

# The Miracle of Spiritual Sight

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** John 9:1-12

**Preached on:** Sunday, September 28, 2014

This morning as we come to the word of God, we find ourselves in a fascinating passage that speaks to us in a very powerful way found in John chapter 9. We will be looking at verses 1 through 12 this morning. I've entitled my discourse "The Miracle of Spiritual Sight." Follow along as I read these first 12 verses. Referring to Jesus,

1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no man can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." 6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. 8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" 9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." 10 So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

Whenever I reflect upon that season in my life as a little boy when by God's grace he gave me spiritual sight and in some inscrutable mystery caused me to do what I would have never done on my own, I find myself being overwhelmed with praise. Like the blind beggar in this chapter, I too was born blind spiritually. Blind from birth. Utterly destitute and helpless spiritually speaking and I would remain that way today were it not for God's grace, a merciful God who sought me out, who stooped down and saved me. This is the magnificent theme of this chapter.

As we look at it, we see a profound and deliberate contrast in chapter 9 from chapter 8. In chapter 8, we see those who reject the word and in chapter 9 we see a man who receives it with joy. In chapter 8, we see the utter ruin of man's fallen nature, rebelling against the light and in chapter 9, we see the light piercing through the darkness of spiritual blindness and giving sight. In chapter 8, the light exposes the tragedy of human inability and in chapter 9 we witness the light overpowering all of that and producing faith. In chapter 8, we observe the natural man's contempt for the Lord Jesus Christ and yet in chapter 9, we behold the undaunted love of Christ pursuing a sinner. In chapter 8, he is despised and

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rejected; in chapter 9, he is welcomed and worshiped. In chapter 8, the Jews stooped down to pick up stones to kill Jesus but in chapter 9, Jesus stoops down to mix clay with his saliva to give sight and eternal life. In chapter 8, Christ is called the demoniac inside his Father's house; in chapter 9, Christ is honored as Lord outside his Father's house. In chapter 8, we see those who stubbornly refuse to acknowledge their spiritual blindness and poverty and thus remain in darkness but in chapter 9, we see one who is given sight to see that spiritual poverty and blindness and who is delivered from the darkness. I would also add that in chapter 8, we see the state of Israel. In that day and sadly in this day today, influenced by Satan in such a way that they were not able to see their guilt, their bondage to sin. In chapter 9, we see a picture of sovereign grace acting where human responsibility has failed.

Folks, I want you to see yourself here and those of you that are listening to me this morning are in one of two categories. You are either in the light or in the darkness and if you're in the darkness, I hope that today by God's grace, you will be given spiritual sight. I would ask you to join me in examining this section of Scripture under three headings that exalt the miracle of sovereign grace which speaks of God's gracious and uninfluenced choice of individual sinners prior to the foundation of the world to be saved and glorified in Christ. We will look at three things regarding sovereign grace: the mission, the mystery and the miracle. The mission, the mystery and the miracle of sovereign grace.

Now, let me take you back to the context. This is very important. The Feast of Tabernacles is now over where Jesus declared himself to be the light of the world and now the Holy Spirit is going to show us what happens when that light shines in a miraculous way. Some will see him clearly and be saved and yet we know that many prefer the darkness rather than the light and for those, they will remain that way forever unless they believe in Christ.

So notice verse 1 of chapter 9. "As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth." Folks, here we see number 1: the mission of sovereign grace. Jesus is on a mission here. I can see him right now in my mind's eye, maybe you can as well. He's walking along but there is a deliberateness to his step and he knows where this one is because this is one whom the Father has given him before the foundation of the world and he sets his eyes upon him and no doubt walks over to him and listens to him talk, watches what is going on and probably thinks to himself, "This is one that I will save by my grace. I will bear his sins in my body on a cross before long. Ah, this is one that I will radically transform. This is one that will live forever to the praise of my glory because this is one that I am about to give sight." You see, the Lord even today is on that same mission searching out those he will give sight. In fact, I would venture to say that he is searching someone in this room, probably some of our children, in fact, I'm sure some of our children and others that are

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listening to my voice. I'm sure he's saying to himself, "Oh, how I long to behold the change that I will bring about in this one in my perfect timing."

