

## **Blind for the Glory of God**

Scripture: John 9:1-12

Code: 43-49

Now, this morning, I want you to open your Bible to John 9, the ninth chapter of John. We are continuing to work our way through this biography of Jesus, which focuses on His deity. This is written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name. That's the theme verse, chapter 20 verse 30 and 31. So, it's written to prove that Jesus is God in human flesh, and to prove that He is the Savior, and that believing in Him brings about eternal salvation. That's the purpose of John's gospel; if not just history, it's an evangelistic treatise with a view to leading people to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior.

And as He lives His life through the lens of John's gospel, He continues to demonstrate His deity. At the same time, the people of His nation, Israel, continue to escalate their rejection of Him. When we come into chapter 9, there's a little bit of a nuance that is added here that tells us we have passed some kind of a tipping point. And that is, in the passage we're going to be looking at, in verse 2, you'll see the mention of His disciples. This is the first time that His disciples have been mentioned in this particular setting of His ministry in Jerusalem, because He is still been focusing on the crowds. He's still been interacting with the people, demonstrating who He is, declaring who He is, making pronouncements about His identity that are supported by His power expressed in the miracles that He did. He has been working, we might say, with the people and with the leaders.

But there are only just a few months now until His death, and the fixed rejection of the people has become clear and crystallized. And now we see Him begin to shift as we see also in the other gospels, toward His disciples in the last months, to make sure that He answers their questions and equips them for what is waiting them.

This, then, would tell us that, I guess in one sense, He is tipped across the edge, and is now on the downslope away from the crowds, away from the nation Israel, away from the leaders who have made up their mind about Him, focusing on His disciples. That is not to say that this particular portion of Scripture doesn't have impact or shouldn't have on the people and the leaders, because in fact, it did. But this introduces a new emphasis.

Let me read the opening 12 verses of this chapter. The entire chapter, all the way to the very end, is basically built around one miraculous healing, the whole chapter. And the chapter, most of it, is given to this discussion of the miracle itself. That's why I've titled it "Unbelief Investigates a Miracle." 'Cause that's exactly what's going to happen. But first, we have to start with the miracle itself, which they then investigate.

Verse 1. As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." When He had said this, He spat on the

ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," which is translated, Sent. So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash;' so I went away and washed, and I received sight." They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

Sickness, disease, deformity, death, have dominated life in the world since the fall of Adam, which means essentially all of human history. Touches us all; we're all in the process of dying. We all are infected and affected by the corruption that came by way of sin. Familiar with sickness, familiar with disease, familiar with deformity. All of that is part of life. And it has literally dominated life since the beginning, since the very Fall recorded in Genesis chapter 3. And if you go to the Old Testament, these corrupt influences falling on physical life are so dominating and so normal, and so unabated and uninterrupted, that throughout the entire Old Testament, miraculous healing is so rare, it is virtually non-existent.

There was the healing of Naaman the leper, who was a border terrorist attacking the Jews. That's in 1 Kings. And then, there was King Hezekiah who had a terminal illness, and God spared him and cured him of that terminal illness. That's 2 Kings. And then, in Numbers 21, God sent snakes that bit the children of Israel with a deadly poison. They would've died, except the Lord was merciful to them, and healed their snakebites.

So, you have the healing of Naaman, an individual; the healing of Hezekiah, an individual; the healing of a group of Israelites, Jews, who were bitten by snakes.

And as far as an outright individual healing, very, very rare and unusual. When you come into the New Testament, as the New Testament begins, there are a couple of other physical miracles of healing. One happens to Elizabeth so that she who has been barren all her life is enabled to have a baby, John the Baptist. That is a healing miracle. And then, there of course is Mary, and Mary's is not a healing, but Mary is given the right, and the privilege, and the power to bear a child without a father, a human father, the virgin birth. But when you look at the Old Testament, you've got six occasions where an actual, physical miracle brought about a change in someone's physiology.

