

Healing of the Blind Man

by Bayless Conley

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Good morning, everyone. Good morning. I hope you are doing well. I'd like to start with a word of prayer. A prayer of declaration to give our undivided attention to God's Word today. I don't know if you are like me, but I can be easily distracted. Sometimes, I'm clapping my hands during worship, and I'm thinking about fishing. It's like, "Sorry, Lord. I'm back. I'm back." I know there is no one else in here who can relate to that at all. Your mind never wanders to anything. I know it's possible for that to happen while you are hearing a sermon preached or while you are hearing the Word read. You can miss something that God really wants to whisper to your heart that is really important for you, your family, or your future. So, can we pray and just sort of make the declaration that spirit, soul, and body, we are going to marshal all of our resources, lean out, and give God our undivided attention? Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as Your people, we come before You now. We thank You that You have brought us out of darkness and into the light. We thank You that You have made us part of this great family called the Church. Lord, we know You want us to grow. We know You have instructions for us. We know that You want to bless us, lift us, and ultimately use us to be a blessing and a lifter of others. So, we just make the decision right now to give You our undivided attention to listen to Your Word, to listen for the whisper of Your Spirit in our hearts. Jesus, above everything, we pray You would be glorified. Amen.

We are going to be in John 9 today. If you have a Bible, you can open there. This, along with the other miracles that John recorded were chosen by John for a specific purpose. I want to read to you where he says why in John 20:30–31 NKJV. He said,

³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John chooses these miracles, and he calls them signs. They are miracles that teach a lesson. These miracles teach about salvation, the deity of Jesus Christ, and the fact that He is the Son of God. This is one of the premier miracles doing that, which John has chosen. As we look at this story, we see that there are three different views concerning the blind man. First, as seen by his neighbors, he is just a blind beggar. Basically, a human parasite, a living handicap. He sat and begged. That's all they saw. Did he ever dream? Did he ever have hopes? Did he ever pray? Did he ever long for the heights? Did he ever weep in secret? Not so far as his neighbors knew. To them, he just sat and begged.

Then as seen by the disciples, the friends of Jesus, in verse 2, they didn't ask how he was to be cured, only how he became blind. They didn't inquire how he might be changed from being a beggar to being a contributor to society. They evidently held out no hope for him whatsoever. To them, he just served as the starting point for a religious debate. How many in the church today view needy people around them the same way? Instead of meeting the need, they talk about it. They debate over it. Like the disciples, they want to do an autopsy in order to discover the

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cause of death without the slightest thought of possibly bringing life. To the disciples, all this man was specimen A, an exhibit in their theological discussion. Then, there is Jesus. As He passed by, He saw a man. A creature made in the image of God possessed of the most amazing capabilities. Someone worth going to Calvary to die for. Jesus saw a man. Jesus saw a potential in him that his neighbors did not recognize, that his disciples did not recognize and that his own family didn't recognize. How do we view those around us?

Gang members hanging out on a street corner. The homeless man shuffling down the road holding his little plastic bag with all of his earthly possessions or maybe huddled in his little cardboard bed. How do we view our coworkers, our neighbors, or our own children? Do we see them as liabilities, as burdens that we wish we were rid of? Or do we see them as creatures of God teeming with potential if they could just come into contact with the Savior? Do we see them as people for whom Christ died, people who God knows and loves? When Jesus came to Peter, He said, "You are Simon, but you shall be Peter. You shall be a rock." He saw potential.

I remember I read a story once about an artist. He was walking along the street, and there was a guy there begging on the street. He was basically in rags. His hair was matted and straggly. He had a long beard from months and months of not shaving it. He was dirty. The artist gave him some money and then went away. He was touched by it. He decided to make a portrait of the guy or a painting. So, he paints the guy, but he paints him clean shaven, with a haircut, in a suit, and with a briefcase. A few days later, when he finished it, he came back to the spot. There's the guy, and he says, "I have something for you." He hands him the painting. The guy said, "Who is this?" He said, "It's the man I see in you." His response was, "If that is the man you see in me, that is the man I shall become."

