



Accusing Words, Lonely Hearts

by Dale Fincher

www.soulation.org

Jesus is a hunter. And He hunts down those who need him.

The ninth chapter of John gives us a detailed episode with Jesus. This episode is sandwiched between two scenes: 1) Jesus' declaration to the Pharisees that he is the I AM who existed before Abraham, and 2) Jesus' exclusive claim to be the only door to the sheepfold of heaven. John is giving us incidences to show us who Jesus is and his claims to be absolute, not just in his person but in his compassion too.

The episode with Jesus in John 9 is a delicate one. There is a blind man begging along the side of the road. The disciples ask him who caused the blindness: the beggar's sins or his parents'? Jesus shattered the current paradigm by saying that this blindness was not a punishment but an opportunity to put God's work on display. Jesus then spit on the ground, smeared the mud on the man's eyes, and told him to

go wash it off at the nearby Pool of Siloam, the only permanent water source in the city at the time.

The blind man, of course, couldn't see Jesus. And it wasn't until he washed his eyes, did he return seeing. Then the confrontations began.

The neighbors were intrigued. "Isn't that the blind beggar?" they asked. Some thought it only resembled him. Others wanted to know what happened. Suspicion hovered over the audience. And they took the healed man to the religious authorities.

Imagine being the blind guy who received his sight. For the first time, he sees the faces of the people whose voices he knew so well. Did they look the way they sounded? Imagine the familiar footpath he would normally take to the Pool, only to return, not only feeling, but also seeing his way along. The vibrant colors of people's dress. The multiple textures of the sand, earth, and mortar. He finally saw the eyes of those who probably threw disgusting remarks toward him during his years of begging.

Along with all the wonder, he is brought before the religious folks, the Pharisees, on account of his newly found sight. The Pharisees begin to drill him with

theological questions, apparently fearful that the now-seeing fellow might hold Jesus in higher authority. "What do you say about him?" they ask. Pulling from his own theological understanding, he says, "He is a prophet."

The voices start to rise, the parents are called to testify, and threats are made. The parents practically disown their son because of the threats of the Pharisees. They back out of the scene and require their son to speak for himself. The story is told. The man was born blind. Now he sees. That's all that is said. That's all that happened. But the Pharisees know something larger is at stake. The seeing man makes a remark at the endless, repetition of questions. This remark is a straightforward theological treatise about the origin and process of miracles: "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

The Pharisees, exasperated by the theological lesson, throw the man out.

Imagine again, putting on the shoes of this man. At the start of the day, you were a beggar, blind, dependent on many. Suddenly, your sight is restored, your neighbors are suspicious of you, your family disowns you, and you are insulted and rejected from the religious community on which your whole way of life centered. Having felt rejection in my own life, I have an inkling of what this man may have felt. Perhaps he wished he never received his sight.

John says Jesus heard about the seeing man being thrown out. The text does not say where Jesus was. Perhaps he was resting with his disciples or giving lessons about sheep. Whatever the case, when Jesus catches wind of the man being thrown out, he hunts after him.

Here's the scene: Jesus approaches the downcast man. The man does not know what Jesus looks like. And being overwhelmed with so many voices that day, he may have forgotten the voice of his healer. "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Jesus says. The man is eager to find out who he is so that he can believe. Then Jesus turns his phrase on a double-meaning of the word "see," a word that was probably a repeated prayer in the blind man's life. "You have

now seen him," he says, "And he is speaking to you."
The man believed, and worshipped.

This is an episode of the profound sensitivity of Jesus. He hunted him out and restored the lonely one. He helped him see that, though he's been isolated that day from his social community, there is another community of a vaster importance. Jesus has come. God has touched down. And it wouldn't be much later till that man, once blind but then seeing, would discover the Holy Spirit and a communion of saints such as the world had never known.

If you feel much like that man of this story, allow Christ to draw near to you. And find your satisfaction, security, and well being in worshipping him.

© 2005 Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. All Rights Reserved. Permission granted by RZIM where originally published. www.rzim.org