Now I understand that those born blind from birth really give very little thought to it, give little value to sight. They don't know really what they're missing. They have no idea even as a dead man cannot know what life is. As you think about it, of all the petitions that this man makes outside the temple precincts, none of them has anything to do with sight.

"Please give me sight." For one thing, he knows that that's not available to him but he doesn't really see that he needs it. He needs something to eat. He needs money. He needs, no doubt, relationship and so forth. My friends, likewise the spiritually blind, they have no idea what they are missing. They have no idea the joy of being forgiven. The joy of being declared righteous. The joy of being in union with Christ. The sheer delight of experiencing the presence of God. The fellowship. The communion. The joy of being amongst God's people. The assurance of eternal life. All of those things are completely, utterly foreign to them. It therefore means nothing to them. It's for that reason those people, like this beggar, would never plead for spiritual sight. They will never plead for saving grace. They will never do that until God gives them the eyes to see the desperate need that they have.

That this man was blind from birth points to the reality that all human beings are born spiritually blind. The unregenerate man, we know from Scripture, has absolutely no capacity to see the wretchedness of his condition. He cannot see the imminent danger that he is in and therefore he cannot see his desperate need for the Savior and none of us would have ever seen our sin or the Savior apart from divine initiative. Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." So God must give spiritual sight. He must take the initiative. As Scripture repeatedly says, "There is none who seeks after God." For example, Romans 3:11. So if that's true, God must seek after man or he's going to remain that way. It's very simple. Now, man will seek after a God of his own making, one he can manipulate for his own ends but he will never seek the living, true God. Chapter 8 has proven this. Jesus has already said in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him," one of many verses that speaks of divine initiative. In this dramatic scene, we witness the effects of the Triune Godhead converging together in the salvation of this man. We see the mystical wooing of the Father. We see the Spirit's mysterious blowing of convicting wind that Jesus describes to Nicodemus. And we see the Son of God seeking after one that the Father had given him as John 6 describes in such detail, one whose name had been written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, one that he had loved in eternity past and now is there before him. But I find it fascinating to think that this man had no idea that Jesus was there. No idea that his name had been written in that Lamb's book of life.

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"As He passed by," it says, "He saw a man blind from birth." I would also want us to contemplate about this scene. Let me ask you this: what do you see when you look upon a person with some great disease or some tragic disability? What do you see? What do you experience inside? I hope it's compassion and I'm sure it is but I also hope you see the hideous consequences of sin. I was talking with Jake the other day and we were thinking about my sister's funeral that happened in this room and I was reminded of some words that I said. I'll never forget the scene when I was holding her hand as she labored to breathe her final breaths and with every heave of her chest, I can remember hating sin more and more and more. I hope you see that here as you look upon this man and others like them but, folks, we all have these disabilities. We may not see them but we are all sinners. We are all in such a tragic state but I hope that when you see these things, you hate sin all the more because all that is miserable, all that is despicable in life, is a result of Adam's disobedience and our sin in him. Paul reminds us in Romans 5:12, "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