My friend, God sees things in you. He sees potential. Jesus saw potential in the blind man. Who would have thought that this blind man had a future? Not his neighbors. Not the disciples of Jesus. Not the Pharisees. Not his own family, but Jesus did. Fifty years ago, who would have thought that I had a future? I was hopelessly messed up on drugs. I was tangled up in Eastern religions and witchcraft. To a lot of people, I was just something to pass over and to discard, but not to Jesus. Jesus saw a diamond in the rough. Jesus saw potential. Thank God He did. He sees a future for you.

Now, let's learn some lessons that this story teaches about redemption and about God's Son. First of all, in verse 1, it says this man was blind from birth. That is an accurate picture of the man or woman in an unsaved state. Spiritually blind from birth. We come into this world with a sinful nature. It can be traced back beyond us and beyond our parents all the way back to Adam in the garden. Romans 5:12 NKJV says,

¹² Therefore, just as through one man (that is Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

Romans 5:19a NKJV of the same chapter says,

¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

Psalms 51:5 NKJV says,

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

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Friend, our spiritual blindness is hereditary. It was our father, Adam, who put out our eyes. It goes all the way back to the one who was the fountainhead of the human race. It was our state and is the state of countless others who are unsaved. Spiritually blind. Blind to their pitiful condition without God. Blind to the fact that they are about to slip into a Christless eternity. Blind of their need for a Savior. I was thinking yesterday about an old friend of mine. His name was Don. We were best friends since kindergarten, and we still hang out occasionally. I'll go by his house, and we just hang out and talk for a while.

We were probably 15 years old, and I don't know if it was his dad or my dad who drove us back into the San Gabriel mountains and dropped us off. I think for two or maybe three days. We had our little backpacks and our fly rods in the San Gabriel River. We hiked back, went off-road, and hiked as far back as we could go into the east fork of that river. We made a little camp. We went fly fishing and caught a bunch of trout. We decided to go exploring. Alright, two 15-year-olds were climbing through all these hills back here and back there. Lo and behold, we found an old abandoned mine. We didn't have a flashlight. We had a couple of books of matches. So, we decided to go into this old mine and light a match. We would go in, and it would light our way, and then the match would go out. So, we would light another one and go back until it burned our fingers. It was wet, and it was stinky. We went back and burned a whole book of matches getting back. We only have one book of matches left. Don says, "I'm not going any farther." I said, "I am." He says, "I'll wait."

So, he waited there in the darkness, and I lit another match. I kept going and going. Eventually, I got to this point. I lit a match. I looked down, and I was about six inches from another shaft that went straight down. I almost stepped into it, straight down in the darkness. Then, the match went out. I'm in complete blackness. I light another match, and I dropped it straight down the shaft. That little match went down, down, down, down, down, down and just disappeared into the darkness. I thought, "I'm glad I had a match." I made my way back to Don. We are out of matches now. You can't see the light at the entrance of the opening of the mine. We did it. We did make our way out. I was that close to plunging into just utter darkness. Friend, without the light of the gospel, people will tumble into eternal darkness. It's only the light of the gospel. Only Jesus Christ can open a person's eyes. John 3:3 NKJV says,

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

You can't see the kingdom if you are not born again. Well, how does that happen? Jesus told us. It was in red up there on the screens. In John 9:3–4. Jesus said, "If the work of God is going to be revealed in him, I must work the work of Him who sent me." Jesus is the only one who can bring about the new birth. Jesus is the only one who can truly change a life for eternity. He must do the work. He is the light of the world. There is no other Savior or no other God. Only Jesus can take us out of darkness and into the light. Only Jesus can cure us of our spiritual blindness.

I'm not just talking about all of the people out there in the world, the non-church people. There are millions of people who sit in churches today who are spiritually blind. They are trying to see by being religious. They are trying to see by being self-righteous through religious rituals and good works. They cannot point to a day or an hour in their experience when the Spirit of God opened their eyes and revealed to them that they were a sinner and that they needed to be saved. They can't point to a moment in time where they stepped out of darkness and into light—to a moment when they were born for above. They may be religious, but that is not the same thing as being saved.

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Going to church does not make you a Christian. Water baptism is good. It is a command of Jesus, but water baptism won't save you. If you are not saved, you go in as a dry devil, and you come out as a wet devil. All it does is get you wet. It is supposed to be an expression of something that has already happened to you on the inside. It is a declaration of an inward grace that my eyes have been opened. I found the Savior. I have a new life. That is when it means something. I pray that God quickens you today if you are still in spiritual darkness, that He reveals to you your need of a Savior. Because if you can't see it, you will go into eternal darkness without God and without hope.

