

THE BLIND MAN; THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 9:1 - 10:21

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, the blind man who was cured, and the Pharisees

Jesus were of God or of the devil.

Key-location: Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Jesus was rejected by: the Pharisees after he healed the blind man (Jn 9:16), the Jews who said Jesus was dominated by a demon (Jn 10:19-20); those who wanted to stone Jesus (Jn 10:31-39).
- People were confused about who Jesus was (Jn 9:16-17; 10:19-21).
- Blind (Jn 9:1, 2, 6, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 32, 39, 40, 41; 10:21).
- Shepherd, Good Shepherd (Jn 10:2, 11, 12, 14, 16).
- Sheep: sheep as animals (Jn 10:1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13); sheep as followers of Jesus (Jn 10:7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 26, 27).

Key-attitudes:

- Confrontation and arguments.
- The confidence Jesus had in the words he spoke.
- The determination of the man who had been cured of blindness to say good things about Jesus.
- The hostility of the Jewish leaders in rejecting both Jesus and the man cured of blindness.
- The confusion of most of the people in not knowing if

Initial-situation:

The third year of Jesus' ministry is called the **Year of Passion**. During the first semester of that year, Jesus went on three retreats seeking to be alone with his disciples. During the second semester of the **Year of Passion**, Jesus made three trips to Jerusalem. The first trip was for the Feast of the Tabernacles where Jesus made the following claims: he is Living Water; he is the Light of the World; his followers would know the truth and the truth would set them free; his followers would never die; and God is his Father. Those claims resulted in confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. The Jews picked up stones to kill Jesus, but he slipped away from the Temple grounds.

Initial-problem:

Walking down the street of Jerusalem, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Teacher, whose sin caused him to be born blind?"

Final-situation:

The Jews were again divided. Many argued that Jesus was demon-possessed and raving mad. Others argued that God enabled him to perform miracles.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Healed a Man Blind from Birth Jn 9:1-12

Jesus remained in Jerusalem after the Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus was walking down the street and saw a man who had been blind since birth. His disciples asked, "Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind? Was it his own sin or was it his parents' sin?"

Jesus replied, "His blindness was not caused by his sins nor his parents' sins. This happened so that the work of God might be seen in his life. While I am in the world, I am the light for the world."

Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud with his spit, smeared mud on the man's eyes and commanded, "Go, wash off the mud in the Pool of Siloam." The blind man went, washed off the mud, and came back seeing.

His neighbors and those who had previously seen him begging claimed, "This is the same man who used to sit and beg!"

Others argued, "No, he only looks like him."

The man himself insisted, "I'm that man."

They demanded, "How did you receive your sight?"

He replied, "Someone named Jesus made some mud with his spit, and smeared it on my eyes. He told me to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash it off. I went; I washed the mud off; then I could see" (Jn 9:1-12).

Healing Investigated by the Pharisees Jn 9:13-41

The people took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. Jesus had made the mud and healed the man's blindness on a Sabbath day. The Pharisees grilled the man on how he had received his sight.

He replied, "Jesus put mud on my eyes, and I washed it off; now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

Others countered, "How can a sinner work such a miracle? So they were divided.

Finally, they turned back to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

The Jewish leaders still did not believe he had been born blind and had received his sight. They sent for the man's parents, who confirmed that the man was their son and that he had been born blind.

The Pharisees summoned a second time the man who had been blind. They told him, "Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner."

He replied, "I don't know if he is a sinner or not. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

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

He answered, "I already told you over and over and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Are you eager to become his disciples, too?"

The leaders insulted the man, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

The man answered, "Wow! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God listens only to people who love and obey him. No one has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. Jesus couldn't do anything if he didn't come from God."

The leaders replied, "You were born and brought up in sin; how dare you lecture us!" And they expelled him from the synagogue (Jn 9:13-34).

Jesus heard what happened. He found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

The man answered "Who is he, sir? Tell me who he is so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said, "You have already seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe in you," and he worshiped Jesus.

Jesus said, "I came into this world, so that the blind will see and those who make a pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

Some Pharisees overheard him and asked, "What? Are you calling us blind?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but since you claim you can see, you are accountable for every sin" (Jn 9:35-41).

