

The disappearance of the pulpit is the hallmark of the age. Have you noticed the sermons of the age? They're small. Not short. But small. Preaching needs to be big. Not long. But big.

We're going to stand before our maker and find out how large our sermons were. We proclaim an infinite gospel. In Is. 6 the train of God *filled* the temple — God is big and our ministry and preaching should reflect that bigness. There better not be little, small sermons. They simply will not do.

This passage will simply not allow for a small sermon...

Jesus saw a man (v. 1); the disciples did not see a man, they saw a question. Their question is not a stupid question. It is natural for those who are theologically inquisitive. There must be something that explains this. There is no causative explanation that makes sense to the disciples about the blindness, so they assume sin. They assume it must be the parents.

There might be some other explanation, so they ask the question. What is the answer to this? It's not sin! Sin is not the reason. Sin is not a sufficient answer, particularly because the question was *who* — *who* sinned? They were asking the question presumptuously.

We are inadequate to determine or evaluate why suffering occurs. We are far too presumptuous in assigning blame in the question about suffering.

Jesus doesn't see a question, He sees a man and He heals him. And in the process He corrects the disciples with a comment — the question isn't *who*. It wasn't sin — it was for the glory of God to be revealed.

Jesus identifies Himself in v. 5 as the light of the world. He had revealed Himself as the Light of the world to the Pharisees (8:12ff) — He will do what only He can do, bring light into darkness. He heals the man so that the works of God can be revealed. He is the Light of the world.

The act of spittle being added to the dust of the ground making clay is powerfully symbolic about the act of creation in Gen. 1-2. Jesus commanded him to wash and he did what he was told. And he came back seeing. How are you going to preach a little sermon about that?

This man's blindness is not an occasion to ask a theological question, but an occasion for the Light of the world to declare the glory of God.

And that's not the end of the text. It gets a lot more interesting.

After the man sees, now the neighbors see that there is a question. Those who previously seen only a beggar now recognize the act of healing that had happened in his life. They had felt superior to him — but watch what doesn't happen. *No one* celebrates the fact that the blind man

now sees! And he notices that fact.

He washed and came back seeing (v. 7) — this was a problem for the Pharisees!

They tried to say it wasn't him, but who knew who he was? The blind man who ***kept saying...*** So they asked another question — ***how*** was he healed?

He told me what to do and I did it — and I came seeing. Notice in this chapter how many people don't know anything!

Now there is another theological problem — is he clean or unclean? Someone would have to adjudicate the nature of the miracle. To whom will they take him to get the answers. Take him to the Pharisees. And they are ready for this. “This is complicated” — the healing happened on the Sabbath! If there is anything the Pharisees can't stand, it's a miracle on the Sabbath! They're not happy!

So the Pharisees were asking again — he will be interviewed repeatedly in this chapter... Jesus, they assumed, could not be of God because He didn't keep the Sabbath. A division (v. 16) began to arise among the Pharisees (which is a good thing).

The Pharisees are now the ones that can't see — they ask the blind man (even though he can now see), “what do you say about Him?” (He went to the experts and they asked him about Jesus!) No one had ever had a significant interaction with this man, and now he has become the expert. They ask, and he has a category — He is a Prophet. They have no such category. This man doesn't know everything, but he does recognize the truth that Jesus is prophet.

The Jews did not believe — so they went to the parents. They didn't get the answer they wanted, so they went to someone else. Ma and Pa. They had to be terrified because they already were afraid of being cast out of the Tabernacle. They must have had many of the same questions from the very time of his birth. Blindness was a curse...

The parents refused to answer, so the man was brought back again for a second interview. Beware of people who use “glory” language — pay attention to what follows those kinds of statements. Some will use glory language to subvert the gospel.

This story is not what we think it is about — it's not about a man who was blind and can now see; it is about the glory of God revealed in the life of a man who was blind and can now see.

This man is not only a theologian, but he is incredibly perceptive and brave — ***you do not want to become His disciples too, do you?*** The man had been blind, but he knew Jesus had disciples and that the Pharisees were not His disciples.

The blind man is amazed (v. 30) that the world is not made up of sighted people but blind people. He has been surrounded by blind people his entire life. Notice what he knows —

- ✓ we know that God does not hear sinners
- ✓ if this man were not from God He could do nothing — “you don't know who He is, but

He opened my eyes.”

The Pharisees have not learned anything — *you were born in sins...* They did the only thing they knew to do when they couldn't resolve their problem — they put him out of the temple.

Jesus asks a final question — and don't miss what happens. This man will believe anything that Jesus tells him. He not only sees and believes, but he worships.

And then Jesus sets the stage — *for judgment I came into the world*. The judgment rendered here is cataclysmic.

Jesus tells the Pharisees that their problem is not the blindness of this man, but another kind of blindness with a completely different kind of end. It is a blindness that is because they will not see — they are blind not because they cannot see, but because they will not.

Is. 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:6-7 — the light of the world is light and brings light.

What will you do with this passage? Bring a little sermon?

The hinge of it all is in verse 3 — “*it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” There is a turn-the-world-upside-down theology there. That blows theological fuses all over the place! Many explain it away, dismiss it and ignore it.

If the statement of Jesus in verse 3 is true, then it's not just true about this man, it is true about everyman and about every atom that exists in the cosmos. Why does anything exist? So that it might declare the glory of God. This is not a little moralistic sermon, there is an entire universe of meaning that turns the entire world that we understand upside down.

The gospel destroys all our categories and defies conventional wisdom. It refutes everything we believe about who are blind and who see... This man was not the blind among the seeing; this man was blind among the blind.

God is sovereign here and He is sovereign in every circumstance and situation. The question is whether you will trust Him. Do you think this man will ask Jesus why he was born blind? No. What will the pot say to the Maker?

Do we believe that every person is placed where he is by the work of the sovereignty of God? In every single human being, the glory of God at the end of the age will be revealed, either for salvation or damnation. Do we really believe this?

There are no little texts, and there must be no little sermons. Feel the full weight of the audacity of this statement. The entire cosmos is nothing but the theatre of God for the demonstration of the unfolding of His salvation.