It's interesting. Jesus referred to hell as outer darkness. Then, consider the method Christ used to restore this man's sight. He spit on the ground, mixed His saliva with some dirt, and made clay. He put it on the guy's face. I mean, the thought of it disgusts most people. So, does God's method of rescuing people out of their spiritual blindness. God has chosen it through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. There are some people who think, "Man, that is going to make you even more blind than you were before. The guy is blind now. You made him more blind than he was before." That is the way some people feel about the gospel.

I remember when I got saved. I was so changed. I would talk to anyone or anything who would stand still long enough. The first thing I did was go to all of my friends. When I came back to California, I had a dear friend, one of my best friends living up in the Bay Area. I drove all the way up to the Bay Area just to tell him about Jesus. He was not happy. I remember when I was leaving, he came out, and he was yelling at me. I still remember his words to this day. He said, "Bayless, this Christian thing has got you in a headlock, and you can't see." Now the truth was, I was seeing for the first time in my life, and he was the one who was still blind. Jesus does open our eyes.

Then, when the guy went to the pool of Siloam and came back seeing, they almost didn't recognize him. They said, "Is this the guy who sat and begged?" They said, "Well, he looks like him." He said, "No. No, it's me!" The same thing happened to some of you. You were so radically changed that people didn't recognize you. It happened to me. My friends were like, "Hey, it looks like Bayless, but he doesn't sound like Bayless. He doesn't talk like Bayless. Something has happened to some of your family members. You were so different, so changed, they thought, "What in the blank has happened to you?"

I remember some friends came to visit me. I was living in Ashland, Oregon. It's interesting. Yesterday, I got a call from my grandson, Asher. He said, "Papa, I'm in Lithia Park." It's in Ashland, Oregon. It is the park where the little boy told me about Jesus all those years ago. I said, "Cool! Asher, check this out and check that out." I told him about some things that were there. I had some friends who came to visit me. I'm living in this little room above a bar at the time. I had been saved about a month. These two guys that came, we had a real history together. I could not count how many times we had gotten high together. That's all we did for years and years.

They came to visit me. I make everybody a cup of tea. We are sitting down. One of them pulls a pipe out of his pocket. It was full of dope. He lights it up, starts smoking it, and passes it to the other guy. He goes to pass it to me. I go, "No thanks." I cannot describe to you the look on their faces when I said, "No thanks." They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Guys, I don't do that anymore." I said, "I'm high on the Most High." They looked at me like I had just fallen up a well. They just shook their heads and couldn't believe it. This guy that they almost didn't recognize him when he came back. Then, this story strikes me, as does the magnificent composure and

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calmness of Jesus. Let's just back up to the eighth chapter a little bit. We get the context of where this happened. I want to read to you John 8:57–59 NKJV.

⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." ⁵⁹ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

John 9:1 NKJV,

¹ Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

As He passed by—He is leaving the temple, and these guys are about to stone Him. After such rough treatment from the Jews, would you have had eyes for a blind man? Jesus seemingly forgot about the angry Jews and forgot about the stones. All He can see is this poor man and his great need. This blind man didn't cry out. He was just sitting alone in his darkness, and Jesus saw him. And at what a time did He see him. I know some of you are sitting here today in your pain. You are listening to me, and no one knows the inward struggle that is going on and the inward strife that is happening in your life. He sees you. He sees you in your darkness. He sees you in your trouble.

No one else may see you, but my friend Jesus sees you. I think when we are faced with our own problems and persecutions, do we become so absorbed in our personal difficulties that we don't see the desperate people around us? People who sit in silence and darkness like this blind man or do we think, "I don't have time for such things. I have my own problems." Oh, that God would get a hold of us and open our eyes to see the needs of those around us. To see millions upon millions of people sitting in spiritual darkness, tottering on the edge of eternity. May we learn to lift up our eyes and look on the harvest fields that are ripe and ready for harvest.

Then, you can't read this story without missing the reaction of the religious leaders. You would think that the Pharisees would have been delighted that one in their church, one of their members had been healed. The man had never seen a sunrise. He had never seen a lake. He had never seen a mountain. He had never seen his mother's face that had kissed him. He was handicapped. He was begging. He was bound by poverty. He had always suffered. Now, he is healed and rejoicing in the goodness of God. Were they happy? No. They didn't care about him, and they never had. They were only interested in the one who had healed him on the wrong day and broken the Sabbath. They hated Jesus, and they took it out on this poor man.

