

To. rec. Jan 20, 74 AM.  
S my Nov 27 83 P.M.

BELIEVING IS SEEING

John 9

INTRODUCTION:

✓ (David Hume) of the 18th Century, a Scotch philosopher and a skeptic - was seen leaving a service conducted by George Whitfield, was questioned by a friend -- why surely you did not believe what Whitfield preaches. No, replied Hume, but Whitfield does.

Now this sense of conviction of faith in my life and your life, about the certainty of the Lordship of Christ is the (Hallmark) of the believer. This never goes out of fashion.

✓ Now the circumstances are secondary but the (basic view) of life that we call conversion - which came to (Saul) and blinded him with a bright light on the Damascus road. Or the sudden revelation to the Samaritan woman at the well. Or the unfolding of truth on the first Easter Day to the two Disciples on the way to Emmaus from Jerusalem.

The (9th chapter of John) describes how a blind man from birth received his sight. Actually this incident reveals a great truth. This miracle which took place in time - in fact, has eternal significance for every (spiritual pilgrimage) of every man as he journeys from the blindness of unbelief to the vision of faith. From darkness to light. From the power of the world to the fruits of the spirit.

Note the stage is set.

✓ V. 1 - The miracle takes place on the Sabbath at the gate - which Jesus and his Disciples made their way through toward the country in route to Jerusalem.

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Blind from Birth - Day he was Born!

A blind man (cries out) of the darkness (for help). At first he does not heed but walks past. But one of the (disciples) asked him a question - as he walked past. Master, for whose sin - for his own or for his parents, was this man born blind.

V. (2) - This is an age old question.

One would have expected Jesus to have stopped and discussed the matter. Now to the Greeks, suffering was a fact - that for the punishment of fate - this came to them.

And to the Jews and the Christians - this fact of suffering becomes a problem. Can God, who loves a world, let it go on suffering.

We think of the courageous Job - the broken-hearted Hosea - all of these suffered.

V. (3) - Jesus answered, neither hath his own sins nor for his parents caused this. It was to let the work of God be illustrated in him. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Opportunity of showing what God can do!

Long before Jesus day the people talked that whatever happened to you was an act of the Gods. An earthquake, a war, or sickness. Now if God was good, why did he let these things happen.

*Did Sin Happen While he was in Womb?*

Why is this man blind. Who is to blame. What sin did he commit. What was the sin of his parents. The Disciples were bound up with the past. I mentioned, Job. That was the whole point of that book - that all of his sufferings were caused because of sin. And that he was a good man but God put a fence around him. So suffering came on because of Satan trying him and testing him. But if you will read the whole story of Job, you will find that God knows what he is doing. And when

things are worked out that way.

I read the story of a Christian farmer, whose son had an opportunity to go to college. He returned home after he had been in college for one year. And the father and the son were standing under a tree on the farm. And the father began to question the boy about his experiences in college. He said, I enjoyed my year there. I studied biology. I learned a great deal - and some of the things upset me. His father was curious - he wanted to know. Dad, he said, I discovered that God made the world wrong. For example, look at this strong oak tree which we are standing. God placed little small acorns on it. Look over there in the field - the big pumpkin. God placed it on a fragile vine. Now, if I had been God - I would have put the small acorn on the fragile vine, and would have put the big pumpkin on the sturdy oak. About that time the wind blew and an acorn fell out of the tree. It hit the college student right on the head. The boy mopped his brow, and looked at his father and said, Dad, thank God it wasn't a pumpkin.

Now God knows what he is doing. And sometimes his activities may seem contrary to us. This is the problem. Here is a man that is blind - it is a pitiful case to be blind from his birth. I wonder if you really understand how pathetic this case was.

I read the story once of a little girl that was blind and playmates used to come in and play with her. They tried to talk to her as children talk. In terms, they would say, look at this. Did you see that. But the little girl had never seen a dog, a pony, a bicycle, or a moving picture. They tried to play games together with her. Did you ever think how many games children play involving running, chasing, and hiding. Now her parents loved her - and she had a whole room of dolls that she had never seen. And when it got dark, the other children had to go home. But here this little girl had never seen the light. She had lived in the dark. The condition of this blind man by the roadside - he had never seen his mother's face. The sun rise,

the moon through the clouds, the temple, a smile, the blue water of the Sea of Galilee - utter darkness, limitation and despair. He could never earn a living, he couldn't win the love of a woman, or have a family of his own. He just had to sit in darkness.