Jesus sees this man but this man does not see Jesus nor does he see any of these things regarding his spiritual condition and here again, we see such a dramatic illustration of the terrible condition of a man without Christ. As Paul says, "They walk in the futility of their mind being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God." This blind beggar did not cry out for divine mercy; he did not cry out for saving grace. God had to take the initiative. This is the mission of sovereign grace. In fact, Jesus said in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Dear Christian, had he not sought you, you would have never sought him. It's amazing. "Jesus came into his own," the word says, "and his own received him not." As you think about that, given their stunning rejection of their Messiah, their hatred of Jesus, especially having seen all of the miracles that he performed, it is a wonder that the Son of God didn't just throw up his hands and just walk away in disgust and return to glory and leave them in their wretched condition and frankly, leave us in that same deplorable state. But friends, only a love we cannot comprehend can explain why he did not return to glory, why he did not turn his back forever on the entire fallen race. Ah, but you see, our God by nature is a God of mercy and grace, right? And our God is a sovereign God. He is sovereign over all of his creation.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 1 that he "predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself according to the kind intention of his will." He went on to say in verse 11 that he "works all things after the counsel of his will." So you must understand that man's innate rebellion against God is not a problem that God cannot remedy. In fact, his rejection here provided the perfect context for all his attributes to be revealed. When I say his rejection, this man certainly would have had nothing to do with Jesus like the rest of the Jews in that day if he had heard about him because his eyes

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hadn't been opened yet like the rest of the Jews. But this is a perfect context for Jesus to do his work, a perfect opportunity to reveal his holiness, his sovereignty, his mercy, his grace, his love, his faithfulness to his covenant promises. Even in disbelief, to reveal his wrath and judgment upon sinners. Against the dark background that we see here, the resplendent light of his glorious attributes shine all the more brilliantly. Certainly in these dark days of increasing apostasy and worldwide wickedness, folks, we need to fix our gaze exclusively on the glory of sovereign grace and all that that means in our lives. Where would we be without that?

I want you to notice too that here we have Jesus who has been humiliated and rejected. They tried to kill him. They tried to stone him. And he has escaped from them in some miraculous way. Now he's outside the temple precincts and though he was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, he did not allow his sufferings to distract him from his mission of sovereign grace. This is so poignantly summarized in his prayer right before his crucifixion when he prayed to the Father in John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world." In other passages we read that he has loved his own before the foundations of the world as well. Folks, as you think about it, we have no claims upon God's grace. If we did, it would no longer be grace. Indeed, as Romans 9:16 says, salvation "does not depend on the man who wills," referring to the human will. It doesn't depend on man's will. "Or the man who runs," referring to human effort, but here's what it depends upon, "God who has mercy," Romans 9:16. Then in verse 18 he says, "So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires." This is the prerogative of the Almighty and he is just in all of his ways.

So here Jesus seeks out this helpless man that pictures all of humanity and what a profoundly humbling scene it is for each of us who have been given the gift of faith to think that he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1:4. 2 Thessalonians 2:13, we read that, "God has chosen us from the beginning for salvation." It kind of puts us in the proper place, doesn't it? Romans 8:29, "For those whom He foreknew," which means fore-loved, "He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son." Folks, all we can do is thank God for choosing us, for calling us, for saving us, for sanctifying us and for some day glorifying us all by his grace. This is the mission of sovereign grace.

So we come back to the scene. Jesus passes by and he sees the man born blind. Verse 2, "And His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?'" Now, this was a very normal reaction in that day amongst Jewish people because contemporary Judaism of that day believed that human suffering was a direct result of sin. Man is a sinner. We all know that, but they believed that you could do

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certain sins and God would punish you physically for them and many of them even believed that an unborn child could sin in the mother's womb which is a rather bizarre thought. Others were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy that believed in the preexistence of the human soul, a deception that is very similar to that of reincarnation. Moreover, they believed a person could suffer in this life as punishment for wicked deeds that they had done in some previous existence. Beyond all of that, the disciples were also aware of some of the teachings in the Old Testament that they obviously didn't understand very well. For example, Exodus 20:5, God says to Israel, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me." Now, this is a warning that was repeated again in Exodus 34:7 where God states that, "He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." Well, so what is this saying here? You see, the disciples and some people even today failed to understand that these warnings were given to national Israel because of their idolatry. It warns about how that wickedness will affect the society as a whole. In fact, the full formula of this judgment was to be felt on the third and fourth generation but it included the very important qualifier "of those who hate Me," Exodus 20:5. You see, children who like their parents worship anything that rivals and honors the glory due to the Lord alone, will incite his judgment, will trigger his judgment, a judgment that can be felt for generations because those children like their parents, will tend to hate God like their parents did. Like the Hebrew children of the Exodus who suffered for 40 years in the wilderness because of the sins of their fathers. Like the generations of children belonging to the northern and even the southern kingdom when they were taken away into captivity. And like the generations of children in every family, in every nation, who like their parents neglect or substitute the worship of the one true living God for some rival deity whether it be the little potbellied Buddha or whether it be the false God Allah or whether it be some other God that they have concocted including gods like materialism, entertainment, pleasure and so forth.

