



Portrait of Christ

Sketches in the Gospel of John

Inductive Discovery Lesson 10

John 9:1-41

Jesus: Sight for the Blind

He sits there with bony legs tucked and ready, listening. He waits for the signal to pull himself up to kneel and stretch out his hand. What does hope sound like? For a man whose eyes are blind as the stone wall he leans against, hope is the soft thud of sandals pausing in the dust or the sigh of a stranger pulling coins from his pocket. Even the elaborate rustle of a Pharisee's robes might signal hope if enough people were passing by.

He couldn't see his shabby cloak or the milky emptiness of his stare, but he knew what a pathetic sight he was. He heard it in the transparent questions of curious children. He tasted it in his throat a hundred times a day, pleading for help. Darkness confined him and seeing was something he listened to other people do. Sometimes they stared and wondered aloud (as if a blind man cannot *hear*) how to explain his sorry existence. Lord knows he'd asked the same question, but *why?* is a bottomless search for meaning when you live in the dark. He was just trying to get along, and begging was all he could do.

He heard the distant roar of shouts rising inside the temple grounds, and cocked his head to listen. But the commotion died down and familiar street noise pulled him back into his monotony. Then their voices came into range, men in a rush by the sounds of it. He didn't expect them to stop—but they did. Sensing their gaze fell on him, he leaned forward. “*Rabbi,*” one of them asked, “*Why was this man born blind?*” He turned his face away, instinctively protecting himself from their examination. They were looking at a problem, not a person. But the Rabbi's answer was like nothing he had ever heard. “*This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.*” What does hope sound like? For this man, it was the unlikely sound of a gentle stranger bending near him to spit in the dirt. He didn't struggle against the hands that rubbed warm mud across his eyes. “*Now go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam.*”

Working Text for John 9:1-41
New Living Translation (NLT)

1 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. **2** “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” **3** “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. **4** We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. **5** But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.” **6** Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man’s eyes. **7** He told him, “Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “sent”). So the man went and washed and came back seeing! **8** His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” **9** Some said he was, and others said, “No, he just looks like him!” But the beggar kept saying, “Yes, I am the same one!” **10** They asked, “Who healed you? What happened?” **11** He told them, “The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.’ So I went and washed, and now I can see!” **12** “Where is he now?” they asked. “I don’t know,” he replied.

13 Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, **14** because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. **15** The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, “He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!” **16** Some of the Pharisees said, “This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath.” Others said, “But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?” So there was a deep division of opinion among them. **17** Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed you?” The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.”

18 The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. **19** They asked them, “Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?” **20** His parents replied, “We know this is our son and that he was

born blind, **21** but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." **22** His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. **23** That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner." **25** "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

26 "But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?" **27** "Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" **28** Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! **29** We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from." **30** "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? **31** We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. **32** Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. **33** If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it." **34** "You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.

35 When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" **36** The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him." **37** "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!" **38** "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshipped Jesus. **39** Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind." **40** Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?" **41** "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."



INTERPRETATION — *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: “Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLICATION — *How does it apply to me?*

We don’t study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

John 9:1-12

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____?

John 9:13-34

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____?

John 9:35-41

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a simple title to the chapter to help you remember what it says.



Take A Closer Look

And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world;
that those who do not see may see,
and those who see may become blind.”

John 9:39 ESV

Memorize God’s Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize from and re-write the verse here.

Meditate on God’s Word

While you memorize this verse, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea—the longer it steeps, the richer the flavor. So give yourself permission to slowly savor God’s Word! Use the questions below (like a tea bag) to keep dipping into this verse.

(Challenge alert: You won’t always see an obvious answer directly from the verse.)

Look up. What does this verse show you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, or His promises.)

Look around. What does this teach you about life or people in general?

