

What is your one **MUST-SEE** sight at the top of your bucket-list, the sight that's going to change your life? A question like that sends us travelling across the world, imagining the most spectacular sights on earth, the Great Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, the Grand Canyon, Victoria Falls, Mount Everest.

Today we hear the story of a blind man who received his sight for the very first time. But as we observe him and the rest of the people in this story, it shows us there are two kinds of blindness and two kinds of sight. This man is in for the ride of his life as he takes a journey through all four of them **from blindness to sight**. At the end of his journey, we get to witness his **ONE MUST-SEE SIGHT**, but it's not one he sees with his newly-opened eyes.

Jesus comes upon this blind man as he is walking along with his disciples. The disciples must've seen him before because they are aware that he was born blind. But to them, this isn't a person who needs compassion, it's an opportunity to pass judgement from a distance. So they ask, "**Rabbi, who sinned this man or his parents, that he was born blind?**" (John 9:1). Surely, there is some guilt that has brought this upon the man!

It's so easy for us to think we see clearly like the disciples, despite massive blind spots in our understanding. We take some piece of truth, and exaggerate it all out of proportion. "Sin has consequences" and exaggerate until it becomes tit-for-tat, "Every sin has a specific punishment from God **in our life**. If someone is suffering, it means they're not living right! So when I blew out my knee playing basketball, it must have been because I had done something really bad the day before. If there's a hurricane, God is blowing off angry steam at us. If a disease breaks out, God must be punishing people for the way they live.

Those are just blind attempts to know what God is doing, based on the way our vengeful minds work, but that's not the way God operates. So Jesus teaches his disciples the truth, "**Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.**" (John 9:3)

Doesn't that turn our thinking upside down! God doesn't use bad things in our life to punish us. In fact, he poured that punishment out on the one who didn't deserve it. But he uses bad things as a chance to reveal his glory and carry out his work in our lives. In every seemingly bad thing that happens, we get to see God display his work in our lives. It's just so hard when we're in the middle of it, because we can't see behind the curtain and know what he is really doing.

So Jesus set the disciples up for what's about to happen and then he goes to work, "**As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me...While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**" (John 9:4,5). What a sight it was about to be as he went to work displaying the light of the glory of God. "**Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.**" (John 9:6).

I checked Web Md. Spit and mud are not on the list of medical remedies for blindness. But that's the point, this is not a medical cure, this is simply the power of Jesus working through some arbitrary command. "**Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam.' So the man went and washed, and he came home seeing.**" (John 9:7). A man who had never before seen anything in his life now gets to see for the very first time, and all because he met Jesus. **Step one on this journey from blindness to sight** is complete. Maybe you can imagine him bursting into song "*I can see clearly now the rain is gone.*"

How is the work of God met? With blind skepticism! The blind man can now see, but people around are all skeptical. This isn't the same man; it must be his long lost twin. The Pharisees are even more skeptical. When they hear the story, what is their first response to a grown man receiving sight for the first time ever? "What an incredible miracle! Praise God for his mercy to this man! Nope, because they've got bigger fish to fry—the man named Jesus. "**This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.**" (John 9:16).

What they really meant is, "This man does not keep *our* rules." The Pharisees had been coming after Jesus all along about his so called "doing the work of God." To them this "work of God" was an egregious infraction against their code of 39 categories of forbidden working that they had appended to

God's Sabbath law. They were like a basketball crowd chanting after every foul or travel, "You can't do that! You can't do that!" Except they were shouting at the Light of the world who was raining down miracles to reveal the glory of God. They claimed to see and know who does the work of God and when it should be done, and yet they were totally blind to Jesus doing the work of God right in front of their face! So the blind who think they can see are the most dangerous of all.

Finally, they do something that makes sense. They ask the man who was healed, **"What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."** (John 9:17) But as you might expect, they weren't really all that interested in the man's answer. **"He is a prophet... Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."** (17, 32,33). This is a pretty sensible conclusion, considering what he has just experienced. Yet, this throws them over the top! **"You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" and they threw him out.** (John 9:34)

Let's step back from the story for a second and do a vision screening. Here we have Jesus, the light of the world, in the world at this very moment displaying the work of God in a man's life. The man born blind can now see with his eyes for the first time. Things in his heart are still a bit hazy. He's starting to piece it all together, but he isn't out of the dark yet. He hasn't seen the truly life-changing MUST-SEE sight.

What's the report on the Pharisees? Things are only getting dimmer. They're eyes are fine but they are so blind they can't see the light of the world shining right in front of them, and yet they claim to have perfect vision. The fact is: light shines and it either helps us see or it blinds us like the afternoon sun beaming through our windshield. So in their case, as they try to shut their eyes tighter and tighter in blindness and rejection, the Light of the world sears the eyes of their hearts shut. The vision screening is in: spiritually blind, *BLINDED BY THE LIGHT*.

In their blindness, the Pharisees come to the same conclusion as the disciples did before. This man must have been "steeped in sin" at birth, and that is why he was born blind. Therefore, he has no right to go about lecturing them. Oddly enough, this is the first thing they have said with any shred of truth to it. This man was born "steeped in sin," the sin that infects us all at birth. But they were blind to the fact that were born just as steeped in sin, as the blind man and all of us are.

Whether we are born with eyes that can see or not, the vision screening of our hearts from the moment of our birth reads: BLIND. We are born without true fear of God or faith in God. Totally BLIND. There's no way for the spiritually blind mice that we are to somehow stumble upon the way to heaven. If left to our blindness, our guilt remains and we would perish in it forever.

But listen to what Jesus does. When he heard the blind man had been thrown out, **"He found him."** This was the work he had truly come to do, as he promised through the prophet Isaiah 700 years before, **"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them, and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them!"** (Isaiah 42:16).

That man's journey was incomplete. He could see with his eyes now, but he was still in darkness. He needed to see with his heart. So Jesus went to call him from spiritual blindness to sight.

"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

"Who is he, sir? Tell me so that I may believe in him," the man asked.

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

"Lord, I believe." The Lord's mercy had called this man from blindness to sight. At last he got to witness the one MUST-SEE SIGHT in all of life. He got to see the Son of Man, the Savior of the world, with the eyes of heart. He got to behold the true Light giving him light and life after a lifetime in darkness.

The reason Jesus was there on that day tracking down a blind man is the same reason he comes to us this day through his word. "I have come into this world, so that the blind will see!" (John 9:39) As we

gather here, in the place where his word comes and finds us, we bow our hearts before him. We confess the blind acts of our sinful nature in the days gone by, and he grants to us the MUST-SEE SIGHT of his servant speaking his own words, “I forgive you all your sins.” He grants to us his body and blood, as visible proof for us to see that he has paid for our sins. Jesus comes to us this very day to show us who he is, the Savior of the world, so that our hearts may see and believe in him!

I don’t think that blind man woke up that morning knowing he was in for the ride of his life, a journey from blindness to sight, and darkness to light. But at the end of it all, as the eyes of his heart were opened by the ONE MUST-SEE SIGHT, how did his journey that day end? **“He worshipped him.”**

That’s the believing heart’s natural response to the AMAZING GRACE of our God. That’s why we keep coming back here, week after week, mid-week, holy week, and ever after. Our hearts can never get enough of the MUST-SEE SIGHT of Jesus. His mercy has called us from blindness to sight and we burst into worship for his AMAZING GRACE. Amen.

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. Amen. (Amazing Grace, John Newton).