By the way, as a footnote, 1 John 5:21, John tells us, "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." A very important warning. I hope you consider that. We must all ask ourselves: has anything other than the person of the Lord Jesus Christ become the object of my trust or the object of my greatest desire? Is there anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ that preoccupies my mind? Do I have other obsessions of my heart? Are there other things that demand my loyalty, my service, my money, my time? Are there other things in my life that I fear more than God? Are there other things in life that I delight in more than him? Folks, if the answer to any of these things is yes, then you really need to guard your heart, examine your heart, because undoubtedly you're being taken over by some idol and your children are watching. They are learning. They are copying what you do. You see, our children will become like us. They tend to worship the same idols that

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we worship and in the future, they will reap a tragic harvest of the seeds that you are now sowing in your family. We can see this in our culture all the time.

Now, back to the disciples' theological dilemma concerning the origin of this man's blindness. Again, apart from the national societal implications of generational judgment upon children, the idea that a child can be punished for the sins of his parents is absolutely foreign to Scripture. Scripture does not disavow the general connection between sin and physical suffering. For example, there are certain lifestyles, there are certain habits that we can pursue that can cause physical damage and sometimes God uses physical suffering to chastise sin. We see that in 1 Corinthians 11 when people misuse communion; when they do not have the proper heart attitude and they partake of it in an unworthy manner. For this reason, Paul says, "Many among you are weak and sick and a number sleep." But again, children are never punished for the sins of their parents. Deuteronomy 24:16 says, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin." It's just part of the law. It is repeated in other passages such as Ezekiel 18:20, "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself."

So obviously the disciples were confused about these Old Testament truths. Moreover, their minds were undoubtedly influenced by the popular philosophies of that day that came out of the Hellenistic culture and so with all of this foolishness floating around in their minds, it would be natural for them to ask Jesus this question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he should be born blind?" Notice what Jesus says in verse 3, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him." Folks, this is a remarkable text that causes us to ponder number 2: the mystery of sovereign grace. You know, we never specifically know why God allows what he does in our lives or in the lives of others, especially when it comes to human suffering, but as Christians, we need to view every spectacle through the lens of faith so that we can see the majesty and excellency of God manifested in all that he does whether it is something negative or whether it is something positive, knowing that all of these things are opportunities for us to see his glory at work. Because even when we look upon great tragedy, hidden somewhere beneath it all are his divine purposes to bring glory to himself. In Romans 11:36 we read, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever." Indeed, he is the source. He is the sustainer. He is the summation of all things. He created all things for his glory. He upholds all things by the word of his power. He governs all things by his authority so that ultimately he can bring to fruition his glorious plan of redemption to glorify himself eternally.

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As I was meditating upon this, I was reminded of that time when the earth was unformed. We read about it in Genesis 1. There was no sun, no stars, no moon to reflect the light of his glory and yet even then, the Lord our God reigned in realms unknown to us as our eternal God. Then he decreed an infinitely perfect plan to give him glory and in six days, he set into play, into motion, through creation, this plan. Folks, we must not forget that to this very day he continues to reign supreme over all of his creation. He is the majestic monarch over all that he has made from everlasting to everlasting. He works all things after the counsel of his will. And as we look at prophecy, we see how our sovereign God glorifies himself by allowing us to peer into the secret chambers of his eternal counsels and then through holy writ, he precisely unfolds to us his perfect intentions in history, what he's going to do. We've seen what he has done, what he's doing now and what he's going to do so that we can all through the eyes of faith marvel at his sovereign rule.

