

- Rev. Grant Mangold, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

ONCE WAS BLIND

Can you imagine wanting to be blind? A North Carolina woman suffering from a disorder pretended to be blind most of her life, finally convincing her psychologist to put drain cleaner in her eyes to fulfill her dream. Most people would consider that a nightmare. And maybe YOU don't experience the difficulties of being blind from birth -- but is there something else about your life you wish wasn't there?

In John 9 Jesus sees a man born blind. Asked about him, Jesus replies, "***It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.***" Then Jesus said, "***I am the Light of the World.***" And taking divine initiative, Jesus spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva and put it on the man's eyes, and told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. He came back seeing!

What a scene! The Lord of Creation, who spoke the cosmos into existence with "***Let there be light***" and created the first human being Adam from the soil, re-creates His creation by the finger of God in the earth. The Light of the World shines miraculous healing light -- and Jesus heals the man born blind.

The amazed people took him to the religious leaders, probably expecting them to praise God for the miracle. But these earth-bound self-righteous people were spiritually blind. They weren't impressed with the miracle. They were obsessed with criticizing the Miracle-Worker. They considered Jesus a sinner, because He healed on the Sabbath, and did not affirm their traditions. One of their 39 rules for the Sabbath was "no kneading of bread" so apparently they accused Jesus on their technicality.

The religious leaders interrogated the once-blind man about what happened. He presented a powerful and courageous declaration about Jesus. "***One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.***" However, his parents declined to testify, because the rulers had already announced that anyone who believed in Jesus would be put out of the synagogue.

What would you do? Do you fear other people more than God? Before Jesus healed the man, He reminded His disciples of their mission -- to speak the words and do the works of God Himself. If you are a believer in Jesus, that's your mission too. Don't be afraid to speak out and tell the Good News!

Remember, your testimony is not the Gospel, but is a doorway to sharing the Good News about Jesus. That door may open a crack, or completely, or get slammed in your face. That's what happened to the once-blind man. The religious leaders rejected his personal testimony, and kicked him out of the church - for believing in Jesus. Likewise you should not be deterred by rejection or persecution, because you have been commissioned as an ambassador for Jesus -- simply to speak the truth about Him.

The story doesn't end there. The Great Physician wasn't quite finished with His healing of the blind man. Jesus found Him, and when the man realized it was Jesus who had healed him, he knelt in worship, and declared, "***Lord, I believe.***" Not only had his physical blindness been healed, but most important, his spiritual blindness was dispelled by the Light of Life. He believed in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

What about you? What if you reject God's words and work in your life? What if you are not healed physically? Do you trust in Jesus Himself, or only in what you want Him to do for you? You, like those unbelieving religious leaders, could still be spiritually blind. Such spiritual blindness can prevent you from receiving the light of the Light of the World in your life. Instead, submit to Him, trust Him, obey Him -- and live out His spiritual light and life through you, no matter your circumstances!

The eternal healing of your spiritual sight is vastly more important than any earthly physical healing. John chapter 20 records how Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. Thomas had not yet experienced seeing Him. And he did not believe, until Jesus appeared to him. But Jesus said, "***blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.***" John says the Bible is written so that YOU may believe in Jesus, whether or not you have been healed or had some religious experience.

If your testimony is "***once I was blind, but now I see***" you know that the Miracle-Worker Himself is the real miracle. Your trust is in HIM who works all things after the counsel of His own perfect will for you. Trust & obey Him today -- and share the good news about Jesus with everyone around you!