But the day Jesus passed by changed all of this for this man.

v.6 There are (lots of people) today who thinks that because somebody loses his health, loses his wealth - that there is some sin but as I mentioned (Job) he lost all of these things but he never lost his faith. And we'll discover that in the outcome of this man, something happened to him.

Jesus orders that this man be brought forward and he (makes clay of spital) mixed with the dust of the street. He smears the man's eyes with this mud pack and instructs him to go and wash in the (pool Siloam). The blind man promptly complies. And he returns with his sight.

This is the way that Jesus worked. There was a deep question and deep discussion - you remember when Nicodemus came to him was restless and questioned him about life and death. Jesus dealt with him with one statement - you know what you must do. He asked for a sign. He called Jesus Master. But Jesus bewilders him when he says that a man cannot see this thing (except he be born) from above. Now to every question of Nicodemus, Jesus replied, you do not understand this. You are a teacher of Israel.

Now this apparent impatience of Jesus to discuss the problem of life is surprising.

As a preacher, a clergymen, a large amount of time is spent listening patiently to folks who are troubled about life. People talk about the mysteries of life.

People are seeking blunderingly for faith. They are trying to find hope. Trying to discover victory.

Surely there are times when the why of existence demands to be faced.

Yet Jesus will ~~not argue about the subject~~. Not because he cannot. But Jesus recognizes the limitation of argument.

Now here is the danger -- ~~suppose this blind man, instead of obeying Jesus~~ at his command to wash his sightless eyes in the pool - he had argued, Master, what good thing can come of washing in this pool. What kind of magic saue is this that you have made out of this dust. The unclean earth. Why raise false hopes and send me on a fool's errand. It will take more than Siloam's waters, it will take more than this clay made out of spital to heal my blind eyes.

*We can never put things off until another time, for another, Time may never come -*

Now such a plea seems logical, reasonable, and even scientific.

But, he has everything to commend it except the fact that he will still be blind.

Exactly the ~~(opposite happened)~~.

He first believed and then obeyed. And came back with reborn eyesight.  
Believing is seeing. *When Christ enters into us, we become part of the way - God's Highway runs straight through us.*

V. 6- Jesus goes about to cure this man. He addresses himself to the opening of this man's eyes. He did not defer it - here was an opportunity. He prepares the saue, he made the clay. There was no water nearby. He made the application of this ointment, and dabbed it on his eyes like a physician.

Now I want you to go to the pool.

✓ I want you to note this is not the first time that (clay or dust) was used in the Bible. When God made the first man, he made him out of clay - out of the dust of the earth.

When he made this world, he molded it out of clay. He molded man out of the dust of the earth. And now he is going to open this man's eyes and again he is going to use some clay, some dust. You know this has a wonderful connection. Rev. 3:18 - where Christ says you need to buy eye sauve of me because you are blind. Paul's conversion - the scales fell from his eyes.

And when God works that miracle of the resurrection, he is going to raise your body out of the clay, out of the dust of this earth. My, what a truth!

So faith creates action. This is the servant of will. Believe the miracle to be possible. And the miracle is possible.

Faith in these is action. And this is a journey into the unknowable.

Like Hebrew says, faith is the proof of things unseen.

Faith is that which enables us to treat the things that are unseen.

✓ Now science may trace things back to its origin and may have no room for faith. But faith in Christ is not blind but it is a seeing faith.

" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved, Paul told the prison guard. This primary law of the spiritual world stands out.

In science, we experiment. In so far as it is possible, scientists want some proof that they can demonstrate with. To him, seeing is believing. But here, the blind man, (if he had been a trained scientist, if he had wanted a chemical analysis of the ointment which Jesus made out of the dust - or he had wanted to have taken samples from the pool of Siloam. Now in the world science is king. And we approach things today from the laboratory in every day experience - in our thinking, in our influence. It is more deeply engrained in us than we realize. Everywhere truth today is supported by statistics. Mr. Gallon is the prophet of our day. His poll is the Bible of modern man.