So here's the Lord of heaven and earth and his dominion is universal. It is unlimited. This is why Isaiah would say in Isaiah 25:1, "O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will give thanks to thy name; For thou hast worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness." As in this case, God allowed some defect or disease to persist in this man when he was yet unborn so that God might be glorified by his supernatural power to give him sight. It's an amazing thought. So Jesus says, "The reason here, disciples, is not because of something that he has done but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him." You see, folks, nothing God does is capricious or cruel. You must understand that. Everything he does is always perfectly just and part of his flawless plan even though we don't see it. In fact, as we look at Scripture, we see that God has ordained to allow evil to exist in his created order as an integral part of his plan to glorify himself. Unfortunately, many Christians don't understand any of this so let me digress for just a moment. It's very important. Isaiah 45:7, God says, "I formed the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all of these things." Folks, don't think for one second that when evil comes along it's catching God by surprise. He has ordained to allow those things to happen to bring glory to himself and that includes the great difficulties we experience in our lives. Likewise the prophet Jeremiah lamented in Lamentations 3:38, "Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?" Solomon reminds us that "the Lord has made all things for himself even the wicked for the day of evil." In 1 Samuel 2, beginning in verse 6, we read how Hannah praised God for his sovereignty even over evil when she prayed, "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts." And then the prophet Amos tells us in Amos 3:6, "If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?"

Again, though God hates sins, he has allowed it to invade his perfect universe. Through the voluntary choices of moral creatures in order to dramatically display the glory of his attributes, his holiness, his wrath, his mercy, his grace, his love and his power. Folks, we

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see this most vividly in the predetermined, preordained death of his beloved Son, the most grievously wicked act in all of history. I would ask you: is God not glorified in that? Is God more or less glorified because he ordained to allow evil to enter the world? Asked a little differently: is God more or less glorified because he ordained Jesus to die on the cross? Well, the obvious answer is that he is more glorified because had he not allowed evil to enter his perfect creation, we would have never known the heights of his holiness and the depths of his grace.

So, back to our scenario here. Unknown to this blind beggar, God allowed him to be born this way knowing that one day he would give him sight. This blind beggar was an object of eternal love. Yet another piece of the puzzle of God's sovereign grace that Christ might be glorified. By the way, we should all find comfort in these truths knowing that our afflictions serve a hidden yet glorious purpose that God might be glorified through us in ways that we may never know. This man was at least 30 years old according to verse 23 and now in the Providence of God, according to his perfect timing, he is about to become another recipient of God's grace, all a part of the mystery of God's sovereign plan. By the way, as we think about this, once again, when difficulties come into our life, things that we don't understand, we must never ask the question "why" as if God owes us an explanation but rather we must ask the question "what." "Lord, what should I do that will give you honor and glory in the midst of all of this? My responsibility is to humbly submit to your sovereign good pleasure. It is not my prerogative to question your love and your goodness but rather to seek grace to relax in good faith and anticipate the certain promises that are mine in Christ Jesus." That is the attitude that we are to have.

So Jesus says, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day." This is referring to "as long as I am with you." There is a sense of divine urgency here. He says, "night is coming when no man can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." You see folks, there is a mission of sovereign grace in progress here. Don't be concerned with the past. Don't try to figure all these things out. Don't be asking "why," ask "what." What do I need to do? Focus on the task at hand. Night is coming when no man can work. By the way, this is a reference to his sacrificial death that was about to occur which would temporarily result in darkness for the disciples when the light of the world would be taken away and they would not receive the new light, so to speak, until the Holy Spirit would come at Pentecost. John speaks of this in John 12:35 where Jesus says to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you." By the way, this should be a somber and solemn reminder to each of us. We need to be driven by a sense of divine urgency because, folks, nothing else in life really matters than serving Christ. Everything else is secondary or tertiary because life is short. What we do for eternity is really all that counts so we need to live in light of eternity. Jesus is coming, and I believe he is coming very soon, and I want him to find me absolutely exhausted as I crossed the finish line and I

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hope you are the same way. Paul said, "Make the most of your time because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is," and by implication, "do it."

