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## JOHN 9

### John Series

As we come before the Lord I want to ask you to pray in your own hearts before God and ask Him to use these next thirty minutes or so to touch you in your own life.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, right now we dedicate ourselves to you, our hearts to you. We open your word now or turn our Bibles on or whatever it is with a sense of anticipation, knowing that you speak to us candidly, openly, honestly. You reveal new information to us. You point out weaknesses that we have. You help us to see life more appropriately and better. Lord, we need that. We are weak people. We are challenged in our lives and limited by our own personal limitations and we need you to expand our vision and to increase our ability to see what you're doing in this world. So right now, Lord, we open our hearts to you and ask that you would speak to us as we look at this passage. In Jesus' name, amen.

In the previous chapter in John 8 we saw Jesus saying that He is the light of the world. We saw that in John 8:12 He says this: *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

It's going to be very appropriate that this week as we get into John 9 he's going to talk about healing a blind man. Here he's talking in John 8 about walking in darkness, having the light of life. Now John takes the story in John 9 of the blind man and tells us that story in a way that we can understand it. It just kind of plays off of this idea that Jesus is the light of the world.

As we ended John 8 we saw at the end (and you can see this right in your text in the Bible there) it says the last verse in John 8, *At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.* Jesus claimed to be God. That was so foreign for the religious leaders to accept – that Jesus could be God. I think hard for us sometimes to understand that in our own lives, but it's a very important lesson because I think we are tempted to be like the Pharisees sometimes and God has some important things He wants us to understand, He wants us to share with us.

So we go into John 9. It starts this way: *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.* It's interesting to note that of all the problems that Jesus healed people of, the one that is mentioned the most is blindness. It's also interesting that this is the only passage in the Bible where it says that Jesus healed a man that was born blind. This is going to be an important story as we go through.

He says in verse 1, *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

No one had to tell Jesus that this man was blind from birth, He just knew that. I can imagine walking with the disciples because Jesus was always doing things that were surprising to them and they see Him see this blind man. They see the blind man, they see Him look at the blind man, and I imagine them saying to themselves, "Oh, here we go again. Something's about to happen." They see that look of compassion in Jesus' eyes, I suppose, as He's looking at this man and they know that He's going to do something.

It draws them to a very important question that they want to ask, a question that's bothering them in their own mind. And so they decide to ask this theological question of Jesus as they're proceeding here. The question is: *"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

That's a very important question. I'm really glad they're asking the question because it's the same kind of question that many people ask today. It's a question that they ask that says when a problem happens in a person's life that's unfair, whose fault is it? It's a really difficult question. I think it's a complicated question sometimes.

Sometimes it's the fault of a lot of different people that someone has a problem or they're suffering in their lives. Sometimes it's impossible to answer that question this side of eternity. We don't know. We may never know why a person has a particular problem, but it's particularly challenging. When a person has a problem in their life that seems to be not of any fault of their own, they couldn't have done anything about it, they're just kind of a victim of a difficult situation. You think of some of those kids with bloated bellies in Kitui, Kenya where you can see their bones and you're just going, "Why? Why suffering like this?"

We look at people around who find themselves in really difficult situations in life, challenging situations, painful situations, and you go, "Why? Why is this? How could this happen?" It would be really easy if everything was just so balanced that you worked up to Level 5 and you got Level 5 worth of reward. If you did Level 3, you only got Level 3 worth of reward. But it doesn't happen that way.

Sometimes there are people who do terrible things and they seem to be prospering. There are times that the righteous people, the people who are doing good things, seem to suffer. It doesn't seem like it's fair. It doesn't all balance out.

So the disciples are asking a really important question – why? How could this be true?

Often this is a problem for some people when they actually are thinking about whether they want to be a Christian or not. There are some people who say, "I cannot believe in a God who would allow such unjust suffering in the world. How could a loving God allow the innocent to suffer?" It's a great question.

I think it's important for John to include it in his book here because the whole purpose of this book of John (if you haven't been with us, I'd read all the way through) is to motivate us to come to Jesus Christ and to recognize Him as God and to entrust our lives to Him. That's the whole purpose. So it's very wise, it seems to me, for John to have included this story and this question – why is this person blind?