In the Old Testament, you have three resurrections. That's all. Three. The widow's son in 1 Kings 17, the Shunammite widow's son in 2 Kings 4, and the man in Elijah's grave in 2 Kings 13. Three resurrections. That's it. Very, very rare through the entire history, from the Fall, to the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And by the way, you say, well, that's just the Old Testament. Yes, but if you just took the Old Testament, that would be religion central, wouldn't it be? That would be where God is most active. That would be where God is working, God is acting through the fathers, through the prophets, through the history of Israel, the nation of Israel. And in all of that period of history where God is acting, miracles don't happen except on extremely rare occasions, miracles of healing.

Until Jesus shows up. And when Jesus showed up, miracles explode in every direction throughout

His three-year ministry. By the way, He did no miracles for the first 30 years of His life. None. Because, when He reached the age of 30 and He went to a wedding in Cana, and turned water into wine, the Bible says this is the first miracle Jesus did. So, these nonsense, gnostic, false gospels that have Jesus doing miracles as a boy are nothing but foolish. We just don't have healings in history. You don't have miraculous reversing of disease and deformity. You don't have resurrections. You don't have people coming back from the dead. This is a very rare occasion.

Then you come into the life and ministry of Christ, and healings are happening virtually on a daily basis. This is an explosion intended to demonstrate that the Messiah, the Son of God, God in human flesh, has arrived in the world. Matthew 12:15 says He was healing all. He was healing all. So, He was healing all the people in all the places. That's why I've said many times that He banished illness, essentially, from the land of Israel.

And this, according to Acts 2:22 in the words of Peter that we've been looking at in our study of Acts: this is God attesting to Jesus as the Messiah by miracles. These are supernatural healings. These are creative miracles. People with deformed limbs who were given new limbs. People with deformed and diseased organs given new organs. People with blind eyes given new eyes. People who couldn't hear given new ears. Each is a creative work. This consistent, John introduces the gospel by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Nothing that was made was made without him; all things were made by Him. He is the creator, and we see Him create. All of these healing miracles are supernatural acts of creation, taking something corrupted, something deformed, something diseased, something infected, and replacing it with something brand new. The works of God through Christ.

There's no natural explanation for them. There's no medical explanation for them. There's no psychological explanation for them. These are not psychosomatic diseases that people imagine they have, sort of overruled by Jesus' power as a psychologist. There is no medicine that He uses. There is no formula applied to any of these illnesses. There's no natural process. These are divine, supernatural, instantaneous, transforming creative miracles done by a word, or a touch, instantly and completely. Nothing like it in human history. It all exploded in a three-year period.

The prophet Isaiah in chapter 42 verse 7 said the Messiah would come and heal. He would come and heal. And this is the fulfillment of that Messianic prophecy in that Servant song of Isaiah chapter 42.

Now, here in this, obviously, let me say this first: obviously, there are so many miracles that they're not all in the New Testament. But John tells us that, because at the end of his gospel, he said, "If everything that Jesus did was recorded, the books of the world couldn't contain it." We have the privilege, here in chapter 9, of looking at one of the tens of thousands of miracles, creative miracles that Jesus did. We're going to examine this miracle alongside some unbelievers, and we're going to find out how unbelief investigates a miracle.

This miracle alone should have substantially changed their view of Jesus. If they hadn't already understood that He was divine, this should've been enough to affirm His claim to deity. But instead, instead of coming to faith, instead of acknowledging that there was no human explanation for what they had seen and experienced, all it does is elevate their animosity. It elevates their anger. The more evidence that Jesus gives, the more angry they become. Their hatred escalates. The conflict is ramped up.

So, the inevitable happens. Jesus begins to abandon them, and that's why we see the introduction of conversations not so much with the Pharisees, as with the disciples. They have fixed their deceived ignorance in stone, in most cases. They're merely laboring to gather more outrageous accusations against Jesus so they can press the issue of His execution. It's a sad, tragic fulfillment of the first chapter of John. "He came into His own, and His own received Him not."

