

From Blindness To Sight.

Text: John 9:24-41

Suggested Hymns:

524, 241, 146, 286, 408

1) Who was to blame?

2) Spiritual blindness

3) The meaning of Christianity

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The theme for our sermon today is “from blindness to sight.” The text is John 9:24-41 ²⁴ *So they [the Pharisees] again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man [referring to Jesus] is a sinner.”* ²⁵ *He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”*

²⁶ *Then they said to him again, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”* ²⁷ *He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?”* ²⁸ *Then they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples.”* ²⁹ *“We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.”*

³⁰ *The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!”* ³¹ *“Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.”* ³² *“Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.”* ³³ *“If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”*

³⁴ *They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?”* *And they cast him out.*

³⁵ *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”* ³⁶ *He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”* ³⁷ *And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”* ³⁸ *Then he said, “Lord, I believe!”* *And he worshiped Him.*

³⁹ *And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."* ⁴⁰ *Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"* ⁴¹ *Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Of all the many physical blessings which God in His love and mercy has bestowed upon us, perhaps none is more precious than the sense of sight, the ability to see the beauties and marvels of God's creation, to see the wonders of His love.

Imagine, if you can, the tragic monotony of continual darkness or the painful prospect of having the light of your eyes extinguished and never again to see the colourful beauties of our countryside or the majesty of our mountains and seashore; never again to see the faces and features of our loved ones.

Can we ever thank God enough for the gift of sight as we contemplate the possibility of such a tragedy in our lives? But even if we were to suffer the fate of blindness now, we would still have our memories and could draw mental pictures of our surroundings. There is at least some degree of comfort in that.

But today we meet a man who was born blind, who never knew what it meant to see, who knew his mother only by touch and by the sound of her voice. He was an object of pity to all who knew him. Let us consider, *from blindness to sight*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Who Was To Blame?

This blind beggar sat in his accustomed place in the courtyard of the Temple begging for alms as Jesus and His disciples passed by. I have been told that blind people, as a rule, have extremely sensitive hearing. If that is true, it is very probable that our beggar heard the conversation which passed between the disciples and their Lord. He heard one of them ask Jesus, *"Whose sin has caused this tragedy? Were the parents at fault, or was the man himself to blame?"*

Can't you just see this man leaning forward, hardly daring to breathe, lest he fail to catch the Saviour's answer? He had long wanted to know the answer to that very question. What had he done to deserve this fate? How often he had asked himself that question!

Jesus who stilled the storm-driven waves of the sea now also stilled the troubled heart of this forgotten man, because He answered His disciples and said, ***“Neither this man nor his parents sinned.”***¹ That is really all this man wanted to know. Perhaps he resolved in that very moment that he would be kinder to his mother and friendlier with his father. Secretly he may have held them responsible for the tragedy in his life.

As yet, the blind man did not understand the additional words of Jesus, ***but that the works of God should be revealed in him.*** The blind man did not have long to wait before Jesus also made these words clear and showed him that his blindness was to lead him to a great blessing. Through him God would prove to the disciples and to the men and women of Jerusalem that in Christ God had appeared among men. God Himself, with infinite power to help the lame, the crippled, and the blind and to heal all the ills of sinful humanity had appeared.

Jesus made a clay with which He anointed the sightless eyes of this beggar and then directed him to wash himself in the Pool of Siloam.

The next time we see this man he is gazing in wonder at his surroundings. For the first time in his life he saw the bright sunlight. For the first time in his life he could look into the faces of others. Not everything that he saw pleased him, but the new gift of vision made him forever grateful to Jesus who had said, ***“I am the Light of the world.”***

It was truly a great miracle which Jesus had done. By His almighty power He lifted the veil which would have doomed this man to life-long darkness. Our text, however, points to an even greater miracle than this, the miracle of leading an immortal soul out of spiritual blindness into spiritual sight.

2. Spiritual Blindness

Far worse than the blindness of his eyes was the darkness which enveloped the soul of this man. His physical defect had probably filled him with a sense of bitterness. It had made him resentful toward others. Why was he singled out to suffer blindness while others were not afflicted in any way? He knew God only

as a Judge, hard and harsh, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

Grace and goodness, love and mercy, were terms that he never associated with God — not until that blessed day when Jesus saw him and took notice of him.

This spiritual blindness, so common and so universal, is more pitiful and pathetic than any lack of physical vision could ever be. These Pharisees, therefore, who were the religious leaders in Israel, who were trying so desperately to discredit the power of Christ, who were hoping to extract a denial of this miracle from the lips of the healed man using the threat of excommunication from the church, should be pitied more than this beggar.