Now, I am not minimizing the impact of this for good or science on our lives. Nor is it to regard faith that way. To say this is my body - it is to assert that faith in Christ is a valid fundamental act of experience. Faith is the workable response of the believer to Christ.

A young Scottish preacher once was bewildered of his inability to persuade an intellectual to accept what seemed to be perfectly obvious and a simple fact of life, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the university molds minds and why should they stumble over the acceptance of the Christian faith. Because they want something that is logic. Unless it is, they will deny it. To agree with a proposition without first having proof that is valid would be wrong.

You take the research in medicine by scientists. If a committed Christian talks to them about the existence of God, they expect a statement of faith - supported by a position, about the existence of God. But you do not prove the existence of God - you merely confirm this, his existence - by what you already believe.

Reality that might sustain God - the idea of any concept of ultimate reality is often challenged. There are theories, and so God is thought out of existence and man becomes God.

But you might argue for hours on the Bible with intellectuals and no one will be converted.

Now this does not imply that faith is irrational. And there is no place for logical thinking. But here is something that is needed among Christian laymen. To possess a faith, a conversion, is belief - acceptance - obedience. Now many intellectuals are not Christians. They cannot accept what they have not seen. Now this is the unique part of the Gospel. In a hundred practical experiences of life, we commit ourselves before we know all the facts that are involved. Now none of us would hesitate to sit down upon this chair. Merely because we know the laws of physics. Or about the physical world, that comprises most of the empty space. But to sit on a chair or even walk, involves a act of faith. Now no one has ever seen the pathway of the electrons and the protons in the heart of the atom. No one has really ever looked at an atom. But we have assembled and the things that corresponds.

Daily we commit our lives. No bride or bridegroom would know fully the facts that are implied in the acts of marriage. But when a young couple stand before a clergy man, and he says wilt thou have this man to be thy lawful wedded husband. Now suppose the bride would reply, well, I might. On the other hand, I might not. Now such a statement she has every right to make. She does not at that moment know all the facts, about this young man that she is taking to be a lawful wedded husband. On the other hand, she certainly would not be married. Marriage is a committment. It is a life's work of committment. Now belief in Christ is a committment. We believe first only - then we can see.



Faint not nor fear  
His arm is near  
He changes not  
And thou art dear  
Only believe and thou shalt know  
That Christ is all, and all to thee.

✓ V. 7 - Going and washing in the pool of Siloam, Christ would hereby try and test his obedience. And there to wash his eyes, he would receive his sight.

✓ Isn't it marvelous today, people who have cataracts on their eyes - the Doctor says, now if you will do thus and so, we can remove this problem for you. And you will be healed and able to see again.

The committment or the how of this miracle - the miracle happens. The blind man sees. The question now is how did the miracle take place.

The neighbors of the man and the Pharisees - began to asked. They asked the man.

The man they called Jesus made clay - smeared my eyes with it, and told me to go and wash in the pool. And I'd have my sight.

✓ The Pharisees still would not believe. So they sent for the man's parents. Is this your son - the son that was born blind. How is it now that he can see.

If the parents had said that Jesus had healed their son - they would have been supporting one who broke the Sabbath day. And would have been cast out of the

assembly. On the other hand, if they had declared that Jesus had not performed the miracle - they would have been confessing a falsehood according to their son.

This is our son, they replied. And he was born blind. But how he can see today, we do not know. Nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him.

v. 23 The boy was of age - let him speak for himself.

Yet the Pharisees cross-examined - with impatience and declared one thing, I do know. (I was blind and now I see.)

Now this annoyed these Pharisees because they were intellectuals. What do you mean now you can see.

Now you know what the intellectuals say today - what do you mean by conversion. In what way are you saved. What are the signs of a committed life.

And quite often the person that they are talking too tries to give some description of the life in Christ. And other times they just stare at them with amazement. They seemed to be amazed that an intellectual be so dumb and so dull as to not know about such an experience.

Now in the end, none of us can ever describe in a logical way the deep experience of the heart to anyone else about your own life with Christ.

Think about the experiences of life. What is pain. Can you really tell somebody about pain. Only those who have been in the darkness and suffered can tell you how it hurts.

What about remorse. Can you tell anybody about this. Not unless you have been

through a dark guilty experience in which you were miserable - and sin bothered you.

