


Conversations with Christ: A Blind Beggar

TALKING WALKING

Leaders' Guide

2022-10-9



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- 1 Open your Bible to John 9, and let's explore the experience of this unnamed blind beggar...
What do you think motivated the neighbors? (v. 8-13)
- 2 What do you think motivated the Pharisees? (v. 14-17, 24-34)
- 3 What do you think motivated the parents? (v. 18-23)
- 4 What do you think motivated the blind beggar?
- 5 Which can you identify most with—and **why**?
- 6
 - Reread John 9. List all of the things...
...that the blind beggar **didn't** know.
 - ...that the blind beggar **did** know.
- 7 Which list is more impressive to you? **Why** do you think that?
- 8 **Why** do you think the Pharisees **kept on** asking the blind beggar's opinion about Jesus if they did not intend to believe and respond?
- 9 Were the Pharisees **smarter** than the blind beggar?
Did they need more evidence? **Why** do you think that?
- 10 Why do you think Jesus was willing to receive worship?
Was that the **right** thing to do? **Why or why not**?
- 11 **How well** do you see? (v. 39-40) **Why** do you say that?

- 1 These neighbors are a mixed bag—they probably had some motives in common, others differed.
 - Some of them were willing to entertain the fact that a miracle apparently had taken place (v. 9a).
 - Others dismissed this apparent miracle, chocking it up to mistaken identity (v. 9b)—in spite of the fact that the man himself kept insisting that he indeed is the formerly blind beggar (v. 9c).
 - They all engaged sufficiently with the possibility that indeed was cured of blindness (v. 10).
 - They seemed to defer to the religious experts to settle the case (v. 13).

- 2 The Pharisees likewise **at first** were divided in their opinions (v. 16), but later were monolithic in their response, rejecting Jesus' identity as the Christ (v. 22b, 24, 28-29), and perhaps also the idea that a miraculous healing truly had occurred. What motivated them? In John 11:50 we learn that they were interested in preserving their leadership role in the Jewish nation.

- 3 His parents sure didn't take any risks in order to stick up for him and his story! Being "put out of the synagogue" (v. 22) cut one off from the entire religious, social, and economic life of the city. You'd have to be pretty committed to Christ in order to be willing to pay that price—and they weren't. They must have felt torn—every parent loves their child, and they **were** willing to affirm more than many of the neighbors were (v. 20), but they were afraid of paying a cost for affirming Christ (v. 21-22).

- 4 At first, it was the pure wonderment at being healed (v. 15 & 25). Later, as the Pharisees pushed back on his story, he "connected the dots", affirming that he is from God (v. 30-33). At this point he already affirmed that he would be following Jesus as a disciple (v. 27c)—even though he's never laid eyes on him (35-36)! Finally, when Jesus identifies himself as "the Son of Man" (see Daniel 7:9-14), the formerly-blind man affirmed his faith in Jesus as Messiah and worshiped him (v. 35-38).

- 5 Be ready with your own answer—and a well thought-out motive for believing. Give others a chance to answer first, and make sure that folks give more than a superficial response.

- 6 He **didn't** know:
 - what Jesus looked like
 - where Jesus was at the time (v. 12)
 - whether or not Jesus was a sinner (v. 25)
 He **did** know:
 - that he formerly was blind (v. 9c, 25b)
 - Jesus' name (v. 11)
 - what Jesus did to heal him (v. 11)
 - that Jesus had to be sent by God (v. 33; cf. John 3:2)

- 7 Be ready with your own answer—and a well thought-out rationale. But give others a chance first.

- 8 Lead your group in probing their insistence in probing in the face of their commitment to rejecting Jesus.

- 9 They clearly were more highly educated (v. 34), but they were—here goes—"blind" to the evidence. No, they didn't need more evidence (even though they kept probing for more). Anyone with an honest heart could appraise the evidence given (see 6). They had hard, unbelieving hearts.

- 10 Jesus received worship for one reason only: because he is God, and therefore deserves it. Compare to Acts 14:11–15 and Revelation 19:9-10 and 22:8-9).

- 11 You likely will need to "prime the pump", so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)

Sermon Summary (Key Text: John 9)

Imagine living your entire life in total darkness. In Jesus' day there was not a more destitute condition than if one was born blind. You were a social outcast, unappreciated for your talents and abilities; you were only seen as a problem. There was little opportunity for social mobility. Chances are you would never marry, never have a family, kids, or grandkids. Your whole life would be lived out in a loneliness that would be just about as dark as your vision. You would spend your days sitting by the city gates or on the temple steps hoping that someone would feel pity upon you and throw a few coins your way.

Jesus encountered such a man in John chapter 9. He had compassion on him and healed him. You would think that everyone would be happy, but the religious leaders were not (v. 13ff)! They even interrogated his parents—but they did not want to get involved (v. 18-23). They were afraid the Pharisees would kick them out of the synagogue and that would affect their social status.