Now, chapter 9 is devoted to the miracle and the investigation. The whole chapter. So, we'll have to break it up a little bit over the next couple of weeks. It is another miracle followed by a discussion and dialog. We saw that in chapter 5. We saw it in chapter 6. We'll see it here again. Now, I want to break the passage up into some sections, so let's just take, for this morning, verses 1 to 12. That's a big chunk for me, as you know, but it's a narrative, and we'll get through that.

I want to break these 12 verses down into simple points of contact: darkness, light, sight, and back to darkness. Darkness, light, sight, and back to darkness. So, let's start with the darkness, verse 1. "As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth." Blindness. We see it all over the New Testament. It's a very common experience in New Testament times. It was a very, very common reality in the ancient world. But even going back beyond that, if you go back into the Old Testament, go back into the Pentateuch, go back to the time of Moses and the patriarchs, you will find blindness mentioned many, many times. Mentioned in Leviticus, mentioned in Deuteronomy, then it's mentioned in the books of history. It's mentioned in the prophets. Blindness was a dominating reality in the ancient world, and that's one of the reasons why Isaiah 42:7 said that when the Messiah comes, He will open blind eyes.

Here is an illustration of this kind of blindness. Jesus sees a man who is congenitally blind. He has been blind his whole life. He was born blind. Now, let me give you the picture. Jesus has just declared, in verse 58 of chapter 8, that He is the I am, that He is God Himself. They were so infuriated at what they saw as blasphemy that they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself from them and went out of the temple. He exited the temple.

Now, as He goes out of the temple, as He passes by, He sees a man, blind from birth. This man is sitting at one of the temple gates, begging as Jesus passed by. How do we know that? Because that's a very apparent reality, because beggars, inevitably, ended up at the temple gates. That's where this man is. I just need to make the note that, never too concerned with His own life, He stops, even though He's at high-risk, and in danger because He's escaping from being stoned. He stops to demonstrate grace, and power, and mercy, and compassion, and even salvation on a blind beggar. This is very much like Jesus at the very time of His death, collecting a thief on the way to His own death.

There's a beautiful parallel with this beggar, and another beggar in the third chapter of Acts. Both are beggars sitting at the gate of the temple. The beggar here is blind; the beggar in Acts 3 is paralyzed from birth. He has congenital blindness; that one has congenital deformity. Both are at the temple, and both are met by Jesus, and both are healed by Jesus. These two things must have, even though the apostles mediated the power of Jesus in Acts 3, it was still the power of Jesus. But they illustrate the healing power that Jesus expressed, and the commonality of beggars sitting by the temple. In fact, in Matthew 21:14, it says, "The blind came to Him in the temple. The lame came to Him in the temple. And He healed them."

Look, you get it. Beggars go where crowds are, right? Beggars always go where crowds are, even today. You go where crowds are, you find people begging. They don't operate in isolation. Beggars knew where to be. They went to the temple. Why would they go to the temple? Because, for one thing, the most devout people went to the temple. Good people, ostensibly, went to the temple. People with compassion, people who are kind, caring. People also went to the temple because they were going to make a sacrifice in the morning and in the evening, and that meant they were conscious of their sin. And people feeling guilty about sin are more likely to be generous.

So, you've got devout people, you've got people feeling guilt. You have people also trying to earn their salvation in that system, and the way you earn your salvation, and they were taught by the rabbis, was to give alms. You have people doing deeds of kindness and charity. And then you just have the sheer volume of people there. So, you have more to select from, if you will, and because crowds were pouring in and out of the temple all day long. Also, beggars knew that where there are crowds of religious people who have doing good in mind, there's safety from robbers who would otherwise take everything a beggar had.

