

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE 142

Lesson 16: [“I Was Blind, Now I See”](#)

Class Member Reading: John 9-10

⁹ This is a very well told story. Enjoyable read. Note especially the transformation of the blind man. Not only does he go through the most obvious transformation of blind to seeing, but he also becomes increasingly confident and faithful. He becomes more of his own person, acting for himself. As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. (It was common in the ancient world, as well as sometimes even today, to assume that bad things happen because we sin. Yes, there are natural consequences to bad choices, but above all, we live in a world that requires us to care for and save each other, so that hopefully God’s works will be manifest) ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, **I am the light of the world.**” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, (I love how earthy and hands on Jesus’ healings were. Touch and embracing the messy reality of humanity is important) ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and **came back able to see.**

⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the

Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. (Doesn't at all fit the timing of Jesus' life, but does line up with the situation decades later, in the 80s/90s and later) ²³Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵He answered, "**I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.**" Great answer. By their fruits... ²⁶They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. **Johannine ironic reversals: the teachers are being taught, misdirected discipleship**

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶He answered, "And who is he, sir? **Tell me, so that I may believe in him.**" Touching faith. ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸He said, "**Lord, I believe.**" And he worshiped him. Important example—Jesus first helped the man with what he most needed, and THEN told him who he was. We can apply this to own lives.

³⁹Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment **so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.**" Point to ponder. I think this is about humility—if we are sure about what we know, we are "blind" to new information and change. But if we are humble and open and aware of our limitations, we can learn and change. ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains. "Jesus employs the word 'blind' in two ways: in ability to see, and unwillingness to understand. The Pharisees who do not want to understand are immersed in a deeper moral and spiritual blindness than those who are physically blind from birth" (Oxford Bible Commentary, 979). In what ways are we "unwilling to understand"?

10"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. Jesus is speaking of the commitment we feel to care for what is our own, what is most beloved to us, in contrast to those simply seeking to take advantage of resources for their own benefit. The one who enters the sheepfold is the owner of the sheep; the fold is likely a fenced in area next to the house. ²The one who **enters by the gate** is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his **own sheep** by name and leads

them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.** I think this is one of my favorite descriptions of the purpose of life and the gospel. That we might truly live, live in an abundant, overflowing way. And what should overflow? That is a good question for all of us to reflect on. My personal answers are: love, growth, joy, freedom, and peace. (Read the OBC section on 10:7-10) ¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.” Jesus emphasizes the “deep solidarity” between himself and the sheep, as well as “reciprocal knowledge” and “reciprocal abiding in love” (OBC)

¹⁹Again the Jews were divided because of these words. ²⁰Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?” ²¹Others were saying, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

²²At that time the festival of the Dedication (**Hanukkah**) took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” ²⁵Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. **The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me (allowing our actions to speak for us);** ²⁶but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰**The Father and I are one.**” (This idea appears only in John) ³¹The Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³²Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?” ³³The Jews answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’? Psalm 82:6. In the original context it is likely referring to members of the divine council, not humans. ³⁵If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’ —and the scripture cannot be annulled— ³⁶can you say that the one whom the Father has

sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? ³⁷If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. ³⁸But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, **believe the works**, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”

³⁹Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands. ⁴⁰He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there. ⁴¹Many came to him, and they were saying, “John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” ⁴²And many believed in him there.

Additional Reading:

Scripture Chain: [Psalm 23:1–6](#); [Isaiah 40:11](#); [Ezekiel 34:11–12](#); [John 10:11](#); [Mosiah 26:21](#); [Alma 5:60](#)

[Psalm 23:1–6](#)

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

[Isaiah 40:11](#)

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.
Touching intimacy.

[Ezekiel 34:11–12](#)

11 ¶For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and **seek them out**.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will **deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day**.

[John 10:11](#) (I had to add in 10, one of my favorite verses ever)

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd **giveth his life** for the sheep. Greek notes: “give” is not the normal didomi, like giving a gift, but tithemi, which means “to put or place”, so lay down/give up. The extreme of dying for someone else/our duty also extends to the ability to put the needs of others ahead of our own, though that also needs to be balanced.

[Mosiah 26:21](#)

21 And he that will **hear my voice** shall be my sheep; and **him shall ye receive into the church, and him will I also receive**.

[Alma 5:60](#)

60 And now I say unto you that the good shepherd doth **call after you**; and if you will **hearken unto his voice** he will bring you into his fold, and ye are his sheep; and he commandeth you that ye suffer no ravenous wolf to enter among you, that ye may not be destroyed.