

## I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE

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**Scripture:** John 9:1-12

### John 9:1-12

*<sup>1</sup> And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*

*<sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*

*<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

*<sup>4</sup> I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

*<sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

*<sup>6</sup> When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,*

*<sup>7</sup> And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

*<sup>8</sup> The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, is not this he that sat and begged?*

*<sup>9</sup> Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?*

*<sup>11</sup> He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

*<sup>13</sup> Then they said unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.*

We've been going through the book of John, the book of the seven signs, as it were. And this is the sixth Wednesday when we are meditating the book of the signs. This evening we are going to take a look at the sixth sign, which is the opening of the eyes of the man that was born blind. Two of our previous speakers have drawn our attention to John 20:30-31, and brought out that the author's intention was to bring us to faith, to the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by so believing, that we might be saved, and we might receive eternal life.

To this, I want to add a little more. I want to bring to your notice the prevailing faith in those days. It was commonly believed among the Jews of those days that when the Messiah comes, He will do three supernatural miracles which were absolutely not possible to be performed by anybody else. Any miracle for that matter, is what it says it is – a miracle. It's not possible. You cannot explain it away. But there are three miracles they believed that could be performed only by God or by the Messiah.

1. He would heal a leper.
2. He would heal somebody who was born blind.
3. He would raise somebody from the dead after three days.

Not only did Jesus perform these three miracles, but the Messiah did something greater than all these. He Himself rose from the dead. It's wonderful to meditate upon the miracles of the Lord Jesus, to meditate upon His sayings. Every aspect of His life and ministry is extremely edifying to meditate upon. Now Jesus came; He performed all these miracles. And when He did these things, these signs, many of the common people believed in Him. However, unfortunately, many of the big people stubbornly continued in their unbelief. And this account is no different. As we go through this

passage, we find several interesting points, and I'll try to walk you through them quickly before we come to what is the crux of the passage and what is the application for our lives.

In John 7, we read that the Lord Jesus had gone to Jerusalem on the feast of the Tabernacles which is spread over several days. Apparently, when this incident happens in ch. 9, He is still there in Jerusalem. There are two things that were common between ch. 7 and ch. 9.

- 1) During the Feast of the Tabernacles, large chandeliers are lit in the temple courts, high on the temple mount. These point out to those who are passing by, and also to the nation itself, that the Jewish faith or rather the faith of the Bible is the one true faith. It's a saving faith. It is also at the feast of the tabernacles that Jesus proclaimed Himself as the 'Light of the world'. And in this chapter, He reiterates: "I am the Light of the world."
- 2) The pool of Siloam. At the feast of the Tabernacles, the priest comes and takes a pot of water from the pool of Siloam and pours it out on the steps of the temple, and from there the water flows down. They believed that this was representative of the fact that the Spirit of God would be poured out upon the people in the latter days.

Here in this passage, ch. 9, we read about the Pool of Siloam. This account starts in a very, very interesting and impressive manner. Jesus was passing by, and He noticed a man who was blind from his birth. Very often, we too pass by people who are begging, people who are in dire straits, and we hardly pause to notice, let alone to something about it. but Jesus knew what was coming. The Jews were already persecuting Him, and He knew that shortly He would be crucified. I'm sure there would have been many things going through His mind, but still He had time for the beggar. And the very fact that He noticed the beggar, and therefore by corollary, his need, tells us that He's going to do something about it. Our Lord never stopped working and He brings this to our notice when He said, "My Father has also never stopped. He's still working, and so am I."

Now some people say that this incident of the healing of the blind man illustrates another very deep truth that the Savior has come to call those who are sitting in darkness, in blindness, and to call them out into the light. Isaiah 9:2 says, "They that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwelt in the valley of the land of the shadow of death, upon them has the light shined." And that is what is exemplified here. Here was a man who was in blindness, darkness right from his birth, and shortly is going to see a great light.