There were some perceptions in the day of why a person might have a particular problem. If a baby's born blind then sometimes they even thought that the person must have sinned in their womb. The baby's wrestling around inside and I know there are some moms who are thinking, "This baby's sinning. It ought to go to sleep." And so they had this perception that maybe somebody could actually sin in the womb. Or some of them had a perception that if a person was suffering as a baby like this it was the fault of the parents' and this was the punishment because it was their child and so now they're being punished.

Sometimes they even get that from the Bible where it talks about the sins of the parents being passed on to the third and fourth generation. Let's go look at the verse so you're not confused and we make sure that we understand it. The verse is in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 4. Let me read that command and then we'll go through and see the comment.

He says in Exodus 20:4, "*You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands.*"

You've just got to see this in context. Notice the words *who hate me*. That's got to be really important here if you're trying to understand this because we're not on the side of *hate me*, okay? We're on the side of *love me* here.

What happens to the side of love me? He passes this love – do you see the word *love* there? Someday we're going to get into this word in the Old Testament and I'll unpack it then. But this is the Old Testament word *hesed*, which means loving kindness, the faithfulness of God demonstrated in the way that He cares for us. There's so much packed into this. It's based on His covenant – how He loves us and cares for us. This is a very powerful word.

Who gets that love? *Thousands of generations to those who love me and keep my commands.* That's what we need to be looking at. God blesses us. He wants to bless us in a number of ways.

Let's go back to the question. *Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* That's the question that's being asked. In some sense there is a sense that we could say that problems in our world happen because of sin. If we're going to say that it's because we look at original sin.

When Adam sinned the Bible tells us a lot of bad things happened. It corrupted our world itself, the weeds came in, it affected human relationships. There are all kinds of things that happened

because of original sin that came into our lives. So when Adam sinned it started deteriorating our world. Bacteria started forming that we have now, viruses, and it continues to get bad.

So there's a way that you can say that all bad things happen as a result of sin. We live in a corrupt world and so that sin is ultimately the cause. But it's a very different thing to talk about general sin or sin of Adam and personal sin. To suggest that every bad thing that happens to a person is because of their personal sin is a mistake. That's not what God teaches and Jesus is going to clarify that in just a moment.

Now let me just say that if something bad happens to you I think the first question you want to ask is, "Am I doing something wrong that's causing this?" Because it may be that the present problem you have is because of your own sin. Maybe if you're sinning in a particular way and you're being angry and you're starting to get ulcers, maybe I ought to think about this because maybe the problem I'm having is a result of my own sin. So I think we need to ask that question.

But if the answer isn't obvious there, if there isn't some reason that we see, we don't want to be plaguing ourselves with guilt because the reality is not every suffering event is the result of personal sin. We must understand that. Sometimes it is, but not always. Sometimes it happens for other reasons and that's why Jesus answers the question.

I like the way He answers it. Look at verse 3. *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

He's bringing the idea of the light back in now and He's going to talk about that, which He talked about in the last chapter. Now He's going to talk about it and He's healing this man.

I can imagine the man. He's sitting there and He's hearing what's going on. Because if a person's blind, they have a greater acuity in their other senses. So he can hear what's going on and he hears the disciples' question, I suppose. They're saying, "Do you think this man was born blind because he sinned or because his parents sinned?" I'm sure the man's going, "Oh boy. Here we go again," because I'm sure other people, as they do even in our world, in our lives they often say, "You're suffering because of your sin." So I'm sure that he was hearing that.

And to hear the comforting words of Jesus who said, *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned that he was born blind,"* I imagine that was like, "Well it's about time. Yes! I want to hear what else this guy has to say." There's this statement that Jesus makes because Jesus isn't going to focus on the cause, Jesus is going to focus on the solution. I really like that.

In verse 6 he says, *After saying this, he (that's Jesus) spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

This is just an amazing story. That man had been born blind. That means he had never seen light before. It says that *he went, he washed, and he came home seeing.*

I think there are two things that are motivating him to go walk this distance to get to the Pool of Siloam to wash himself. One thing that's motivating him to move toward this healing process – notice, by the way, Jesus doesn't say, "Okay you're healed," like He does with somebody. He involves this man in his own healing. You have to do something in order to experience healing. That's what He does with this guy. He says, "I want you to obey and then you'll receive your sight." So He sends this man down.

