

When I travelled around with the Great Teacher, following Him from town to town, I was witness to many of His parables and healings. The quiet times were few, but when He went into the mountain to pray I sometimes had some time to think about comparisons between the power of both type of stories.

I had also studied the actions and reactions of the religious leaders for many years, even before I began to follow the Teacher. There were some leaders who truly tried to follow God, but there were so many more that followed only a worldly or political agenda. It was always interesting to see their response to Jesus' activities.

I thought that one of the greatest parables was the story of the Good Samaritan<sup>1</sup>, and that one of the greatest miracle stories was that of the man who was born blind<sup>2</sup>. As I looked at these side-by-side, I began to see certain parallels in the sequence of events. And I saw that the "spiritual leaders" exhibited the same reaction to Good or Evil – they did not "hate evil, love good"<sup>3</sup>. After studying it in some depth, I finally put my ideas down in a list:

	Event	Story of the Good Samaritan	Story of the Man Born Blind
1	Someone who was looked down on as a criminal or second-class citizen does harm or is involved in harm to a person	The thieves (robbed and injured a man)	The man born blind or his parents (who sinned?)
2	Someone who also was looked down on did something good	The Samaritan (took care of the injured man)	Jesus was opposed by the Jewish leaders (healed the man)
3	Reaction from the supposed spiritual leaders as they walked along the road	The priest and Levite (ignored the injured man)	The Pharisees (condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath)
4	Period of separation from the one who did good	The injured man was left at the inn, and the Samaritan promised to return	Jesus told the man to go wash in the Pool of Siloam
5	Long-term care	He injured man was left at the inn until he was healed	The man was interrogated <sup>4</sup> , then <u>cast out</u> of the synagogue after he acknowledged that Jesus had healed him [contrast]
6	Returning to check status	The Samaritan promised to return and pay more if needed	Jesus returned and sound the man to console him

In thinking beyond the basic stories, I found other comparisons. For instance, each had a reason for being told. The parable was told in response to the question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered by stating the two greatest commandments, that we must love God with all of our beings and our neighbors as ourselves. As the latter command put things on a very personal level, Jesus then had to respond to the question: "Who is my neighbor?" For the miracle, Jesus stated that the occasion was to display the work and glory of God<sup>5</sup>.

There was a contrast in the lessons presented in each story. The parable was told so that people could realize the meaning of mercy<sup>6</sup>. The miracle was performed so that people could understand about guilt and judgment<sup>7</sup>. It answered the unasked question, "Who is really blind?" We see in both instances that mercy triumphs over judgment<sup>8</sup>.

These great lessons were presented through the stories, but who really got the point? In the parable of the Good Samaritan, it was clear that the idea was grasped by foreigners, those not thought of as the intellectual equals of the Pharisees. This reminds me of the times where Jesus had proclaimed that the faith of foreigners was greater than anyone in all Israel<sup>9</sup>, and indeed some tried to kill him after pointing this out<sup>10</sup>. The message of the healing of the man born blind was not grasped at all by the spiritual leaders, for in spite of the miraculous power shown in the life of a man who by being blind had been cut off from society all of his life – they cast him out of the synagogue and thus cut him off forever from them<sup>11</sup>.

I wondered how the man born blind felt about being a "lesson"<sup>12</sup>. You know that he must have heard Jesus as he explained this. Then Jesus made him go, a blind man, in faith to the pool to wash his eyes. He didn't lead him or help him get there. It made me think that though in a sense we must go in our blindness to search out God, He does

not forget us but opens our eyes. He comes back for us to help us get the most from the journey, helping us to see the meaning of the parables, healings, and the other teachings of Christ.

1. Luke 10:25-37
2. John 9:1-41
3. Amos 5:15 and Romans 12:9
4. Jesus in John 10:25 presents an argument very similar to that of the man born blind: “Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me...”
5. John 9:3
6. Luke 10:36
7. John 9:29-41
8. James 2:13
9. Matthew 8:10, Luke 7:9
10. Luke 4:14-30
11. Note from sermon by Dustin Welch
12. John 9:3

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