I remember many years ago when the Lord met me and changed me, it was as though my eyes were suddenly opened. I don't know people who have been brought up in a Christian family who have been taught the gospel right from their childhood. I don't know how it is with them. But to me, who was an absolute novice, who had never heard the gospel, never really had the Christian faith explained, never gone to church, never read the Bible till then. Suddenly one day I started seeing. It was a huge miracle. And I can fully understand what would have gone through this blind man's mind. One moment he couldn't see anything, the next he could see everything. And the great light, the Light of the world was in front of him. That's how it was with me. I knew nothing. But then suddenly, I rose up and I could see everything. And so many things were supernaturally revealed. The reading of the Bible, the theology, all that came much later. But I can only say I was blind, but then I started seeing. He opened my eyes. And that is the story of this blind man as well.

Now there were some disciples, very smart people who were there with the Lord. they were probably budding theologians. They said, "Lord, this man who is blind, he must have done something wrong. Who was it that sinned? Was it this man or was it his parents?" Now, he had been born blind. Was it he that sinned? No. Again, you have to go to Jewish tradition to understand what they meant.

They believe that when a lady was carrying a child, and she went into a place of idolatry, not only was she guilty of sin, her unborn child was also guilty of sin. They had so many beliefs. These people were more interested in asking peripheral questions.

But you find that the Lord was interested in the one who was suffering. And, rather than answering their questions directly, He decided to do something about the one who was in trouble. So He says, "Neither this man has sinned nor his parents." Now this very saying would have startled the disciples because they believed. And even today, there are many who believe that if you're going through something, you must have committed a sin. Now that's possible, but not necessary. Every suffering in this world can be traced back to the original sin, but it need not be that you have done something wrong, and therefore you are suffering.

And that's exactly what the Lord was pointing out here. Neither this man nor his parents have sinned, but this has happened. He was born blind so that the works of God might be revealed. And in a very short while, the work of God was going to be revealed in him. He was going to be healed, and the man who had never seen was going to see, far better than those who thought they could see.

Then Jesus said another very interesting thing which is very relevant to you and to me. He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is yet day; for the night is coming when no man can work."

I really don't know whether we ever pause at this point to deliberate, to think and reason about what this means to me. This is something that has meaning not only for Jesus in those days; it has meaning for you and me today. There is a time given to you and me to work. The time is coming when you cannot work even if you wanted to. There are people who miss the call of God. And then they wept when they were old saying, "I missed the call. God called me, I did not obey." And when they realized, they neither had the energy nor time to do the work for which God had called them.

There were some who kept postponing sharing the good news with somebody. But when they realized that it is time to share, the other person was no more. There are many, many different ways in which this works itself out in our lives. There is a time coming when you cannot work. That's why the Bible says, "Now is the time. Today is the day." It grieves me to see people who just come and go, and it makes no difference as to what is happening in the world. It has been said that the church is the only institution that exists for the sake of its non-members. So while it is good that we do meet together to be edified and taught, what are we doing about those who are out in the darkness?

Then the Lord Jesus said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." In another passage it goes on to say "You are the light of the world". Inasmuch as you and I reflect His light, we become the light of the world. I really don't know whether we can say this truthfully that, in my place of work, in my home, among the people that I interact with, that I am a light. Do people that see me know that here is a person who has something different about him? Let's find out what is different about him. Does our lifestyle create a questioning in the mind of those who observe us?

## **THE HEALING**

And then of course, the Lord goes on to heal him, and He adopted a very unusual method. He spat on the ground, made clay with that, and then anointed the eyes of the blind man. Now why did He do that? He had the power to speak and things would happen. I believe that one of the reasons at least is that He wanted us to focus on the healer, not on the methods, the seven methods of healing, or whatever. And He delights to break out of the norm, even today. He does things to surprise us.

Sometimes people ask: How does God speak? And the way I understand, and the way I convey to them is – when I look at nature, I find different kinds of flowers, different kinds of fruit, so many

colors, so many tastes, different smells. God is a God of variety. He speaks in different ways. And so too, He heals in different ways.

