man’s condition** ... **His consent**, and ...

HIS CURE The proof he was cured of his blindness lay in the fact he left behind the place he had occupied in the darkness for he had become a new creature/creation in Christ, the old things belonging to the years of his blindness had passed away, and all things had become new for him (cf. II Cor. 5:17). Jesus had given him a new life. He saw his parents and his neighbours for the very first time ... He was no longer in darkness and ... if he would have known the words, he would have been singing, “What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought Since Jesus came into my heart! I have light in my soul for which long I had sought, Since Jesus came into my heart!”

On that day the Light of the world (v.5) overcame his darkness. The old hymn says, “The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin, The Light of the world is Jesus” ... There is no other Gospel that saves. There is no other Light you need for there is no other light which compares with the Saviour. ... Many

lights ‘turn on’, but they don’t last for they soon dim. Even the sun and the moon and the stars don’t compare, “No need of the sunlight in Heaven we’re told ... The Lamb is the Light in the city of gold”.

There is no other cure for sin apart from the Gospel for sin’s blindness is expelled when you look to the Saviour, “There is life for a look at the crucified One, There is life at this moment for thee”.

I still don’t know why Jesus knelt beside this man, why he spat on his finger and with the saliva formed clay in the soil and put it in the man’s eyes. It would have been far easier to simply have commanded the man to see ... but that was not the way the Saviour chose to do it. ... Perhaps the reason He did it that way is to show how He came to each of us individually, - in our different circumstances, - to meet the need of our salvation. Yes, there is only one means of salvation, and yet Jesus comes to the rich and wealthy as well as the poor and homeless. He comes to those steeped in the vilest sin the same as He comes to those lovely people blinded by their self-righteousness.

As we approach the Lord’s Table we remember how Jesus suffered for us all and bled and died as our Saviour on the cross. It is not simply a story out of an old Book, but it is the living truth by which we are saved. He opened our eyes that we would see ... And even though we came from different ‘arts and parts’, by faith we have seen Him stretched out upon the tree ... By faith we see Him on Heaven’s throne ... And soon, - as John writes in one of his epistles, - **1 Jn. 3:2** *when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* ... And that is the day to which Paul so warmly refers, “Until he come”.