

**“Faith To See Clearly”**  
**4<sup>th</sup> In a Series on Faith**  
**John 9:1-41**  
**March 2, 2008**  
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At the risk of sounding cliché “here we go again. John rambles on here quite a bit about this story of healing of a blind man. But it is more than just another healing story about Jesus, it is a revelation. This passage Jesus reveals who he is, not just by what he says but by what he does. Those who believe have the faith to clearly see what he is all about. Those who don’t are blinded themselves by what they cannot or refuse to see.

It seems simple enough as Jesus walks by the blind man. The Disciples ask an innocent question, as to why this man was blind. Was it his sin or the sins of his parents? This was the common belief, and one with which there was a theological struggle. Why do bad things happen. The Pharisee’s belief was that bad things happened because they were bad people. They sinned and there were consequences. An alternative movement was of course that no, bad things happen. The book of Job was written precisely to address this point. But the assumption of the Disciples was the former situation. They had faith enough in Jesus to believe that he could tell them which one it was. Jesus however, shocks them all by saying neither, his blindness is because God will be glorified by what Jesus is about to do. And he proceeds to smear the mud and spit and tells him to wash in the pool and his sight is restored.

Miracle over. Well not so fast. There is the lesson after the miracle. It comes not because of the Disciples asking what just happened here, but the priests and elders this time. They could not see because they did not have the same faith. First they couldn’t believe it was the same man who had been healed. They have to ask his parents who say he is a big boy ask him. So they do again and then they say well this cannot be the messiah because he healed on the

Sabbath and that is work and since it is a sin to work on the Sabbath he cannot be the messiah. We of course are not sinners because we do not work on the Sabbath therefore this healing cannot be a good thing.

What they had is something that we all have, selective seeing. Daryl Dash comments that every second, our brain is bombarded with sensory data from all five senses. You just sat down, but already your brain has probably stopped consciously focusing on the feel of the seat. You're probably not thinking about the temperature of the room, although you probably did at one point this morning. There are all kinds of sounds that you're not focusing on right now - the faint hum of lights, somebody shifting beside you. Our brains would go crazy if they had to process every piece of data that our bodies sensed.

We think we're seeing everything, but we're all being selective all the time. Today, you've probably noticed who's not here, who's sitting in a different spot, who's sitting with whom. You may have wondered what it means that so-and-so is sitting with that person. We just leased a new van in the last month and it's the same with them. You get interested in a car, and all of a sudden you notice them everywhere. They were there before, but you never noticed them.

The part of the brain that filters all this information is called the Reticular Activating System. It's continually at work, even though we never think about it. Today's story is about our spiritual Reticular Activating System. The goal for all of us, if we're followers of Jesus Christ, is to see the same things that he sees. Most of all Jesus wants us to notice him.

Finally the man says I don't know weather he is a sinner or not, but I do know that I was blind but now I can see. And for his faith he can see. Others, the priests the Pharisees, Jesus warns, cannot see because they think they believe.

Recently, I ran across an email list going around that carried this intriguing title: "Great Truths About Life That Little Children Have Learned." Let me share a few of these "great truths" with you.

- (1) " No matter how hard you try you cannot baptize a cat."
- (2) "When your mom is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair."
- (3) "Never ask your 3-year-old brother to hold a tomato? or an egg."
- (4) "You can't trust dogs to watch your food for you."
- (5) "Don't sneeze when somebody is cutting your hair."
- (6) "School lunches stick to the wall."
- (7) "You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk."
- (8) "Never wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts? no matter how cute the underwear is."

Now, it is virtually certain that the children learned these "great truths" and came to these bold new insights after some dramatic eye-opening experience in their own personal lives. Can't you just see in your mind's eye,? some children trying to baptize a cat? and leaning full well from that experience that this is just not a good thing to do. The point is clear: A dramatic personal eye-opening experience can give us new insight, new perception, new vision.

On a much deeper level and on a much more positive level, that's precisely what we discover in this amazing story in John 9.<sup>1</sup>

We however must be willing to see it. When we come to this table today, where we are offered and receive forgiveness, where we forgive one another and seek to live a new life, Christ is there whether we see him or not. Will we see him as we come? Will we when we are done? Let us not be blinded by our own perceptions about God but let us let God speak to us in new ways that continue to transform our lives. Let us have new insight that enables us to break down the barriers of our own faith and those of others. Let us be more generous, let us be

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<sup>1</sup> James W. Moore, Encounters with Christ, [www.eSermons.com](http://www.eSermons.com)

more hope filled, for Christ came so that God may be glorified through what he has done for us. Let us have that faith to see clearly the body of Christ.