The blind man responded to the call of Christ, but those who saw Jesus with their eyes again and again, who witnessed His divine power and goodness in the miracles which Jesus had done, still refused to recognise Him as the promised Messiah or even as a Prophet.

“We know,” they said, *“that this Man is a sinner.”* They were calling Jesus a sinner. Sadly, they were totally blind to their own great need of a Saviour. And yet they resented the words of Jesus when He said, *“For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”* Haughtily they asked, *“Are we blind also?”*

That is a question which in all humility we, too, should ask. *“Are we blind also?”* Or has the Spirit of God wrought the miracle of spiritual sight in us? Has He given us the power to see our helpless and hopeless state without Christ? Are we satisfied with ourselves, content, and confident that our life and conduct is above reproach and that God is highly pleased as He looks down upon us?

Christ has no blessing for the self-sufficient, and no healing for the well person. If you see hope for yourself by virtue of your character and goodness, as the Pharisees did, then you will remain blind, blind to your desperate need, blind to your Saviour, and blind to His help and healing.

Today we see the human race groping its way blindly down the road to sure and certain ruin. Frantically we want to halt this march to disaster. We want to cry out to everyone that military might, and scientific and technical knowledge are not the answer to humanity's need.

3. The Meaning Of Christianity

The only answer to man's need is Christianity. If you were to make this statement to an unbelieving neighbour, he would probably ask you to be more specific and say, "*What is Christianity?*" What would be your answer? A long theological analysis would probably bore him. In very simple words you could answer him in the words of the Apostles' Creed. "*I believe in God the Father Almighty. ... And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. ... I believe in the Holy Spirit. ...*"

That would be a very brief answer to his question. If you could enlarge upon this and also quote the meaning of these Articles, you would have given him a full answer as to the meaning of Christianity and its power to save. The person needs to understand that he and all people are the handiwork of the almighty God and that we must look to God, and God alone, for our protection and preservation.

The person needs to understand the destructive power of sin and see the infinite love and pity of God as revealed in the atonement of Christ on the cross. He needs to understand the importance of God's inspired Word, through which the Holy Spirit works the miracle of conversion and fills us with the sure and certain hope of life everlasting. Such an understanding would surely lead to a solution of his problems, and his blindness would be changed to sight.

The meaning of Christianity is also beautifully demonstrated in the story of the remarkable cure which Jesus wrought on the eyes of the man who had been born blind, and in the events which followed this miracle.

Jesus had applied clay to the eyes of this beggar and directed him to wash himself in the Pool of Siloam. Now, we know that neither the clay nor the water of the pool had any healing powers. It was the faith of this man, his faith in the power of Christ, that brought the light to his eyes.

"His eyes were opened." Boldly he confessed his faith in Jesus as a Prophet and a Man of God in the dispute with the Pharisees which followed this miracle. He knew that his confession would have dire and dangerous consequences and might result in his excommunication, yet he dared to say, ³³ ***"If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."*** He became the first man in Christian history to suffer for his faith.

When Jesus heard about it all, He immediately went in search of him, wishing to comfort him and to confirm him in his faith. What do you suppose the Lord Jesus said to him? He only asked him, ***“Do you believe in the Son of God?”*** And when the Lord revealed Himself to the man as the Son of God, His Helper, Healer, and Saviour, the man looked up and said, ***“Lord, I believe.”*** And immediately he knelt down and worshiped Jesus.

Here we have the final and conclusive test of Christianity. ***“Do you believe in the Son of God?”*** Our answer must be yes or no. If it is yes, you, too, have spiritual sight. The darkness of uncertainty and doubt will be exchanged for the light of His precious promises. You will be able to say with Paul, in 2 Timothy 1:12, ***I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.***

If you have lost the Lord Jesus, if the interest in material things has blinded your eyes to the only real values, then let me urge you to come back, back to the Father’s house, from which you have gone like the foolish Prodigal. Heed your Saviour’s call when He says, ***“Follow Me!”***

Follow the example of this blind man when he met Jesus. He didn’t question the procedure of Jesus or the instructions which Jesus gave Him. He simply did as he was told. And so let us also follow the directions which God has given us in His Word and live our lives according to His instructions today and tomorrow until we finally come into His glorious presence.

We conclude with the words of the Psalmist, Psalm 36:9, ***’ For with You [O Lord] is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.*** Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 9:3