As far as they were concerned, they liked him better with his little dish and his white cane. A blind beggar. Now he is calling Jesus a prophet and saying He was from God, and they didn't like it one bit. When they failed to intimidate him, they cast him out. They actually labeled him first. That spirit is still just rife in the world today, and I think it's of the devil. If we don't want to listen to someone, we just label them. "Yeah, they are a conspiracy theorist. Okay, it doesn't matter if they have facts. It doesn't matter if it's provable. I have labeled him, so now I don't have to listen to you. Or you're a left-wing socialist. All right, doesn't matter what you have to say. Doesn't matter if it's provable. I don't have to listen because I've labeled you. You are an Uncle Tom. You are a redneck hillbilly." We label people, and we just shut them off. We can shut the facts off. We can shut the truth off. That is what they did.

They said, "You are completely born in sins." Literally meaning, you are completely depraved. "It's your parents' sin. It's your own sin, and we are the judges. Get out of here."

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We don't have to listen to you." The guy's argument against the Pharisees was sound. It was biblical. It was strong, and they didn't want to hear it. So, they labeled him and cast him out. The moment they put a label on him, "We don't have to listen to you anymore." Let us not be guilty of that same sin. It creates division. It creates strife. It is from the devil. Do you know that many religious people sneer at those who have experienced the light and who have been set free by Jesus? They don't want any boat rockers in their circle. They like their dead formalism, their ritual, and if someone comes along and stirs things up, they may cast them out.

I taught a Bible study in Los Alamitos many years ago, a few years before we even started the church, probably four or five years before that. There are still people here at Cottonwood who were in that Bible study, and can tell you that this was true. One of the people who regularly came brought a friend. She brought a woman who was a semi-invalid. The woman she brought could barely move. Most days, she was not able to get out of bed. On a good day, she could get along like this. Literally, it was hard to watch her. I heard her story later. Her husband had left her. He just said, "I can't. I can't handle having to care for you any longer." She said, "If he would sit on the edge of the bed, and the bed moved, I would scream in pain. I was in that much pain every day."

In that Bible study, we laid hands on her and prayed for her. Jesus miraculously healed her in front of everyone. It was amazing! Spectacular! I will never forget it. She is sobbing like a child. Sobbing. She went around to every single person in that room, took them by the shoulders, and said, "Jesus has healed me!" She is bending over. Her friend told me she had a downstairs apartment in an apartment complex. When she got back, she ran up to the top of the stairs, ran down the stairs, ran up, and ran down again. Completely, totally, marvelously, and miraculously healed. Then I didn't hear from her. She didn't come back. I talked to her friend, who brought her about a month later. I said, "Where is your friend?" She said, "Well, she went back to her little church."

It's where all her friends were. That is where her connections were when she was able to go. That is where she would go, and they threatened her. They said, "Look, Jesus does not heal today. This is not of God, and if you keep talking about it, you are not welcome among us anymore." It just shocked me to hear that. "We don't want to hear this, and if you keep talking about healing and saying that Jesus is still doing this, we don't care what things look like. We don't care what's happening to you. You are no longer welcome among us." Her friend said that because of the connections and things that she had there, she actually allowed them to muzzle her. She never spoke about it again. Tragic, I think.

Sometimes, even your own family may not stand with you. This man's own family didn't stand with him in the story. Many of God's faithful have been persecuted and experienced such things. They have refused to go with the status quo, refused empty religion, refused to walk arm in arm with the world, choosing rather to live by the Word of God, not ashamed of the name of Christ. Sometimes, they have been turned out and cut off from family and friends. Jesus said, "I didn't come to bring peace on the earth. I came to bring a sword. And a man's enemies will be those of his own household." Some of you have experienced it.

Now, thank God my dad got saved and was Spirit-filled. When I came back, I was with him one day. The truth is, I probably had a whole lot more zeal than I had wisdom. He looked at me one day and said, "I liked you a lot better when you were on drugs." He was not happy about my Christianity. Now, eventually, God got through to him. Dad got saved and became a solid member of the church. I'm thankful for that. It was pretty rough going for a few years there between my dad and I. Some of you know exactly the kind of thing I'm talking about.