Here He adopted a very peculiar way to heal. The interesting thing here is He says to the blind man after anointing his eyes: Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. Siloam means sin. Jesus Himself was sent by the Father. And here we find Him sending the blind man to the pool of Siloam. Why did He do that? Do you remember there was another prophet who sent another man to go and wash himself and he came back healed? The story of Naaman and Elisha. He sends him; He does not say, "You go and wash and you will see." There is no explicit promise here, but probably it was implicit there. He says, "You go and wash."

So, here was this blind man. I don't know how he went; maybe feeling his way, maybe somebody took him. On the way, it would have been a walk of at least a few minutes, I'm sure several thoughts would have gone through his mind. What am I doing here? What is the point of dirtying my eyes and then asking me to go and wash them? What is the point of all of it? All these thoughts would have gone through his mind. But still, because Jesus said. You know there's something magnetic about Jesus. When He speaks, you just do it. you don't stop there to argue. You just do it. and that's why, when He called all kinds of people to follow Him, they drop what they were doing and just got up and followed. Imagine a tax collector, a rich man, he just dropped what he was doing and got up and walked. There's something special about the call. So this man, he went, he washed and he came back seeing. He obeyed, and he experienced a miracle. Everything became different.

There's a song and I love the lyrics. This is the experience of a person whose eyes have been opened by the grace of the Lord Jesus.

Heaven above is softer blue,  
Earth around is sweeter green;  
Something lives in every hue  
Christless eyes have never seen:  
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,  
Flow'rs with deeper beauties shine,  
Since I know, as now I know,  
I am His, and He is mine.

Everything changes. Everything is new. The life that was colorless, like tasteless water becomes tasty wine. It's wonderful. When I think back about my own experience, how the Lord met me and brought me. I used to be groaning on my bed on Monday mornings. I was a student in the engineering college. There I was bemoaning the long week ahead. But after the Lord met me and changed me, and gave me a new life, every day became thrilling, something to look forward to. What is going to happen today? That was the thought in my mind when I got up. And sure enough things were happening.

So here, this man suddenly started seeing. I believe that we need to bring back some passion and some emotion into our religion. Some of us have become so flat. You remember that lame man who was healed at the Beautiful Gate? He went walking and leaping and praising God. There's a chorus that we sing in Sunday school. After he started seeing, I don't know whether this blind man went leaping. I don't know what he did, but I'm sure he must have rejoiced. He must have shouted, screamed. And after that, if you read on, we find people examining him. What happened? Are you the person? No, no! you must not be the person. How can a man, born blind, start seeing? He looks like him, but he must be somebody else. He had to say that he was that person. He was different, not only because he was now seeing, but there was a light in his eyes. Earlier his eyes were lightless,

lifeless. Now there was something different about this man. So they asked him: What happened? How is it that you are able to see now? He said, "A man named Jesus, anointed my eyes/ and He said, 'Go and wash.' I did and I came back seeing."

Thereafter, the Pharisees (every story must have a villain) start cross examining him, and they said, "It is not possible. Tell us how did this happen." They called for his parents – Is this your son? They couldn't believe it. they didn't want to believe that Jesus had healed the man who was born blind because they knew that was one of the signs that only God or the Messiah could do. Not even a prophet! That was their understanding. They didn't want to believe. They didn't want to accept that this miracle had happened. But you notice, if you read on through the rest of the chapter, that Jesus Himself goes back to this man and leads him to a saving faith in Himself.

That's an interesting story, the rest of the chapter. It's very interesting to look at this man's progression in the faith and his awareness of who Jesus is. He started calling Him a man,

v. 11 – the man Jesus

v.17 – Jesus is a prophet

v. 27 I am His disciple

v. 33 Jesus is from God

vs. 35-38 He's the Son of God, I trust in Him and I worship Him.

Look at the progression from man to the Son of God and One who can be worshipped. That was the journey of this man who had been born blind.