I think there are two things motivating him to go down to the pool. One is the gracious and loving words of Jesus that are sending him to do this. The second thing is he has dirt in his eyes and he's got to get rid of it.

The reason I say that is because I think that sometimes that's the motivation for us to go to the pool. Sometimes we experience in our own lives some kind of problem. The dirt in our eyes, the irritation. We start saying to ourselves, "I am tired of this. My anger is getting the best of me. I've got to do something about it, and so I'm going to go to the pool of God's word more often now. I'm going to dig into God's word, get back to my regular quiet time, and I'm going to enjoy that. I'm going to let God do that work in me."

Or we start having this problem that habit's getting the best of us. The habit that we know we shouldn't be involved in, but it's starting to get over. "I've got to get back to church. I've got to get involved in that home fellowship," and God uses the pool of the home fellowship in order to be that place where I'm refreshed and God does the healing.

Sometimes God involves us in the miracle that He wants to do in our hearts. Sometimes He sends us to the pool. Sometimes it's the irritation in our own eyes that we see that drives us to the pool. That's what's happening in this man's life. He's going back. He's going back to this pool and he's going to receive the healing that God wants to provide for him.

Now it's interesting that there's a point made. See in verse 7 John stops and puts in this parenthesis that *this word means "Sent."* He's trying to make some application there. Probably what he's trying to say is the Father sent the Son, as Jesus has already said several times in John. The Father sent the Son. And now the Son is sending the man to go and do this job. It means sent. It's all about being sent.

We have to realize that God has done the same thing in our lives. He's sent us. We're on a mission. If you don't have a mission-oriented view of your life then you need one.

One of the interesting things about adolescent teenagers is usually between the ages of twelve and sixteen there isn't that mission-oriented view of life, it's more of a I do what I feel like doing. I stay up late at night, I play video games, I text in the middle of the night. I do all these kind of things. But an interesting transformation takes place when a child moves out of that first stage of adolescence in to the next one where they start having a mission-oriented view of life.

I think many of us are in that ourselves. Where we're in an early stage of adolescence spiritually and when we recognize that God has sent us then we can move forward. So he makes this point about being sent.

Notice it gives a statement of what happened to him. It says, *So the man went and washed, and came home seeing*. It's not complicated. Obey and he saw the results, a miracle took place in his life. Now here's a man who had never seen light before.

I just spent time pondering this as I'm looking at the worship songs. I know what I'm going to be teaching about, so I'm looking at the big beautiful picture of the mountain or the stream or all the videos that are behind the words that we sing and I'm thinking, "Wow. I am so glad that I can see." If I had to lose one sense it would not be my eyesight. That would be the last sense I would want to lose because I value that so much.

Here's a guy who had never seen light before. Can you imagine? I just can't imagine what that would be like. I can see fingers for the first time. Wow. To see faces of people for the first time. To see flowers. To see birds. To look up in the sky. To see color. Wow. What was it like for him to walk from the pool back to his own neighborhood because that's where the story is now going to take us.

He's moving from Siloam back to his own neighborhood and he's walking along and I can imagine him seeing a puddle and deciding to step in it just because he had never seen one before. He hears a noise over there and he says, "I wonder – I want to see what the noise looks like." To see a person talking. Look over there and see the face of the person talking. There's this amazing thing as he's walking back to his neighborhood.

So we come to verse 8. It says, *His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"* It's kind of a funny thing. Here's this guy walking along, looking at things, and he looks different. These are the guys that probably turned away when they saw him begging because you know how it is when you see a beggar. They probably didn't look at him that closely. It looks like the same guy and now he's walking around and looking at everything around and he's just enjoying the sights all over the place. They're saying, "Isn't this the same guy?"

