

# Healed



John 9:1-41

Year A Lent 4

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## Parts by scene

■ = large part   ▲ = medium sized part   ● = small part

		1	2	3
▲	<b>Matthew</b> - a former tax collector (i.e. a agent of the Roman occupation of his own people) who in his repentance from that past life is the most religiously fervent of the disciples	▲		
●	<b>John</b> - the gentlest and most caring of the disciples	●		●
▲	<b>Joanna</b> - a wealthy woman with a perceptive and agile intellect who abandons her life as the co-manager of King Herod's household to follow Jesus	▲		●
■	<b>Blind Man</b> - a man who was born blind, but who is remarkably at peace with it - until Jesus appears and disturbs his equanimity with Hope	■	▲	■
▲	<b>Jesus</b>	▲		▲
▲	<b>Pharisee #1</b> - a religious leader used to getting his way through intimidation		▲	●
▲	<b>Pharisee #2</b> - a more open minded leader who sincerely wants to discover the truth of things		▲	▲
●	<b>Father</b> - the father of the blind man		●	
●	<b>Mother</b> - the mother of the blind man		●	

## Scene 1

**Blind Man , Jesus , Joanna , John , Matthew**

*{As Jesus and the disciples walk along the street, some of the disciples debate a teaching that Jesus once gave them.}*

**Matthew** *[argumentatively]* I thought we settled this! Things don't just happen to people for no reason. God rewards virtue and punishes sin. How else could it be?

**John** But that doesn't mean that misfortune is *necessarily* a punishment, or that success is necessarily a reward.

**Matthew** If something good happens to a terrible sinner, or if he suffers no consequences for his sin, it's like he's being rewarded for being bad. Why would God do that?

**Joanna** If all misfortune is a punishment for sin, then what about that man over there? I hear he was born blind. How could that be a punishment for his sins when he hadn't had a chance to commit a single one?

**Matthew** Maybe his parents sinned.

**John** Seriously?

**Matthew** Believe me, when I was a tax collector, I threw plenty of people into prison for their parents' debts!

**Joanna** [*coyly*] That was sinful of *you*.

**Matthew** [*earnestly*] I was the chief of sinners!

**John** But you were never punished, as far as we know.

**Matthew** That's because I repented.

**Joanna** So if this man were to repent of his supposed sins, his blindness would just disappear? If that's the case, you'd think there wouldn't be any blind people in the world.

**Matthew** Repentance is not that easy! Most people don't have it in them. Look at him! Filthy, begging for his food: he has no virtue in him!

**Blind Man** Ahem! [*in a droll, amused voice*] I'm not deaf, you know. Just blind.

**John** We're so sorry! Please forgive us.

**Blind Man** Willingly. [*humorously*] Especially if it will spare you from some horrible punishment.

**Joanna** [*earnestly*] We're sorry about your...condition.

**Blind Man** What "condition" do you mean? The *Human* condition? If so, I accept your condolences.

**Matthew** [*a little stiffly*] You're an Unbeliever, aren't you?

**Blind Man** Me? Heavens, no! I'm a fervent believer in the Son of Man.

**John** That's what our rabbi calls himself! Do you know him?

**Blind Man** I might. I know a lot of people who don't know me. I hear their talk as they pass by me every day.

**Joanna** Your ears must be extra sharp because - because...

**Blind Man** *[laughing]* Because my eyes are not? No, that's a myth. I don't hear any better than anybody else. I might be better at *listening*, though.

*{Jesus enters.}*

**Jesus** Do you know who I am?

*{A long pause while the Blind Man mulls it over.}*

**Blind Man** I think you're probably their leader.

**Jesus** Good ears! I take it you heard their debate earlier?

**Blind Man** About whether it was me or my parents who sinned so horribly that I was born blind?

**Jesus** Do you have an opinion on the question?

**Blind Man** In my opinion, my parents are very nice people, though they do worry too much. Of course, I'm the main reason they worry, but there's nothing I can do about that. As for me, if there's some great sin in my life that caused this, I wouldn't wish it away, since I'm happy right now, and if I repented from this sin (whatever it is) I might no longer be happy, and I'd rather be happy and blind than sighted and miserable.

**Jesus** Well said! You're not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Joanna** I've never met someone as content as you are with his lot in life. Even among the wealthy and powerful! Aren't you upset about your blindness? Or has it turned out to be a hidden blessing?

**Blind Man** *[laughing again]* Another myth! It is what it is. Neither a curse nor a blessing. If I weren't blind, there'd simply be other blessings and other hardships. The conditions of our lives have no reasons; they simply *are*.