But as far as the Pharisees are concerned, their story is completely different. And in the midst of the story, Jesus comes saying: I have come to separate the blind from those that see. I've come that those who are blind might see. And then the Pharisees asked, "Are we blind?" He says, "If you had accepted that you were blind, that would be different. But you have said you believe that you can see, and therefore your sin remains."

What is it that He was trying to say there? This. What I said just now is the last few verses of this chapter. If you want to receive your miracle, and by miracle I'm not just talking about some big supernatural thing. Even the miracle of God revealing Himself to you, not just as a sign, but the miracle of God opening your spiritual eyes. If you want to receive any of these things, you must first come to Him acknowledging your need. That's where it all starts. It's when the tax collector said, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," that God was merciful to him. And when the Pharisees said, "I thank you, I do this, I do that," was he informing God? God does not need to be informed. So he went back receiving nothing. But the tax collector went back justified.

I want to draw your attention to the crux of the passage and what it means for you and for me. The Lord will give sight and light to those who acknowledge their blindness. Not just physical blindness, even spiritual blindness. It is only when we acknowledge our need that there is hope. God does many things, but one thing He will not do; He will not force Himself into your life. And that is why in Revelation 3:20 He says, "Behold, I stand outside the door and knock." That of course is spoken to the Laodicean church. But it is very valid to anybody, not just in the church but even to those who are outside the church. He stands outside and knocks. You need to open the door of your heart and then only will He come in. So it is only when we acknowledge our need.

Remember blind Bartimaeus: Lord, I want to see. And he received his miracle. There were other blind men probably. They didn't even go to Him, and they did not receive their miracle. It's possible to stand in front of the Lord Himself and not understand who He is. It's possible to be so near to eternal life and still lose out. There is no limit to what He is willing to do to redeem you and me. To intervene

in our lives and do whatever it takes to bring deliverance into our lives. Our God is a loving God, but there is one thing He will not do – He will not force Himself.

The next point we notice from this passage is that every sign or every miracle in the Bible points to the One who does the miracle, the one who is behind the miracle. Here, Jesus Himself goes back to the man after the miracle was done and leads him to a saving faith in the Messiah. In those days there were many who were running after miracles.

John 6 – many followed Him. Today it's no different. Crowds will follow if they hear that there is a miracle worker. But do the miracles that God is pleased to work through our hands, do they point people to the Savior? Does our life point people to the Savior? That's the important question which the blind man and the Pharisees had to answer. But they arrived at different answers. The conclusion of the stories was different. The whole key question here in the story of this healing is: Who is Jesus? Who do you think He is? They said He's a sinner. The blind man, a new believer, he says that we know that God does not listen to a sinner's prayer. He will not do miracles if a sinner asks Him. He's a prophet, but more than a prophet, because one who has opened the eyes of a man born blind, according to their own belief system, had to be the Messiah. He believed; they refused to believe. He went back seeing, not just with his physical eyes but with his spiritual eyes. They remained blind. They said, "We see" but they went back as blind as they were. This man went back redeemed, saved, life transformed. They went back as they were. And that is the question that stands before you and I today.

What is your understanding of this person called Jesus? That's a question even Pontius Pilate asked: What shall I do with this man called Jesus? And the answer to this question is going to make all the difference to you and me, not just in this life, but in eternity. Each of us has to arrive at their answer independently. There is a correct answer, but you need to arrive there on your own. The Pharisees had everything in front of them. They refused to believe. It's not that they could not believe; they refused to believe. It was too much. It would have upset their whole belief system. They didn't want to go that way. They refused to believe, and completely lost out.

Remember when Jesus wept over Jerusalem? Just before the cross!  
Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings; but you would not. And now lo, your city is left unto you desolate, because you did not know the day of your visitation. They did not know that the Son of God Himself was standing before them. They refused to believe, went back blind, and as Jesus said, 'Therefore your sin remains,' their sin remained.

We'll close here. It's my prayer that every one of us, here and online, comes to the right understanding of this person called Jesus. It's vitally important that you come to the right understanding, and that having come there, you might inherit eternal life.

Amen.

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