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Then, when he was cast out, Jesus heard about it. It says that Jesus found him. That meant that Jesus went looking for him. I love it. When I couldn't come to Him, He came to me. Imagine Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He said, "Who is He Lord that I might believe?" Imagine the tears flowing from his eyes when Jesus said, "It's Me. I'm talking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. Jesus received that worship because He is God in the flesh. If not, this beggar has become an idolater and Jesus a blasphemer. No, my friend, He is deity. He is the Son of the living God. Well, certainly, the greater truths to glean from this story have to do with redemption, salvation, and what Christ has come to do in bringing the world into God's family. Let us not pass over the obvious truth that teaches us that Jesus is a healer.

I just want to share four things in connection with the healing of this man blind from birth. Number one, debating theological conundrums is not as important as helping people. The disciples just wanted to debate. "Let's have a theological debate. Who sinned, he or his parents, that he was born blind?" Listen, helping people is more important than theological debates over difficult things.

I remember once, after a service, a guy was here for his first time at the church. He made a beeline for me, and he wanted to argue. Not about the message, but when the bookshop was open, and we used to have it out in the foyer, he just went off about some book that he didn't like that was in the bookshop. I didn't even know the book was in the bookshop. I don't have anything to do with the books that were in there. There was something in the book that he didn't agree with. So, he is taking me to task. He just wanted to argue and debate. I said, "I don't know about that book," but he would not relent. He just wanted to have this religious debate over it.

Meanwhile, a line has formed behind him. There is someone on crutches. There was a lady who kept having to sit down and stand up. Her husband was with her. It turns out she was in the late stages of cancer. She had come for prayer, and this guy was completely oblivious to it. He kept me there for about 20 minutes. He wouldn't stop talking and arguing. Meanwhile, there are people lined up behind him with real needs. This is just such a picture of what we see in this story. I'm going to say it again: Debating religious, theological conundrums is not as important as helping people. Did you notice that Jesus never answered the why? When it came to this man's condition, Jesus didn't answer the why, but He did bring relief and the cure.

We can get over-occupied with trying to figure out why or how certain things happen. Why did so and so experience this tragedy? Friend, no one except God has all the answers to those things. I do know we are living in a fallen world. Everything does not operate the way God originally intended. One day, He is going to make a new heaven and a new earth. Everything will be in perfect order with no more crying, no more tears, and no more sickness. In the meantime, we do have an adversary called the devil who walks around as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. There are all of the offspring of sin throughout the world. We read in Romans 5 that through Adam's sin, death entered the world. Well, sickness is just incipient death. Destruction, all of those things came into the world as the offspring of sin. I don't have all the answers as to why, but I do know the one who does. My main job is to help people, not to try and solve every religious debate. It is one thing if you have an honest question, but some people just want to debate for the sake of debating.

Number two, the work of God is healing. When the disciples said, "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent

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Me.” That the works of God should be revealed in him. In other words, the works of God hadn't been revealed in him yet. The blindness was not the work of God. The restoring of sight was.

Did you know, just a matter of interest, all of the original manuscripts from the New Testament are written on papyrus, and there is no punctuation? It is all capital case letters, and there is no separation between the words. All the punctuation, all the verse designations, and all the chapter designations were added by translators for clarity, and thank God they did. The words are all inspired, but the punctuation is not always inspired. I just want to read to you the way I think this should be written. Jesus answered, neither has this man sinned, nor his parents. Period. Neither has this man nor his parents sinned. Period. But that the works of God should be revealed in him, I must work the works of Him who sent Me. Period.

Either way, we know the works of God hadn't been revealed in him yet until Jesus opened his eyes. Imagine the blind man hearing the words of Jesus in verse 5. The very next thing He said, “I am the light of the world.” That was the beginning of faith for this blind man. If you are bound by sin, you need to hear that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. If you are tormented by oppression, you need to hear that He is the Prince of Peace. If you are sick in your body, you need to hear that He is the one by whose stripes you are healed. If you want faith, find out all you can about Jesus. He is the author and the finisher of our faith.

