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Sermon Summary

Gentle Light Bearers

John 9

26th March 2017

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The drama is coming to a climax. John has been showing us step by step who Jesus is and what He came to do. In Chapter 8 Jesus says He is the light of the world. In chapter 10 John will show us that Jesus is the Good shepherd who cares for His sheep. In the chapter we have just read John shows us why a new shepherd is needed: Those who should be caring for the flock are blind to their own faults and failings and blind to the effect they are having on the sheep they are supposed to care for.

The positioning of this story is therefore quite deliberate. John is clearly wanting to warn the Jewish leaders of the great danger they are in. Teachers have awesome power in their hands for good or evil. Parents have the same massive responsibility in teaching their children. And we all suffer from the same blindness of the people with whom Jesus is talking. What is being said here to the Jewish leaders applies directly to us.

Let's look at the story again. Verses 1-12 simply tell the story of a man blind from birth, healed by Jesus to the surprise and consternation of those who know him.

Verses 13-17 show the first investigation by the Jewish authorities. It ends with the man who was healed expressing surprise at their inability to decide if Jesus is a goody or a baddy! "How can he be sinner? He healed me and we all know that God doesn't listen to sinners." When the man is asked for his opinion he says that Jesus is in his view a prophet.

Verses 18—23 show stage two of the investigation. Maybe the man was not blind to start with. His parents are scared of being put out of the Synagogue so after say that this is their son and that he was born blind and they had no idea how he could now see directed the Jewish leaders to ask their son who is old enough to speak for himself.

Verses 24-34 show them doing just that and the dialogue deteriorates into mudslinging. The man sticks with his story because it is the truth. The Jewish leaders stick with their story that it can't be true because Jesus broke their Sabbath laws. The man shows them the utter foolishness of their position and they rely by

attacking him and driving him out.

It is a sad sad tale is it not? How can they be so blind to what is so obvious. Ear brothers and sisters this kind of blindness can assail us all. I heard a story once of a group discussing worker Priests. What profession would be fitting for an ordained member of the church? Medicine, Law, Politics, were all mentioned and then someone said what about Carpentry. Oh no they all said that is too lowly a job for the leaders of the church. Really!

Finding our own blind spots is no easy task. Only with someone we really trust can we enter into that voyage of discovery. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend", says Proverbs 27:6. Absolutely true. But they are wounds nonetheless and they hurt.

Jesus teaching is a two edged sword. "I have come into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." How can we learn to see? The following diagram may help.

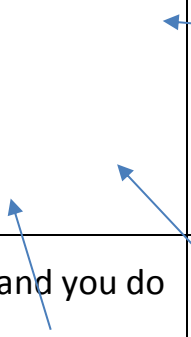
What you and I know about me	What you see about me but I don't.
What I know about me and you do not know	What only God knows about me.

If I can trust you enough to tell me what you see and I don't see: I will grow in self-knowledge.

If I will own to myself what I prefer to keep hidden, I will grow.

If I listen to what God the Holy Spirit says to me through His written word I will grow.

What you and I know about me	What you see about me but I don't.
What I know about me and you do not know	What only God knows about me.



A word of warning; the Bible tells us to treat others with gentleness. Paul tells us in Titus 3:3, to be gentle and to show every courtesy to everyone. In 2 Timothy 2:24 he says that the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. James says that the wise are gentle. (James 3:17) and one of the fruit of the Spirit is Gentleness. (Galatians 5:23).

Truth is very dangerous in the hands of the blind. Jesus could no longer trust the Jewish leaders of His day with the teaching of His people. He came as the GOOD shepherd to show His people the way. Like Him we are called to the same task. Please be especially gentle with those closest to you only then you may be granted the privilege of helping them grow. So rather than being blind we will begin to walk in greater and greater light.