Look within. What does this teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

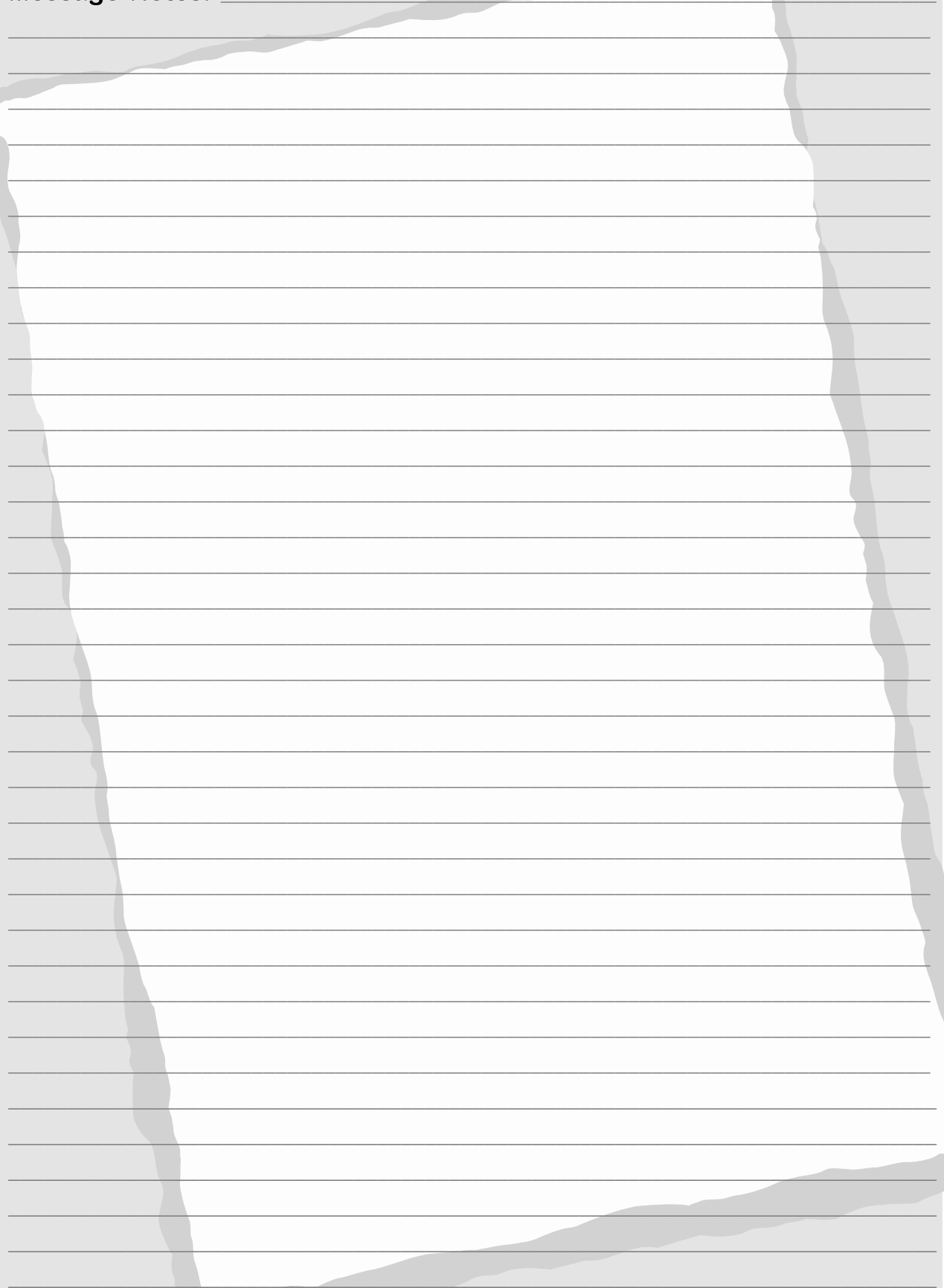
For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter?
How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word *darkness* on the walls of his cell.

C.S. Lewis

Message Notes:



A large rectangular area with a light gray background and horizontal lines, resembling a notepad or message template. The area is framed by a thick, irregular, dark gray border that looks like torn paper.

