

## “Brought Into Focus”

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John 9:35-41

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Read the Scripture by clicking [here](#).

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We begin this story a few weeks ago, with a healing. This man had been blind from birth. Jesus gave him sight. Jesus told us something very important. Confronted with suffering, we can get knotted up finding an explanation. It is better to pay attention to what God is doing. Keep your eyes open, and see God at work!

But people see differently. Just look at the story. After the healing, they tried to figure out what had happened. Some in the Pharisee group saw Jesus acting out of line to how they were certain a godly person should act. They wanted to be faithful to God. So they rejected Jesus. “*He is dangerous,*” they concluded. That’s what they saw. Were they seeing well?

Compare them with the man whom Jesus healed. After Jesus opened his eyes, the rest of the story shows him seeing more and more about Jesus. At first, all he knew was Jesus’ name and that Jesus healed him. Then, he saw more: Jesus is a prophet, who acts and speaks for God. Then, he saw more: Jesus is from God. Then, he saw more: Jesus is the “Human One” (or “Son of Man”) the ruler who brings God’s kingdom of salvation, healing and justice into the world.<sup>1</sup> Then, he sees: Jesus is the Lord. And he worships him. That’s what he sees. Is he seeing well?

We have these two stories unfolding in this same story. We have someone seeing Jesus one way. We have others seeing Jesus the opposite way. One way sees God at work. The other sees Jesus working against God.

Whose sight is in focus?

### II

How do our eyes focus?<sup>2</sup>

We look at something, and what we see is the light coming from it. The light hits our eye’s surface (the cornea). It continues through a hole (the pupil). Then it hits the lens. The lens bends the light. That’s crucial. It ensures the light lands on the back of the eye (the retina) the right way. The retina converts the light into information for our brain.

We can focus up close. We can focus far away. How? As light comes in from different distances, the lens needs to bend it differently so it still hits the retina properly. If it does,

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<sup>1</sup> For “Son of Man,” see Daniel 7.

<sup>2</sup> For this information about how the eye focuses, see

<http://www.woodhamseye.com/blog/how-does-the-eye-focus>, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyopia>.

then the image is clear. It's in focus. If the light isn't bent correctly, then what we see is blurry. So there are tiny muscles that bend the lens, changing its shape, so it bends the light the right amount. We can focus on something six centimetres away. Then, in a third a second, without us thinking about it or even realizing it, those amazing muscles adjust the lens so we can focus on something across the room. When it does not work right — like when our lenses stiffen with we age — we need glasses.

There is one thing we cannot do. We cannot focus on two things at once. Hold your finger away from you face, and focus on the nail. What happens to everything else? Can you still see other things? Sure. But they are blurry. As long as we focus on the nail, we cannot focus on anything else.

This rule of focus applies to physical sight, with our eyes. But it does not apply to our spiritual sight.

### III

We are using “sight” as a metaphor here. Our eyes let us see what's happening in our physical world around us. Likewise, God has made us with spiritual-sight, so we can experience God.

Remember in Jesus' story, we have a stand-off. The man who had been blind has come to see Jesus one way. His opponents are seeing Jesus very differently. Sometimes, different ways of seeing are good. Other times, though, they can't both be right. Imagine we are driving together. We come to an intersection. I see the light is green. You see it is red. One of us is right, and knowing which has consequences.

Remember the rule of focus. We can only focus on one thing at a time. When we focus on one thing, everything else is blurry. But listen to how it is with our spiritual-sight. When we focus on Jesus, we see him clearly. We know him, we trust him, and we see the presence of God. And, when we focus on Jesus, everything else is not blurry. It's more clear. With physical sight, only one thing can be in focus at a time. With our spirit-sight, when Jesus is in focus, other things come into focus too.

I see God more clearly, because I'm focussing on Jesus who is God with us. I see myself more clearly, because I'm focussing on Jesus who sees me clearly. I see our world more clearly, because I'm focussing on Jesus who is redeeming the world. I see what is important more clearly, because I'm focussing on Jesus and what he values. I see how to act with love more clearly, because I'm focussing on Jesus whose love is perfect.

But when I am not focussed on Jesus, everything else is out of focus too: myself, our world, what's important, my desires, my loves, God.

#### IV

Our spirits see, because Jesus is God's Light, shining into our darkness.

Encountered by Jesus the Light, this man who had never seen before, started seeing. He began seeing with his eyes, yes. With his spirit too. Because he focussed on Jesus.

But when Jesus the Light encountered others, folks who were certain they could already see everything perfectly fine, they failed to see.

He was the same Light, coming to both. He was the same Jesus, encountering both. For some of us, encountering Jesus reveals, bringing into focus things we could never imagine. For others among us, encountering Jesus conceals, leaving everything else blurry and blind too.

What makes the difference?

It seems that those who are most sure, most confident, most certain that they could see, are the ones who can't see Jesus.

Those who know that their sight is a mess, those who know their spiritual-sight is blind, who know the healing of God's Light is their only hope . . . they are the ones who can be healed, who can have their eyes opened, who can behold the wonder of God at work.

Are you someone who sees? Or, someone who needs to see?

Jesus found the man, and healed him. Jesus finds you too.

This is the good news of Jesus the Messiah. Amen.