

# Gospel Reading for Sunday, March 22, 2020

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**Directions:** Read the Gospel passage. Then answer the questions.

## A Reading from the Gospel of John 9:1-41: The Man Born Blind

As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed, and came back able to see. His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am." So they said to him, "[So] how were your eyes opened?" He replied, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went there and washed and was able to see." And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know." They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see." So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath." [But] others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them. So they said

to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" His parents answered and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Messiah, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him." So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from." The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners,

but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.” They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out. When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him,

“You have seen him and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him. Then Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.” Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.”

1. What miracle did Jesus work? How did He do it?

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2. What question did Jesus ask about the blind man? How did Jesus answer the question?

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3. How did the blind man’s friends and family react to his healing? How did the Pharisees treat him?

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4. Despite the way he was treated by others, in the end, how did the blind man respond to Jesus?

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5. What did Jesus accuse the Pharisees of at the end of the Gospel story?

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# Persecution

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**Directions:** Read about Jesus' teaching about being persecuted for being Christian and then answer the reflection questions.

Jesus told us many times throughout the Gospels that being His follower would not be easy. Not only is it difficult to be like Jesus and to follow His teachings, but when we do so, others may not understand what we are doing or why we are doing it. They may ridicule us and even persecute us, just like how the blind man was treated in this week's Gospel. Jesus worked a miracle and gave sight to this man who was blind from birth. What a great gift! Imagine how the man's life was changed. And yet, the Pharisees and even the man's friends and family did not understand this change. They questioned him, accused him and Jesus of untruth and wickedness, and ridiculed and scorned the man.

Jesus taught us that the reward for living a Christian life will be greater than any earthly reward: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Matthew 5: 10-12).

Even though we might suffer in this life for being a Christian, our reward in the next life will be the Kingdom of Heaven itself. There is no greater victory!

1. What are three reasons that it is difficult to live as a Christian in the world today?

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2. What are two ways that the teachings of Jesus, if truly lived, could change the world for the better?

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3. Have you ever experienced ridicule or persecution for your beliefs? What happened? How did you feel? How did you respond? How does knowing that your reward will be in Heaven give you hope in the face of persecution?

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