So, the temple was where they were. They located there 'cause it was the best climate for them to survive. The beggar can't see Christ; he's never seen anything. But it says, He saw the beggar, "as He passed by." Sovereign grace dominates this miracle. Sovereign will dominates this miracle. The blind man can't see anything. He doesn't know anything about Jesus coming by. But Jesus sees him. The blind man is a picture of the sin-blinded man who has no capacity to see Jesus, who is profoundly, deeply, engulfed in his desperate blindness, and has no capability to see the Savior. The analogy is irresistible.

In fact, the gospels use this analogy. Paul talks about spiritual blindness a number of times. And the gospels record more cases of blind people being healed than any other specific malady. There's one healing of a deaf-mute. There's one healing of someone with palsy. There's one healing of someone with a fever. There are two healings of lepers, groups of lepers. There are three dead people raised, but there are five separate accounts of blind people.

Blindness well-illustrates man's spiritual darkness and lost-ness. Helpless from the start, this blind man is at the mercy of somebody who comes up, chooses to help him. He's like the sinner. God has to take the initiative with the blind man through Christ. God has to take the initiative through Christ for the sinner. That's how grace operates. We're lost, we're dead, we're blind, we know no truth, we see no Christ, we have no God, and God sees us. Comes in compassion, grace, and bestows spiritual sight.

It's a beautiful picture illustrated by this healing. So, we see darkness then in verse 1. In verse 2, we see light. Verse 2 through 5. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi," teacher, "who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" That'll tell you where their theology was, essentially; that if something's wrong with you, it's a sin issue. Not an indirect one, but a direct one. Now, we would all agree that everybody's illness is related to the fall of Adam, right? But you can't make a direct link between I'm sick because three months ago I committed a certain sin. But in their theology, that's how it worked. If you're deformed, if you're diseased, if you have some kind of illness, it's because of sin directly, not because of the fallenness of the world, but because there's guilt that you are bearing.

So, whose sin was it? Which means that, and they split that out, was it this man, or his parents? That was what they were, that was what had developed in their system, that people who were ill, or infirm, or whatever, were that way because either they sinned, or their parents sinned.

Now, this questions could have a physical, a physiological component, a medical component, if you will. Because the greatest ancient contributor to blindness was gonorrhoea. And since there was no treatment for that, when a mother had gonorrhoea, a baby passing through the birth canal could come out blind, essentially. This was epidemic. Even in the modern world, where in third-world countries, there is no remedy for that. Silver nitrate, or whatever is used; there's no remedy for that. Blindness is multiplied.

There was a time not many years ago, according to one source I read, where 90 percent of the blind, born blind, were from venereal disease. And again, even today in countries where they don't have the ability to care for that, blindness is increased. So were they saying something about the sin of the mother or the father? Something about a transmitted disease? Maybe that was in their mind, but probably more likely it was theological, rather than physiological.

The rabbis were convinced that the sins of the parents were visited upon the children. Where did they get that? They got that because they misinterpreted Exodus 20, and I'll come to that in a few minutes. But they believed that parents' sins could show up in children's guilt and punishment.

But just before we get to that point, backing up a little, they made a direct connection between suffering and sin in the life of the person. Now, you remember the classic illustration of this is Job's friends. Job hasn't done anything. He's suffering like mad. His friends come up chapter, after chapter, after chapter, after chapter, they try to indict him, try to make him guilty, so they can find sin and direct cause for his suffering. And he keeps throwing that off, and throwing that off. But that was a reflection of their theology. Where there is sin, there is suffering; and where there is suffering, there is corresponding, specific sin on the part of the individual who suffers.

You see that in Luke 13. You remember the tower fell over and killed all those people? And you remember that Pilate's men went in and sliced up the Galileans who were worshipping, and what did the people ask? They said, "Are they worse sinners than everybody else?" If calamity comes, if a tower falls on you and kills you, or if somebody stabs you, that's a sign that you're worse than everybody else, right? The worst people have the calamities, and the better people escape. That's the same kind of theology.