**Jesus** What would you say if I told you that I knew the reason for your blindness?

**Blind Man** I would tell your followers to beware of any leader who claimed to know the reasons for everything!

**Jesus** *[laughing]* Ha! They should indeed beware! *[earnestly in a low voice]* But it can't be that you're so perfectly indifferent to your blindness. You must have a preference. You must have a hope! Tell me, if you could say Yes or No to being healed, and know beyond a shadow of a doubt that your wish would be granted, which way would you vote?

**Blind Man** *[suddenly uncomfortable]* But it wouldn't be granted, so it's pointless to consider it.

**Jesus** You won't even pretend there might be hope?

**Blind Man** *[a little angry]* Look, it's been an entertaining conversation, but I've only got a couple of more hours of daylight left to beg enough for my supper tonight. And I'm sure you have someplace to be.

**Jesus** We do. We'll leave you now, but first, may I touch your face?

**Blind Man** *[uncertainly]* I suppose so.

*{Jesus scoops up some mud and spits on it.}*

**Blind Man** *[even more uncertainly]* What are you doing? What is he doing?

*{Jesus applies the mud to the man's eyes.}*

**Jesus** *[in a low voice so only the man can hear]* God's blessing be upon you. If you would be healed, if you'd be willing merely to pretend that you might wish it, go the pool of Siloam and wash this off. Either way, we'll talk again.

## Scene 2

**Blind Man , Father , Mother , Pharisee #1 , Pharisee #2**

*{The Pharisees have brought the man, who has been healed of his blindness, and his parents in for questioning.}*

**Pharisee #1** He cured you of blindness by rubbing mud in your eyes? That's ridiculous!

**Blind Man** Really? How is it usually done?

- Pharisee #1** Admit it! You were never blind! This is some kind of a scam.
- Blind Man** Wouldn't the more effective scam be to pretend I *was* blind, so I could trick people into giving me money?
- Pharisee #2** *[in a calmer, explanatory voice]* The scammer would be the man who claims he healed you. We see a lot of them, and they can do a great deal of harm to the community before they skip town with their profits. If you're shielding one of these men, or worse, if you're working with him, the consequences could be grave.
- Pharisee #1** Admit you were never blind! Admit it now and *maybe* we won't excommunicate you from the synagogue!
- Father** Please, sirs! We don't know anything about this man, or how our son was healed.
- Pharisee #2** But you confirm that he *is* your son, and that he *was* born blind?
- Mother** Yes, to our everlasting sorrow.
- Blind Man** *[with feeling]* Mother! *[to all, with real indignation for the first time]* How did my healing somehow become *bad news*? Isn't it obvious this man was a prophet of God? How else could he have healed me?
- Pharisee #1** There are all kinds of power, and not all of it comes from God! If this man was a prophet of God, then why did he heal you *on the Sabbath*?
- Blind Man** *[sarcastically]* I don't know! When do prophets of God *usually* do their healing?
- Pharisee #2** Excuse us. *[privately to Pharisee #1]* I think his story checks out. Maybe this really was a genuine miracle.
- Pharisee #1** On the Sabbath? And just look at this guy: a dirty, irreverent beggar! He was altogether born in sin!
- Pharisee #2** *[to the Blind Man]* Can you tell us anything about the man who healed you?
- Blind Man** *[flippantly]* Why, are you interested in becoming his disciples?

**Pharisee #1** *[at the end of his temper]* All right, that's it! You're out! You are officially cast out of the synagogue! *[to the parents]* And you! If you breathe of word of this to anyone, you'll be next!

**Father** We won't! We promise!

**Mother** Thank you, sirs! Thank you!

*{Pharisee #1 and the parents exit. The Blind Man begins walking away himself.}*

**Pharisee #2** Wait! Please! Listen, I apologize for my colleague, but this really is important. We have a responsibility to the community to find out the truth of this. You understand that, don't you?

**Blind Man** I understand that the truth is important, yes.

**Pharisee #2** If you'll tell me everything you know about this healer, I'll do my best to have your ouster revoked.

**Blind Man** You work side-by-side with your "colleague" and yet you can't see the kind of man he is? If you try reversing his decision, you could end up excommunicated just like me. He might even hurt my parents just as an afterthought. So here's my deal: I'll tell you everything I know about this healer if you promise *not* to try having me reinstated. *[after a pause]* Well, do we have a deal?

**Pharisee #2** All right. Tell me what you know about him.

**Blind Man** He didn't tell me much, but I overheard a little more. He's from Nazareth, and -

**Pharisee #2** *[interrupting]* Nazareth? Was he Yeshua, son of Mary?

**Blind Man** I don't know. But one of his followers was John, and another was Matthew, a former tax collector.

**Pharisee #2** My God, it's him!

**Blind Man** Who?

**Pharisee #2** A very dangerous man - to the entire nation! You've rendered an invaluable service. I'll keep my end of the bargain - I won't try to have your ouster reversed - but I will keep an eye on your parents

and make sure they're protected.