If you will walk through Matthew, walk through Mark, walk through Luke, walk through John, linger on the stories, see how Jesus dealt with people, and listen to the things that He said, faith will come to you unconsciously. The worst thing you can try to do is try to have faith or to try to believe. Don't try to believe. Just feed on the Word of God and faith comes unconsciously. Faith is the unconscious byproduct of the indwelling Word. Romans 10:17 NKJV says,

¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It goes by not hearing the Word of God. Oh my! Then, there's the method. I want to comment on this. Jesus spit, made clay out of his saliva, and put it on his eyes. Naaman the Syrian was a leper, and the prophet told him to dip in the Jordan River seven times, and he was healed. Hezekiah was given a death sentence. The prophet told him to take a lump of figs and put it on the inflamed part where the boil was, and he was healed. Jesus told the ten lepers to go show themselves to the priest. Here, again, clay was put on the man's eyes, and he was told to go to the pool of Siloam. There was no virtue in the clay. There was no virtue in the pool. There was no virtue in the Jordan River for Naaman. There was no virtue in the figs for Hezekiah. Those things were just tangible items that helped their faith. You can't put God in a box. Healing can come in so many different ways.

Here are just a couple of thoughts in connection with the method. First of all, faith is an act. Jesus put mud on this guy's eyes. Imagine it. He's never seen. He says, “Go to the pool of Siloam.” Now, I'm sure he had heard of the pool of Siloam, but if you study from where Jesus was, it is like about a third of a mile, somewhere between a quarter of a mile and a half a mile is the pool of Siloam, through crowded winding streets and alleys. Imagine this blind guy trying to find his way to the pool of Siloam. Do you think that was easy? He is bumping into people. Carts are coming by. People are going, “What the heck are you doing?” He said, “Where is the pool of Siloam?” I mean, it must have taken him the longest time to get there. Faith is an act. In the book of James, it says, “Faith without corresponding actions is dead.”

In fact, even in James 5, it says, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church. Let them come pray over him, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer

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of faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." There is action required there. Then obedience releases God's blessings. That is the second thing. When this man obeyed, he was healed, and I'm quite sure he just didn't get it. "I can't see what you have done, but I heard you spit. I know where the mud that you put on my face came from. Now, you are telling me to go across town to an area I am unfamiliar with and wash it off in a pool? That makes no sense," but he did it. He did it.

In the Bible, it says to bring all the tithe into the storehouse. God says He will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing for you. That doesn't make sense. No. No, if I give the first part of what I have to God, then I am going to have less. That doesn't make sense. Of course, it doesn't, but it does require obedience to see the blessing of God, and so many of God's promises are that way. Things that He whispers by His Spirit, things declared in the Word.

Many of you have heard me share this story. When Pastor Harrison, our oldest son, was a little boy, he got this terrible fever. We prayed for him and did all we could. We took him to the doctor, but this thing just raged for days. He lost most of his hearing. The doctor said, "It doesn't look good. I don't know if his hearing is ever going to come back. You just need to get used to it." I would estimate probably 80% or more of his hearing was gone. We were devastated as young parents. We would stand behind him and go, "Harrison." I'm standing 3 feet behind him, and he can't hear me. I have to yell at him, standing behind him for him to go, "Yeah." He couldn't hear. We prayed. We fasted. We had done everything we knew to do.

He had gone to bed one night. I was praying, and the Holy Spirit whispered to my heart and said, "Go into your son's room and sing over him." I didn't feel like doing that. I was upset. I was broken inside, but I went in. I lifted my hands. It was one of the hardest things I ever did. I began to sing and rejoice. I felt nothing. I felt as dry as a desert and as dead as a graveyard, but I did it. Five minutes, ten minutes, I'm singing, and I'm worshipping God. He is just sleeping there in the bed. Fifteen minutes have passed, and I feel just still deader than a hammer. At about the 20-minute mark, something changed in the atmosphere. I began to laugh. I can't explain it, except this note of victory came into my spirit. I just knew something had happened, and I laughed. I thanked God, and I think I probably cried a little bit. I went on to bed. In the morning, when Harrison got up, his hearing was restored 100%. It has been perfect from that day to this day. Somebody says how? I don't know. I just obeyed what God had put in my heart, and results came.