Verse 9: *Some claimed that he was.  
Others said, "No, he only looks like him."  
But he himself insisted, "I am the man."*

Can you imagine him? He can hear them talking and he's going, "No. No. It's really me. I'm the blind dude that was begging down there. I can see now." And so they're going, "Whoa. This is so amazing." This guy is looking at his neighbors. These are his neighbors talking. You see that, right? He's heard their voices before. He knows who they are and he hears that voice and he knows them and he's looking at them now for the first time and he's saying, "Man, that guy sure is ugly," or whatever he's saying, I'm not sure. But he finally sees them for the first time and he's putting the face with the name in a very real sense.



Verse 10: *“How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.*

*He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes.”* Now notice the word *man* there because we’re going to see a progression in this guy’s thinking about God or Jesus as we go through.

He starts with *the man*. He says, *“The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”*

It’s a really simple message. If you want to share Jesus with someone else and tell them about who God is, it’s a simple message. I was blind, but now I see is basically what the guy is going to say. I went, I obeyed, and I experienced God.

As I talk to people who are not Christians, they’re trying to figure this thing all out, one of the things I can say is, “I know God. I know Him personally and I watch Him work. It’s so fun to watch Him work. It’s amazing that that happens.”

That’s what this guy is saying. He’s telling them about this and so the neighbors respond – *“Where is this man?” they asked him.*

*“I don’t know,” he said.* “How do I know? I’m just trying to figure this out for myself. I’m just looking around. I’ve never seen the guy before.” He’s never seen Jesus before. He met Him, but He’d never seen Him. He was at the pool and now he’s coming back, so he doesn’t know where He is.

Verse 13 – what do these neighbors do? *They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.*

Verse 14: *Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath.* Oh no. You know what’s going to happen now in the story, right? This is like the party poopers. Everything is going great. This guy can see, everybody’s surprised, but oh no. We get the reality that the miracle happens on the Sabbath day and that of course would be against the religious leaders’ rulebook, not God’s rulebook about what can happen on the Sabbath.

These are the religious leaders who made up all these rules about what you could and couldn’t do on the Sabbath. Probably early on when they were developing it it was kind of a good thing. They said, “We can’t do this; we can do this,” but then it became their spirituality, their legalism, that caused them to not even be able to see God work because of their rulebook.

He defended the religious system, that’s what Jesus had done. Because He had made clay on the Sabbath which was against the rules.

Verse 15: *Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”* It’s not complicated. I just did what He told me to do and now I can see.

*Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided.*

They can't see the work of God because their perception of God was in a box. I think this is very important because I don't want to be like a Pharisee and I think I can be sometimes when I start to put God in a box and say He only works in this particular way. God wants to break out of that box and He wants to show me something else. I think people get saved out of religious systems many times. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be so tied into my box that I can't see God work.

*Verse 17: Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."*

*The man replied, "He is a prophet." So He moved from a man to a prophet. This guy doesn't really know Jesus yet, but he's trying to figure this all out too. He's getting to know Jesus.*

In verse 11 he started with *man*, in verse 17 it's a *prophet*, in verse 38 he's going to call him *Lord*, which is where we all need to come in our own lives. That's a beautiful progression we see in his life.

*Verse 18: They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. Oh that's a good idea. Let's bring in the witnesses or let's bring the parents in. What they're saying is, "I can't believe this. It doesn't make sense to us." When that happens in a person's life they have to make a choice. You have to either make a choice to stick to your system and reject God or you say, "You know what, I need to give up my system and I need to trust God and allow Him to open up that in my life." They are going to hold on to their tradition we're going to see.*

*Verse 19: "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"*

It's interesting because here we've got the man and we've got the parents and we've got the Pharisees and everybody else standing around, but this is the first time that this young man has ever seen his parents. He's heard them. As soon as they start talking he's going, "Oh." I'm sure this guy is so amazed looking around at life. Every time something else happens he's just going, "Whoa. This is bizarre."

*Verse 20. This is the parents speaking. "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*



They're saying, "We're as surprised as you are. We just got here. Yes, he's our son. He's never had a problem talking, believe me. So ask him, he can speak for himself." So they turn him back to Jesus.

Notice they're afraid of the Jews. I mean, they're not very good spiritual leaders in their own home. They're not willing to take a stand. They're just puzzled by the whole thing as well.