So, their question comes out of the milieu of the thinking of the rabbis. The rabbis even had to explain congenital issues, congenital deformities, congenital blindness, born blind. How could that be the sin of the person born blind? When they say, was it this man who sinned? How could he sin? He was in the womb. They even developed, the rabbis did, the idea of prenatal iniquity. Sinning in the womb.

And there are some really bizarre discussions between rabbis on this subject. In which, one rabbi eventually responds with Genesis 4:47. "Sin lies at the door," and he makes the door refer to the door of the womb. So, he interprets that as some kind of insight in to prenatal iniquity. And the other guy argues, the other rabbi argues that if the baby was actually sinning in the womb, he'd be kicking

harder. Crazy.

Some believed, like Plato did, in the preexistence of the soul, influenced by Hellenists, so that somehow your soul was around sinning before you were conceived. So, they did believe that somehow, some of them believed that something a person did in the womb, or as a soul before the womb, contributed to this condition. On the other hand, they did believe, as well, that the children suffered from the parents' sin.

And that was Exodus 20 verse 5. "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations." You've heard people use that, that there are cursed children, cursed generations. This notion that you're paying for the sins of your parents somehow has managed to survive to our time even today. But among the Jews, there was the idea that people could be punished for several generations for sins committed by their parents.

You say, well, what does that mean? First, it's a collective statement: the sins of the fathers, the leaders, the generation, the heads of a generation. The sins that they commit that define that generation area so influential that they can't be reversed and rooted out for three or four generations. That's the principle that that is establishing. It's not saying individual sins for three or four generations of kids, grandkids, great grandkids, are going to be cursed. That is completely alien to what Scripture says, and I'll show you that in a minute.

But all it is saying is: you'd better take care of your generation, because if you are characterized by iniquity and sin, it's going to take three or four generations to turn it around.

Think about that when you look at the generation we're living in right now. This does not turn around fast. It penetrates deeply. This is not personal. Turn to Ezekiel, 'cause I need to show you this. Ezekiel chapter 18. One of the most important chapters in the prophets. Ezekiel 18. Because it's directed at this question. The Word of the Lord, chapter 18, verse 1. Ezekiel 18.

When the word of the Lord came to me, says Ezekiel, saying, "What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge?'" That's the proverb. The proverb is that the children suffer the consequence of the behavior of their parents. So, God says to Ezekiel, "What do you mean using that?" Verse 3. "As I live," declares the Lord God, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore." Stop using that.

Then he explained in verse 20. "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be on him."

Individual responsibility, period, paragraph. But in that Jewish theology, now, back to John 9, they had developed this system where generations could be cursed. So, they want to know: did the man sin somehow? Did he sin in some way? Did he sin in the womb, or did his parents sin, and now he's cursed with blindness?

They would use a couple of cases. They would go to Achan, and they would say, well, when Achan stole things that he wasn't supposed to steal when he went into the land, and buried it in his tent.

You remember, God said stone him and his whole family? Why did God want the whole family killed? Answer: complicity. They were all involved in it. They were all guilty. And there are times when God did directly punish someone for sin by giving that person an illness, and even killing some people in the Old Testament. Miriam received leprosy in Numbers 12 as a direct punishment from God. Uzziah, direct punishment from God, died. Touching the ark, direct punishment from God, death.

So, there are occasions of that happening in the Old Testament. But the questions just reflects all of this theology. The answer Jesus gives is verse 3. "Neither this man sinned, nor his parents." This isn't about that. With one statement, completely obliterates that whole theological system, because Jesus is now saying: somebody can have a severe, congenital, life-long illness that has nothing to do with his own sin, or the sins of his parents. That whole system, He wiped it out with one statement. You can't make that conclusion.

Here's the reason he's blind: "So that the works of God might be displayed in him." He's blind for the glory of God. He's blind for the glory of God. He's blind so that we could come to this moment, and this healing, and the power of God be put on display, and the works of God be manifest, and God be glorified.