What happens next is yet another example of the mystery of sovereign grace. Verse 7, "When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing." Now, why Jesus made this mud pack with his saliva is not stated and I've read probably 30 different things that try to explain this and a lot of them have some interesting merit to them but they're just conjecture. I'm going to give you one that is conjecture as well but I think this bucket holds more water than the rest. As we read the rest of the chapter, we quickly discover that the Pharisees expressed an inordinate interest in how Jesus healed this man which suggests to me that Jesus deliberately chose a method that would get under their skin, a method that would somehow violate yet another one of their man-made rules, some of their taboos that would have been associated with their works righteousness system, that system of apostate Judaism. DA Carson says this, "Considerable anthropological evidence indicates that where prevailing religious values focus centrally on pollution and taboos expressed in terms of human excreta, there is corresponding anxiety about the social and political structures." In other words, people get real nervous about these things. They put these things together in some religious way, "Oh, don't touch this. Oh, be careful with that," and so forth. Of course, the Jews were big on this. Carson goes on to say, "In other words, the taboos surrounding the human body give symbolic expression to massive social constraints, so to attack the symbols as Jesus clearly did on some occasions whether or not this be judged to be one of them or not, would be perceived as an attack on the social, political and religious system." So I believe that somewhere in all of this, Jesus has this in mind but we can't say for sure.

What happened next seems to really symbolize Israel's rejection of the Sent One. Let me explain this to you. Notice in verse 7, he says to him, "'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing." We've seen the mission and the mystery of sovereign grace and now we see the miracle of it. Now think about this: go wash in the pool of Siloam. How simple. Like the Gospel: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. No rituals. No ceremonies. No priest. No good works. And will you notice that though this man could not see, he could hear and this is how salvation comes to us, isn't it? "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ." You see, our ears allow us to hear what our eyes cannot see and one day faith will become sight. One day we will be able to behold and experience our Lord in all of his glory face-to-face as he has promised which, by the way, makes sufferings of this present time not to be worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

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# The Miracle of Spiritual Sight

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** John 9:1-12

**Preached on:** Sunday, September 28, 2014

So, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam which is translated Sent." I've been there. Last October I saw this pool. It is located near the southeast corner of the city wall of Jerusalem in the old city of David which is inside of Jerusalem. It is important for you to understand that in Hebrew the name "Siloam" transliterates a Hebrew term "Shiloah" which means "Sent." The Old Testament revealed how King Hezekiah constructed a tunnel from the Gihon Spring to the pool of Siloam to guarantee a continual water supply in case they came under siege by the Assyrians. I've been in that tunnel. Maybe some of you have. It's an amazing thing carved right out of the rock. And it's fascinating to note that during the Feast of Tabernacles that had just concluded, where Jesus had just finished declaring himself to be the living water and the light of the world, the high priest would draw his water from guess where? This very pool. Not knowing that the Sent One is standing right in their midst. Even as God's provision to bless his people came from the Gihon Spring into the pool of Siloam, Jesus the Messiah of Israel has come in fulfillment of all of that symbolism. The Sent One from God as he is described on multiple occasions throughout the New Testament. But they would not receive him. We can go all the way back into the Old Testament in Isaiah 8:6 and we can read in that context how King Ahaz and all of Judah "rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah," which is Siloam, the same term. This typified God's help which they rejected. They didn't want God's help and here, once again, they reject the very source of living water sent by God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet in the mystery of sovereign grace, isn't it fascinating how Jesus uses the same waters to bring health, to give this man sight. A living illustration of what could have happened to Israel in that day and what the Lord of God says will happen to a remnant of them in a day yet future.