Verse 24. So what do the Pharisees do now? This is like what a courtroom looks like. *A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."*

I like the guy's response. Verse 25: *He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"*

This guy's great. This is so amazing. He's looking around and he's seeing all of these cool things. He's saying, "Whoa. That's a nice robe you're wearing, Mr. Pharisee." He's kind of saying, "Wow. I didn't know you guys dressed that way. That's interesting." Whatever he's looking at is so amazing to him, he doesn't have time to get involved in a theological argument. He knows he can see.

I was talking to a man just a few days ago who was really consumed with criticism. He's a leader and so whenever he's criticized he likes to put everybody straight. He likes to make sure everybody's got it straight and he just defended himself left and right. You've got to be kidding me.

One of the things I learned early on is if you're a leader you're going to get criticized. You don't have to defend yourself every time you do something. Furthermore, there are so many good things you could do. If you get caught up trying to defend yourself every time you turn around of all the criticism, you'll never get anything done. There's so much ministry that can be done. Life is too short to spend so much time trying to figure out how I'm going to solve all the problems that people perceive we've done something wrong.

I just think that's the attitude this guy has. He's going, "I'm not getting involved in this argument. Hey, I'll tell you what I do know. *I was blind but now I see.*" It's a great testimony that this guy has.

Verse 26. *Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"* They're asking the wrong questions. They're asking what and how. They're not seeing what happened here. They're not asking who and how can I get to know Him. They're not doing anything.

It reminds me of a detective show, like *NCIS* or something. You look at all the evidence, you come up blank, and you say, "Okay. Let's go over all this evidence one more time. See if we can figure out exactly what's going on here." That seems to be what they're doing.

I love this guy. He's so profound. They say to him, *"What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"*

Verse 27: *He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"* Fascinating. Just fascinating. This guy's got nothing to lose. "Hey I'm just going to be real with you. This is the reality. Do you want to be His disciples too?"

The word *too* implies that he's a disciple. So he's already had this change of thinking in his mind. "I'm going to follow this guy. He can heal my eyes. I can see now. I'm going to be one of His disciples." So he says *too*.

Verse 28: *Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."*

They're really put off. "You're a disciple," they're saying to him. "We're religious leaders." Basically they're saying to him, "You don't know anything. You do not know what you're talking about. You're ignorant."

So verse 30: *The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."*

Basically he's saying, "You guys are the religious leaders and you don't know where this guy comes from? Very interesting."

Verse 34: *To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.* This is so fascinating. The religious leaders reject God's work because it doesn't fit into their system.

I just don't want to be a Pharisee. I want to be able to watch God work in wherever He is. *And they threw him out* of the synagogue. "You can't be one of us," is essentially what they're saying. And they threw him out of the whole system.

Verse 35 – this is so interesting. Here's a guy who's an outcast. He's rejected problems. All he got was sight. Now he's a different guy and he's rejected. Notice verse 35 (I just love this) – *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*

Jesus went after him. He was rejected by these other people, but Jesus went to him. Jesus knew that he needed this relationship and so He asks them the very important question. "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" In other words, do you believe in God? Do you believe in the Messiah? I just love the care of Jesus here. It's beautiful.

In verse 36 – *"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."* Here's a guy who's ripe, who's ready to understand more, to have his eyes opened. Not just eyes opened

physically, but to have his eyes opened in his heart. Who is this guy that I can believe in Him, he says.

*Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."*

Verse 38: *Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.*

Worship is this sense of awe, amazement. We sing about the love of God in that first song. "Wow, God, you're so loving." In that second song we sing about the holiness of God. We say, "God, you're so amazing. There's no one like you. It's just amazing." There's a sense of worship that comes out. Worship is awe. That's what it is. You go "wow."

So here's a man who's experienced God, who saw God work in his life, and he goes, "Whoa. This is bizarre. This is so amazing. Lord, I just worship you." That's what it says – *he worshiped him.*

Let me finish the verses in this chapter.

*Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."*

That's what judgment does. When God comes in and Jesus as the light of the world reveals this bright light, what it does is it reveals things. It reveals that those who think they know it all are those who are really blind – the Pharisees. The ones who are blind and humble and willing to come and say, "I need to be healed," they're the ones who receive their sight.