Not all disease, not all defect, not all suffering comes from personal sin. It can. You can be a believer, and if you just keep sinning, the Lord may make you weak, and sick, and take your life. There's a sin unto death. But you can't necessarily make that connection, or you're going to be like Job's friends, and you're going to be saying, "Oh Job, you're sinning somewhere. Come on. Fess up." And you're going to be no better than Job's friends.

No, this isn't about this man's parents. Were they sinful? Sure. Is he a sinner? Of course. But this has nothing to do with that. There are healthy sinners in the world. Have you noticed? Really, and some of them are wretched. I mean, some of them are wretched sinners, and they live a long time, and they're healthy, and there are sick believers who are faithful to the Lord that you can't make those connections.

Well, Jesus has done with that theology, just cuts the bottom out of all of it, and says, "This is about the works of God." The purpose of the man's blindness is to reveal the miraculous power of God through the Son of God to substantiate His claims to be the Messiah, to be God Himself. He's going to do a creative miracle so that it becomes clear to everybody that He is the One who created, as John begins his gospel saying. He's a prepared vessel to put God on display through Christ. Jesus doesn't want to discuss theology any more than just to knock it off, just cut it down at the root.

So, in verse 4, without any more theological discussion than just to obliterate that absolute connection that they had made, He says, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work." Guess what? It's good to have a theological discussion, but sooner or later, you need to go to work. He's not going to stand there and debate theology with him at this point; it's time to go to work.

Well, He says, "Night is coming when no one can work." He's not talking about physical night. I suppose it was daytime, and I think He probably wanted to heal the man during the day so the man could see that he could see. I mean, it would be sort of rude if you're going to heal a guy, to wait till it

was dark. Come on. Give me a break. I mean, this is pretty monumental. At least do this in the day. So, I think Jesus intended to heal him during the day, but that's not the point. The point is: "We," I love that we. I'm going to camp on that in a minute. "We must work the works of Him who sent Me." Back in chapter 5, verse 17 and following, Jesus said, "I work and the Father works." The Father and I work together. What the Father does, I do; what the Father says, I say; what the Father wills, I will. The Father and I work together, and they wanted to stone Him for that, because He was making Himself equal with God, remember that?

Here, He pulls the disciples in with the "we." We are all together called together to "work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day." Well, what do you mean, "It is day?" Not daylight. Lifetime. Lifetime. Far greater spiritual implication here. Death is looming on the horizon. He has months. The disciples, some of them don't have very long. They have years, but they're martyred.

There's a far greater reality here. We only have a brief time. This is not a time to get caught up in theological debates. We cut that theology at its foundation, and then we go to work. I love this "we." Jesus says in John 5, "I work with the Father." And here, He says, "And we all work together with the Father." What a calling is this. Staggering. Staggering. I love that "we." In the light of the fact that night is coming, the end of your life.

We don't know how much time we have. We don't know. Months? Years? We don't know. Fewer every breath; fewer every day. It's time to work. I don't know how much time I have, but I don't think I've ever had more things that I want to do for the kingdom. I can't put the reins on anywhere, because there's only one thing to live for, and that's to work with the Savior and the Father, and to do the work. I'm so thrilled to be in the "we." "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day." As it is day. It's just an expression to talk about life, before the lights go out permanently, and you leave this world.

Ephesians 5:16, Paul puts it this way: "making the most of your time." Making the most of your time because the days are, well, what are you doing with your life? What are you doing with your time? Frittering it away with a bunch of nonsense that doesn't matter. I love that we're in the "we" here. That elevates the whole idea, doesn't it? As long as it is day, listen Christian, clean up your life, get moving, get the sin out, the worldliness out, the trivial stuff out, the compromise. Stop wasting time. Stop flirting with the world. Stop doing those things that have no value at all in the future, and get at it, hand-in-hand with the Lord, hand-in-hand with the Father. What an incredible thing to work with the One who is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all we can ask or think. Get to work.