So with Jesus taking all of the initiative, this blind beggar places his faith in him demonstrated by his unquestionable obedience and personal testimony later on in the chapter where he praises the Lord. So it's real simple. Jesus comes along, puts the stuff on his eyes and says, "I want to go to the pool called Sent and I want you to wash." That's what he did. He goes and he washes and I love this phrase, "he comes back seeing." Now folks, don't be misled here like some of the deceptive faith healers. This man's healing was not a result of his obedience, per se, or even the water. It was a result of the Sent One, the Son of God. And not just his eyes were able to work for the first time, it was more. You must understand this. I think that is fascinating if you think about it. It was more than suddenly he had perfect retinas and perfect corneas and an iris with an adjustable circular opening called pupils. It was more than all of that. These pupils that can expand and contract depending upon the amount of light entering the eye. You see, this miracle also included millions and millions of nerve cells that had never been formed because they were never needed. Nerve cells that could transmit electronic signals of the optical images to the visual cortex within the brain. Beyond that, you have to have myriad upon myriad of brain cells and neural transmitters throughout the body that had

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never been formed, suddenly they are there. They were never needed before. Not only that, he has the instant ability to process the flood of visual information that hits his body for the first time and be able to function perfectly accordingly. Oh, dear child of God, don't miss this: the staggering implications of symbolism in this miracle is a picture of the spiritual sight and the new birth, regeneration that makes us new creatures in Christ. "And he came back seeing." Now, I want to think about this as we begin to wrap it up this morning. He came back seeing though he had not yet seen Jesus. He still hadn't seen Jesus. Many years ago, I came back seeing. I still haven't seen Jesus. I'm going to someday, and so are you. Sound familiar? Oh, the miracle of sovereign grace.

Verse 8, "Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, 'Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?' Others were saying, 'This is he,' still others were saying, 'No, but he is like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the one. It's really me,'" is what he's saying. "So they were saying to him, 'How then were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.'" Obviously, they all wanted to know, "Well, where is this guy?" They probably had heard of him because his name was pretty much on everybody's lips. "They said to him, 'Where is He?' He said, 'I do not know.'" He still hadn't seen him. In verse 7, we see Jesus basically disappearing. He returns again in verse 35. He appears to him after he had been excommunicated from the temple because of his faith and testimony in Christ. Verse 35 and following, "Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?'" He didn't know who Jesus was. "Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.' And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshiped Him." You see, divinely initiated faith is obedient faith that not only recognizes and worships Christ but perseveres come what may. You see, when a man is truly born again, he will make much of Christ. He will disappear into the background.

I close with what Spurgeon said in light of all of this, "If you were saved by Jesus, your star must set but the star of Jesus must rise and increase in brilliance until it becomes no more a star but a sun, making your day and flooding your whole soul with light. If we are saved, Christ Jesus must and will have the glory of it. None on earth or in heaven can rival Jesus in the esteem of souls brought from darkness to light. He is everything to them." Oh dear Christian, may we all rejoice in the miracle of spiritual sight and be forever humbled, be forever lost in the wonder of it all and may this be the topic of your conversations this week: with your family, with your friends. Talk much about the mission and the mystery and the miracle of sovereign grace in your life. Dear friend, if you see a bit of your sin in the Savior, please know it's because God is giving you sight. God is giving you sight so you must respond obediently. I pray that you will say, "Lord, open my eyes today that I might see Jesus," and humble yourself before the Lord your

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God, confess your sin, repent, plead for his undeserved healing. Go to the pool of Siloam and come back seeing. Okay?

Let's pray together.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May we somehow grasp the glory of them all in such a way as to cause us to live differently even this week. We ask this for your sake, for your glory, and we give you thanks in Christ's name. Amen.*

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