Verse 40: *Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"*

*Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."*

There's this division that ends up existing between the blind man and the Pharisees, or those who respond to God and don't respond to God, or those who recognize the guilt of their sin and come and have their eyes open and those who think they're so righteous that they don't need God and so they miss out on the blessing that comes. There comes a point in each of our lives when we said we worship God. We say, "There's nobody like this God. Wow, this is so powerful."

My mom sent me an email about John Piper's son who was a prodigal and then came back to the Lord. His son gives this testimony in this email. I thought it was touching. It's just an illustration of someone who came to Christ and recognized what they need.

"When I was nineteen I decided to be honest and stop pretending I was a Christian. At first I pretended that my reason was high-minded and philosophical. But really I just wanted to drink gallons of cheap sangria and sleep around. Four years of this and I was strung out, stupefied and generally pretty low. Especially when I was sober or alone.

My parents, (John and Noel Piper) who are strong believers and who raised their kids as well as any parents I've ever seen, were brokenhearted and baffled. I'm sure they were wondering why the child they tried to raise right was such a ridiculous screw-up now. But God was in control.

One Tuesday morning, before eight o'clock, I went to the library to check my email. I had a message from a girl I'd met a few weeks before, and her email mentioned a verse in Romans. I went down to the Circle K and bought a 40-ounce can of Miller High Life for \$1.29. Then I went back to where I was staying, rolled a few cigarettes, cracked open my drink, and started reading Romans. I wanted to read the verse from the email, but I couldn't remember what it was, so I started at the beginning of the book. By the time I got to chapter 10, the beer was gone, the ashtray needed emptying and I was a Christian.

The best way I know to describe what happened to me that morning is that God made it possible for me to love Jesus. When He makes this possible and at the same time gives you a glimpse of the true wonder of Jesus, it is impossible to resist His call."

His eyes were opened. He saw. He saw for the first time something he had never seen before and that is really the message that we have, that we all have, that we enjoy, that we share with others and we say, "You know, Jesus can change your life."

There's a spiritual component to your life that if you have it, it just adds tremendous resources to who you are. If you're missing that, you're groping around as if you were blind.

God offers that to each one of us. He says, "I want to give you something. I want to give you sight." Not just sight to a blind man, but life that causes him to see who Jesus is and it will change this guy's life. He becomes a disciple or a follower of Jesus. I'm sure he followed Jesus around, he cared for Him, he did all kinds of things. He told other people about the Lord. Because God changes lives.

It's just a beautiful message, a great story. I think this is a pinnacle in the gospel of John 9 because what happens here is that the excitement of the religious leaders is at a high. They're going to kill Jesus. They're looking for ways to do that. Jesus is in a place right now where we're going to see He's going to go away from them, He's going to go over to the other side of the Jordan in the next chapter, and it's not going to be long before He comes back and He's going to be crucified.

It's a powerful place and leaves us each with a decision that we must make. Most of you have made a decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The most important decision you can make.

By the way, if you're here today and you haven't made that decision, that's the most valuable decision you'll ever make in your life. You can make that decision today and have your eyes opened and you can experience God in a powerful way. You can do that when we sing in a few minutes. We'll have prayer counselors at the side and the Lord can work in your life as you go

talk to one of the prayer counselors. Talk to them and ask Jesus to come into your life and open your eyes.

I think there's also a message there for all of us that we want to be careful not to box God in because even religious people in the story became Pharisees because they had a list of rules. The spirit the heart of the gospel was missing for them so they couldn't see God work. I don't want to be a Pharisee and I know you don't either. So we must continually be asking God to speak to us, open our eyes so as to allow Him to show us things and to teach us and guide us. And when He does, amazing things happen. That's what God wants to do in each of our lives.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you now as humble people, blind in so many ways, needing to experience you in who you are, and needing to see. We know, Lord, that you impart that vision. As we come before you now we ask you to speak to us and lead us. Reveal to us who you are in greater ways than we've ever imagined or ever seen before. We worship you to that end and recognize that there's no one like you, that you are a God and we need you in our lives. So we dedicate ourselves to you now in Jesus' name, amen.