It was a dynamic miracle! Jesus' power is pretty impressive here. But John isn't recording this event to impress us with Jesus' power. Nor is he recording this event to impress us with Jesus' compassion, impressive as it was. John records it as an illustration of this fact: "Jesus is the light of the world" (see John 8:12). He also records this story to show us the different kinds of responses people had to Jesus. There are some people who believe in him and embrace the light and they see, and are saved. And there are others who see the light and they reject it. They shut their eyes to it and remain spiritually blind. This is the impact that Jesus' light has on people: some will be drawn to it and they will be saved. Others will reject it, and they will perish. In fact, one of the prophesied characteristics of the Messiah would be that he would bring recovery of sight to the blind, not just spiritually, but physically.

Jesus not only sees this guy, he sees him as no one else does. His disciples see him as a sinner. His neighbors saw him as a beggar. Jesus saw him as a man in need of mercy. Jesus not only sees him, he heals him. But this miracle has an unexpected impact in his life. What should have been the best day of his life begins to look like one of his worst. He is interrogated and kicked out of the synagogue. And Jesus hears about this and goes and finds him (verse 35) and reveals himself to him.

You see this man's understanding of Jesus is growing. His physical eyes were opened instantly, but the eyes of his heart were opened gradually. At first, he only knows Jesus' name (v. 11). Later he concludes that Jesus was a prophet (v. 17), that he is sent from God (v. 33), then in v. 35-38 he concludes that Jesus is "the Son and Man", he believes on him, worships him, and he is saved! The same thing happens to us spiritually when we respond to the gospel. First, Jesus sees us—as people who have violated God's law and gone our own way. We are in absolute spiritual darkness (2 Corinthians 4:3-6), destined for an eternity apart from him.

But then God shone the light of the gospel in our hearts, our spiritual eyes were opened and we believed and were saved. And what a contrast with how we previously viewed him. Previously, we didn't care about God. We were blinded to the truth. What happened to that blind man is a picture of what can happen to every single one of us when God shines his light into our hearts and opens our eyes to who Jesus is.

Notice the instant reaction. There is immediate opposition to this man. Even his family distances themselves from him. Maybe that has happened to you too. This happens a lot to young people. They go to a Christian conference or youth camp, they respond to Christ. They are excited about what God has done, they get home and their parents pour water on it to quench their passion for Jesus, because they don't share it.

Even the theological people get into a debate with this man, "I can't answer all your questions—all I know is, I was blind, and now I see" (v. 25). It is hard to argue with that, isn't it? It is hard to argue with a personal testimony. Some of us are terrified at the idea of giving our personal testimony. We think: "What if I don't know the answer to their questions?" But the blind beggar shows us that something as

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

A **physically** blind person **knows** that he's blind, but a **spiritually** blind person **doesn't!** (John 9:40-41)
So, what do the **spiritually** blind think of the gospel? What do **you** think of the gospel?

Monday— Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-6.

- Who is "the god of this world" (v. 4)? Not sure? See: 1 John 5:19 and John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.
- Verse 3 says that the gospel is "veiled" to those who are perishing (ie, going to hell). According to v. 6, how is spiritual blindness removed?

Tuesday— Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-20.

- Explain this: The gospel "appears foolish" (v. 18) to those with "foolish wisdom" (v. 20).

Wednesday— Read 1 Corinthians 1:21-25.

- Circle the word "called" in 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 (2x), 9, 24, 26 and "chosen" in 1:27 (2x) and 28. Are you "called/chosen" by God? The test is: "How do you evaluate the gospel message?"

Thursday— Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.

- Are you one of the "wise", who think the gospel is foolish, or one of the "foolish" who know it to be wise?

Friday— Read 2 Timothy 2:14-21.

- This passage distinguishes "honorable vessels" and "dishonorable vessels" (v. 20-21). Which are you?

Saturday— Read 2 Timothy 2:22-26.

- We **all** once were "held captive by the devil to do his will" (v. 26). Have you "come to your senses", have you been "granted repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" (v. 25)?



- "Why do so many of us struggle with addictive habits?"
- "Are freedom and change possible—for me or my friends?"
- "What is the biblical method for breaking addiction's grip?"

Biblical Hope and Help for Addictive Habits and Eating Disorders

- **Saturday, November 5th 9am — noon**
- **Triangle Community Church [4216 Kildaire Farm Road, Apex]**
- **Facilitators: Dave and Krista Dunham**
- **For adults and high school students**
- **Tickets just \$15**
- **Free childcare available**



This interactive workshop will provide you with rich biblical perspectives on addictions, with additional focus on eating disorders, and will equip you with practical strategies for combatting these common struggles.