The Good Shepherd and His Flock Jn 10:1-21

Jesus continued, "I tell you the truth, only thieves and robbers climb over the fence of a sheep pen instead of entering through the gate. The shepherd of the sheep enters through the gate. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When

he gets his sheep out, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from the stranger because they don't recognize a stranger's voice.

"I am the gate for the sheep. All those others are thieves and robbers, but the sheep don't listen to them. I am the gate; anyone who enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives up his life for his sheep. The hired worker is not like the shepherd. The hired worker doesn't own the sheep. When the hired worker sees the wolf coming, he runs off and abandons the sheep. Then the wolf attacks and scatters the flock. A hired worker runs away because the sheep mean nothing to him.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep; my sheep know me. In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I give up my life for the sheep. I have other sheep in addition to those in this sheep pen. I must bring them together also. They too will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd.

"The reason my Father loves me is that I give up my life, and I am free to take it up again. No one takes my life from me, but I give it up of my own free will. I have authority to give it up and authority to take it up again. This authority I received from my Father" (Jn 10:1-18).

After hearing Jesus' words, the Jews were again divided. Many said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"

Others argued, "These are not the words of a demon-possessed man. Can a demon give sight to the blind?" (Jn 10:19-21).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus heal the man born blind?
2. Why did the healing of the blind man result in open opposition between different people?
3. How did Jesus compare himself to a shepherd?
4. How is the relationship between sheep and their shepherd comparable to that between Jesus and his followers?
5. How can you discern if a religious leader is similar to those Jesus called hired workers, who don't care about the sheep, or if he is a shepherd who is willing to sacrifice for his flock?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. Some diseases are the results of sin; however, not all sickness is the result of sin. Sometimes good behavior is unrewarded and bad behavior is unpunished. Sometimes innocent people suffer. Jesus said sin did not cause the man to be born blind (Jn 9:3).
2. The person who follows Jesus may suffer persecution. The man who was healed of blindness testified for Jesus; he was cursed and evicted from the synagogue (Jn 9:28, 34).

3. There was a contrast between the religious leaders, who were false prophets, and Jesus. The false prophets expelled the believer in Jesus from their presence (Jn 9:34). However, Jesus accepted him, made him a part of his flock (Jn 10:16), and made him one of his sheep (Jn 10:3-4, 14).
4. As a shepherd, Jesus' work has many aspects:
 - 1st He is the "Good Shepherd" who gives his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11).
 - 2nd He is "The Gate" through which, if anyone enters, he will be protected (Jn 10:9).
 - 3rd He is the Shepherd who knows each sheep; he knows each one by name (Jn 10:3, 14-15).
 - 4th He is the Shepherd who leads, going ahead to show the road that the sheep should follow (Jn 10:4).
 - 5th He is the Shepherd who secures and protects his sheep. No one will snatch a sheep out of his hand (Jn 10:27-28).
 - 6th He is the "Great Shepherd of the Flock." He became the Great Shepherd because of his death. The Great Shepherd's goal is to equip each person for doing God's will (Heb 13:20-21).
- 7th He is the "Head Shepherd", who will return to distribute crowns of rewards to faithful shepherds who serve him (1 Pet 5:4).
5. There are three types of spiritual leaders:
 - The shepherd (Jn 10:10-11). He loves the sheep and is willing to give his life to protect them.
 - The hired hand (the mercenary) (Jn 10:12). The mercenary only works for money. He does good things for the sheep, taking them to water and food. He won't abuse them; however, he doesn't take risks to protect them. When a wolf comes, he won't risk his life by standing between the sheep and the wolf. Although the mercenary doesn't abuse the sheep, he allows the wolf or thief to attack them.
 - The wolf or thief (Jn 10:8, 12). The wolf or thief is a false prophet who will attack and abuse the sheep for his own advantage.
6. Jesus accepted the cross and resurrection as God's plan. No one could have killed Jesus without his consent. He declared he would lay down his life, only to take it up again (Jn 10:17-18).