**Blind Man** Thanks. You're a good man. "Not far from the Kingdom of Heaven", as someone once put it to me.

### Scene 3

**Blind Man , Jesus , Joanna , John , Pharisee #1 , Pharisee #2**

*{Jesus, John, and Joanna encounter the former Blind Man walking down the street.}*

**Jesus** Hello again.

**Blind Man** It's you! I recognize you.

**Joanna** We heard you were kicked out of the synagogue. We're sorry about that.

**Blind Man** It is what it is.

**Jesus** I'm glad you decided to take the risk, though.

**Blind Man** *[as above it all as ever]* Well, the mud you spread on my eyes became very irritating after a while. I really had no choice!

**John** But it worked. Wouldn't you say your life was better now?

**Blind Man** I don't know about "better". After all, I've been kicked out of the synagogue and my parents are afraid to talk to me, and it's just occurred to me that I have to figure out how I'm going to eat now! But I *would* say "broader", and for that, I sincerely thank you all.

**Joanna** What was it like to see after being blind all your life?

**Blind Man** To be honest, it's been a little disappointing. The world is...flatter than I always thought. It's bigger, though.

**Jesus** *[with increasing majesty]* And getting bigger all the time. It was for this that I came into the world: that the blind might see, and that those who claim to be sighted might be revealed to be blind.

*{Two Pharisees jump out from the around a corner.}*

**Pharisee #1** Meaning us?

**John**           Where did they come from?

**Blind Man**       They've been spying on me, probably hoping to find you. *[to the Pharisees]* Just as blindness doesn't improve a man's hearing, gaining his sight doesn't suddenly wreck it. I've heard you tailing me ever since I left my parent's house.

**Pharisee #1**      *[to Jesus]* You broke God's law by healing on the Sabbath, and you call *us* blind?

**Jesus**           If only you *were* blind! Then there would be hope for you. As it is, your sight is so "perfect" you can't even see who stands before you.

**Pharisee #2**      *[in a more reasonable voice]* That's exactly why we sought you out. *[to the Blind Man]* We weren't spying on you. Honestly. We just decided it was time we met this man, and we thought the fastest way to find him would be to stay close to you in case he came to you again.

**Blind Man**       I understand. So now you've found him! What will you ask of him?

**Pharisee #2**      *[to Jesus]* Sir, can you tell us who you are, and by what power you were able to heal this man?

**Jesus**           Who wants to know?

**Pharisee #1**      We do, you wretch! We, the leaders of the people! We, who already know more about you than you might think! *[to Pharisee #2]* Come on. I told you this would be a waste of time!

**Pharisee #2**      But...but...  
  
*{The Pharisees exit.}*

**Blind Man**       *[to Jesus]* Sorry. I told them who you were. But they seemed to know you already.

**Jesus**           They don't know me at all.

**Blind Man**       True enough, but that makes them even more dangerous. Watch out for that mean one in particular. He'll stop at nothing. And I mean, nothing.

**Jesus**           That's all right, because neither will I.



**Blind Man** It looks like our mutual encounter isn't going to lead to a better life for you, either!

**Jesus** No, never better. But broader? Bigger? *[after a pause]* And now, there's one more thing you need to do before we part ways.

**Blind Man** *[after long pause]* I *did* thank you, but I'm happy to thank you again.

**Jesus** It's not that.

**John** Do you mean that he should join us? That would be wonderful!

**Jesus** No. He can certainly join us if he wishes, but I believe he'll be more useful right where he is, telling his story to his friends and neighbors.

**Joanna** Then what? What else is there?

**Jesus** *[to the man]* I hear you believe in the Son of Man.

**Blind Man** *[suddenly serious]* I do. And your man there told me that that's what you call yourself.

**Jesus** Do you believe that's what I really am?

**Blind Man** Well, you did heal me, so it stands to reason.

**Jesus** So, what do you think you ought to do in the presence of the Son of Man?

**Blind Man** *[in confusion]* I'd be happy to follow you, though you just said I should stay put. Is there anything else you want me to do?

**Jesus** What comes before obedience but after belief? If you believe in the Son of Man and believe that he truly stands before you at this moment, what should you be doing? *[after a long pause]* Anybody? *[after another long pause]* You should be worshipping me.

**Joanna** What?

**John** Rabbi, it's a lot of ask of the man. After all -

**Blind Man** *[shakily]* No! No, he's right. It's what I should be doing. *[attempting some humor]* I'm a little out of practice, you understand! *[soberly again]* Okay. No more joking around. *[after a deep breath]* Here goes...

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