Then, the fourth and final thought is the opening of this man's physical eyes led to the opening of his spiritual eyes. It was progressive. In verse 11, he called Jesus a man. In verse 17, he called Him a prophet. In verse 38, he called Him Lord, and he worshipped Him. In Acts 8, in the city of Samaria, Philip went there. There were miracles, healings, and the supernatural got their attention. Then, the Word was preached. They were saved. In Acts 9, through the healing of Aeneas, who had been paralyzed for eight years, two cities came to Christ as a result of the healing of that one man. It says all who dwelt in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

May we never forsake or play down this aspect of the gospel. The great commission is to lay hands on the sick, cast out demons, and preach the gospel. Jesus is still a Healer. Jesus is still a Savior. He is still the Prince of Peace. He has not diminished in any way. We should preach a full, bold, compassionate gospel. Again, I want to emphasize that I stand as one before you who doesn't have all the answers, but I know the one who does. Whatever is broken in your life, I'm telling you, Jesus can fix it. However dark your circumstances are, Jesus has light for you. He can help you in the worst of circumstances.

Healing of the Blind Man

The arm of the Lord is not shortened that He cannot save. My friend, He is all-powerful. There is nothing too difficult for our Lord. He is mighty. Maybe you can relate to a past like mine. I made a lot of mistakes and made a lot of bad choices. I got in a lot of trouble and had quite a few addictions in my life. A twelve-year-old kid was the first one who ever talked to me about Jesus Christ and shared salvation with me.

It rocked my world, and when I embraced Jesus, He was reaching out to me first. When I said, "Yes," He changed my life. Maybe you can relate to somebody with a past and a history like mine. On the other hand, I was actually talking to somebody outside whose daughter is in Wisconsin now. We got to talk a little bit about you, Janet, before the beginning of service. My wife Janet is a farm girl from central Wisconsin. This woman has never smoked a cigarette in her life. She was kind of the opposite of me in every way. I started smoking, I think, when I was 11. One day, she came to the realization that she was just as lost as someone like me.

We are not saved by our good works. We are not saved by doing religious rituals or fulfilling religious duties. We are saved by faith. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born of a virgin. He came to this world. He lived a sinless life. He was taken by wicked, cruel hands, and He was crucified. He was put to death on a cross as our substitute. The death on the cross was horrific. If you read about it, I mean, it just makes you cringe. It was the worst form of capital punishment that existed in the world at that time. It caused people to suffer for the longest and the worst. That was not the worst of His sacrifice. The Bible says, "He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us."

Isaiah said, "His very soul became a sacrifice for our sins." God laid my sin on Jesus. The penalty for lying. The penalty for adultery. The penalty for murder. Any other thing you can think of. The penalty for all of those sins was laid upon Jesus. He carried it willingly. Why? So, we could go free. It doesn't make sense. It's too big. It's too grand, but He did it. It is a love that is hard to understand. Throughout eternity, we will be plumbing the depths of this love. Trying to find the borders of it, but there are no borders. There is no height. There is no border. There is no depth that can't be reached. Such a love. It shows how valuable you are to God and how much He wants to change your life.

But you have to be willing. I loved Pastor Harrison's message last week. It was just brilliant. He talked about the intersection of grace and sin. Jesus doesn't leave us the way we were. It can't be, "Okay, I need to tick this box, just pray a little prayer, and then I'm good, and I can live however I want." No, He changes us. And from the moment we embrace Christ as we spend time in His Word, His Spirit begins to conform us to His image. From the inside out, it is a wonderful thing. Not always fun, but it is wonderful.

I just want to pray with you. If you are here today, and you have never made Jesus the Lord of your life. If you are out on the plaza, wherever you might be watching or listening right now, and you are tired of going the way you have been going. You know your life needs to change. You want to say "Yes" to Jesus Christ. We are going to pray together and then we are going to do something. We are going to take five minutes and do something before we dismiss today. Let's do this first. Maybe bow your heads and close your eyes. If you mean business, I am going to give you some words to pray. Now, they will mean nothing if you don't tie a sincere heart around them. If you will tie your heart around the words and speak them to God, He will hear you. Just pray out loud after me. Say,

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Dear God, I humbly come before You. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe You love the world so much that You sent Him to die for the world. I believe He died for me. I believe He carried the penalty for my sins in His own body on that tree. I believe He was raised from the dead and that He sits at your right hand. You promised that whoever calls on the name of the Lord that You would save them. I'm calling on the name of the Lord now. Jesus, save me. I call You, Lord. I give You my life, and from this moment forward, anything You want, I'm Yours, Jesus. It is in Your name I pray, amen.

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