Jesus knew His death was coming in just months. He says in verse 5, "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." But that's only for a while. He will always be the Light, in one sense, but it'll never shine in the world as brightly as it did for those three years. I must use my power and light while I am here. He's going to use His power to give this man physical light. But more importantly, He's going to give this man spiritual light.

If you go down to verse 38, the man himself said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. So He not only heals the blind man; He saves him. So, I say, verses 2 to 5, light breaks into the darkness. First, it's physical light, so he can see; and then it's spiritual light, so that he can see God. First, he could see the world around him, and then he could see the world, the invisible world. "I am the Light of the world." Chapter 8, He said. "I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, will have the Light of life."

Jesus is feeling the end of His life coming, and He's saying, "Guys, we've got to work. I can only shine at this level of brightness while it's day, and it's coming to an end." He repeated that kind of thing a number of times, at least four times in the gospels, where He talked about that He was the Light, but it wasn't always going to be like that. That time was limited.

So, the darkness, and then the light. And then, we come thirdly, verses 6 and 7, sight. When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," which is translated, Sent. So he went away and washed, and came seeing.

Now, if you read commentaries, the question comes up: why did He use this method? Well, He did it a few times. Mark 7, He used saliva to mix with mud to put on somebody's ears. Mark 8, He did the same thing with another blind person. He did that. People say, well, why did He do that? Well, I found some interesting suggestions. One guy said: to make use of the healing quality of saliva. Really? That's a stretch. Another commentator said: to make Him even more blind. You can't be more blind than totally blind. Piling mud on eyes that don't function doesn't make you more blind. Not a good perception. Another writer said: to symbolize that man is made from dirt. Don't see the connection. Another said: to give the eyes time to heal. Those eyes didn't need to heal. They had to be replaced. Those are silly.

Why did He use this method? I have no idea. Furthermore, I couldn't care less. He did. He did. There's an element in it that I do understand. Could've just touched his eyes and he would've seen instantaneously. Created eyes on the spot. Why does He send him somewhere? Because I think He's calling for obedience here. He's calling for the man to submit. Now remember, the man doesn't know who's talking to him. He's never seen anybody. But he obeys. He goes, and does that. He went away, verse 7, washed, came seeing. Why would he do that? If you came up to a blind beggar and spit and put dirt on his eyes, he'd probably slap you. If he didn't know who you were, and it wouldn't matter who you were.

Why does he do this? Because the divine compulsion of an irresistible power is beginning to work on his will. He's being transformed. Are we seeing here an illustration of regeneration? New life is bursting on his blackened soul. I don't think he had any hesitation at all. I think a spark of faith ignited in his heart as the Spirit of God began to change him on the inside. It comes to fruition in verse 38 when he says, "Lord, I believe," and worships Him.

Are these the first workings of the power of the Holy Spirit to draw this man to submit to Christ? Why the pool of Siloam? That's a very special place. Outside the wall, there was a place called the Spring of Gihon. A lot of water. But the city was very vulnerable. It was under siege, and they were worried in Hezekiah's day about the Assyrians sieging the city and cutting off the water. So, Hezekiah had a tunnel built from the spring up, in under the city wall, into Jerusalem so they would have a water supply, and the water was kept in the pool of Siloam. It meant Sent because the water was sent from the spring, Gihon, into the city. This was the water supply where they went at the Feast of Tabernacles to gather the water for the great festival when they poured out the water remembering God's provision of water in the wilderness, and Jesus said He was the water, the living water. Remember that?

So, this spoke of God's provision. It spoke of God's cleansing, spoke of the water of life. It's really a beautiful picture, and it was water sent into the city, another wonderful symbol. The waters flow from the temple hill and are regarded, even in the Old Testament, as symbolic of spiritual blessing. Isaiah 8 talks about that.

So when a man went to wash at Siloam, there was an analogy there. He was going to the one who was the true Siloam, the spring of life water from God. Christ is the true Siloam. That, He even said back in chapter 7 verse 37. "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." Beautiful imagery, beautiful analogies.

This is how salvation works in this analogy. Sovereign grace confronts a blind and helpless, hopeless begging sinner. He can't see, can't see God, can't see Christ. But sovereign grace comes to him, places His glorious, merciful hand on his sightless soul, asks only a response of simple faith, prompts that response. He finds his way to the cleansing waters, which is an emblem of Messianic salvation in Isaiah, and he comes back, and he can see, spiritually. It's really a beautiful picture.

That leads us to the last little part of the opening, and we're back to darkness again, 'cause everybody's now in the dark about what's going on. The neighbors and those who previously saw him as a beggar were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" Which means that it was a daily deal for him, survival. Very familiar. Same beggar, always in the same place.

They can't explain how this man can come seeing, so they say, "Isn't this the one that used to sit and beg?" And others were saying, "This is he." Still others were saying, "No, but, he's like him. He looks like him. It can't be." He steps up and says, "I'm the one. You guys don't need to debate. I can tell you. I'm the one." I can't imagine the rest of that conversation, as he was trying to explain that he'd never seen anything in his life, and process the whole world now in front of him. I don't know what kind of joy and exuberance he was expressing in saying it was him.

So they were saying, "How then were your eyes opened?" I love this, verse 11. He answered. This is a simple, simple explanation. "The man who is called Jesus," somebody must've told him that. "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash;' so I went away and washed, and I received sight." That does not explain how it happened. That just explains what he did. There is no explanation for how it happened. That's a creative miracle.

But the man can only describe the experience. So, he's trying to push the darkness back for the rest of the folks. All I can tell you: this man named Jesus came, put mud on my eyes, told me to go to Siloam and wash. And I did, and I can see. They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I don't know." I mean, he might've said, "Where's where? I've never seen where or anything else, so what do you mean? You want directions from me? I don't know where anything is."

So, this darkness ensues and falls over everybody. How are they going to dispel the darkness? Verse 13. They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. They're going to go to the experts. And this is where unbelief begins to investigate a miracle with a predictable result. It's really an incredible story, an amazing story. The account of Jesus healing a blind man beautifully illustrates really the salvation process. We sit blinded by sin, begging. We can't see God. We can't see Christ. We have no capacity to recognize the Savior. We have no way to initiate any kind of

deliverance or rescue.

And then, God, in His mercy; Christ, in His grace, finds us. That's salvation. And He reaches out to us in our blindness, and He gives us sight. And all He asks is a simple act of faith, which He empowers. And He washes us. And we forever see. And that's what will happen to this man. First, the physical healing came, and then the soul blindness was removed. But we'll have to keep that for next time. Let's pray.

It's such a blessing, Lord, to live these scenes, feel like we're there to some extent, because of the clear, beautiful, simple language of Holy Scripture. So wonderful to go back to the settings, and walk with Jesus in these situations. And it's even more wonderful than seeing it as history, as great as that is, to know that this is our own reality as well, for we were blind, and didn't see God, and didn't see Christ, and didn't know the Light. We didn't even know there was a world to see, or what it was like, until You came in mercy and grace, sovereignly chose to give us spiritual sight. All You asked was a simple act of faith, which You empowered, and we came and we washed. We were cleansed, and we can see. Thank You for the salvation that You've given to us, sovereignly, graciously. Lord, I ask that You would grant that to those who are here today who are still blind, still sitting, begging with no sight, and no hope. Lord, stop by them. Stop by those souls, and reach down, and touch them. Give them sight. Empower faith in their lives, to embrace You as Lord and Savior.

Again, Lord, with gratitude, we bring this hour to its end. We are so refreshed in fellowship with one another and with You. So enriched, greatly blessed. Seal to our hearts these great truths. May they become a part of us, the very fabric of our thinking. May we be available to Your Holy Spirit to speak the words of hope and salvation to those we meet. Use us for Your glory, we pray. Christ's name. Amen.

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