How does a musician describe the beautiful music - Beethoven, who was tone deaf and yet wrote beautiful violin music.

Sorry is hard to bear and doubt is slow to clear. Each sufferer says his say - his scheme of the wheel and woe. But God has a few of us whom he whispers in his ear. The rest may reason and welcome. 'Tis we musicians know.

Religion is a deep song and the common note of worship is a thankful heart.

These miracles, and this miracle - first, was an act beyond our comprehension. The unique quality of Jesus in his sinlessness and his ability to deal with sin and suffering, is something that we interpret here. If Jesus was all of this in that day, if an ordinary person could trust him with such power, that he would come into the problems of human sufferings and human situations, and forgive him. And make him whole. What it is saying to us is -- that for Jesus there was no other rule for life, than the will of God. And life is perfectly safe in his hands.

In the second place, this happening so many years ago is a type, is an example for yourself and for me. Jesus is giving the recipe for life, and for living.

In the third place this miracle tells us that Jesus healed bodies and minds. Demon possessed people - and he can do the same today.

Fourth, it says that what Jesus did then, is what he does down through the ages. The raising of Lazarus was something that happened that day and Jesus is going to do again.

(Chaplain Brown) tells of a troop ship of 1500 American Marines, returning from Japan.

To his surprise, the group requested a Bible study. He studied the book of John with them and when they came to the 11th chapter. He said, what are these men going to make of "I am the resurrection and the life". The question was not what Jesus was able to do to Lazarus many years ago. But are these words true in 1946. At the end of the study, a young Marine came to him and he said, Chaplain, everything in this story that we have studied - points to me. I have been in Hell the last six months. Until I heard this from God's word, I'm just getting free. He went on to explain that he had gone in the Marines straight from college, to Japan. He had gone to find amusement and got into bad trouble. No one knew about it - but God knew about it. He had terrible feelings. He felt his life was ruined. He felt he could never face his family again. He knew, if ever they knew this wretched story - he says I have been a dead man. He condemned himself. And if they knew. But after reading this, he says, I am alive again. The resurrection and the life that Jesus was talking about is a real thing. That lad had a hard job, to get things put straight again. But he did it. When life seemed ended for him and when he seemed dead, Jesus raised him up, out of life, which sin had killed.

✓ What we need is a Christ that still does things. There is little relevance in the story about Jesus giving eye sight to this man unless he gives it to us today. Jesus still makes things happen.

If we think of the fact Jesus spoke to a tax collector and Matthew left all and went into a new life. As he passed the avenue in Jericho, a little man, Zacchaeus came down into a new world and repented.

A sobbing penitent woman fell at his feet weeping. And rose a new creature.

And so men and women down through the years, they too saw - not the sermons or the eloquent preachers, nor the libraries of devotions - none of these by itself is the truth of Christian experience. There is no other name under Heaven whereby

a man can see the life which is salvation.

Conversion is to feel the touch of the Master's healing fingers.

Wherefore (every man's) - on, his journey, if he will come to the feet of Jesus - whether this blind man comes lonely, bewildered.

Whether a man is intellectual and he comes. You believe on the son of man. Who is this sir, inquires the man. Tell me, that I may believe on him. You've seen him, replies Jesus. He's talking to you. Until that moment, the man had never seen Jesus. In his blindness, he had felt Jesus in a sense that only he could. He had heard Jesus' feet walking on the pebbles. The sandals on his feet, the gentle rustle of his robe. And then the touch of the fingers upon his eyes and a voice. And when he heard Jesus, the preacher, he gazed on the son of God with new eyes. God's own gift to him had come. Thomas, the doubter, when confronted with the hands of Jesus fell and worshipped him.

We need (carved) on our pulpits, where only the preacher can see, these words:  
" Sir, we would see Jesus. "

This is the aim of preaching. Is to show forth Jesus and his glory - to the end that men may worship and come and see God.

That you might live a (clean life) again. That you might know the (forgiving love) of God.

You two can come in with your faltering words to God and be converted from whatever sin may have been in your life.

Here, oh my Lord, I see

The face to face;  
 Here would I touch  
 And handle things unseen,  
 Here grasp with ~~firm~~ <sup>firmer</sup> hand  
 The eternal grace,  
 And all my weariness  
 Upon thee lean,  
 Here would I feed  
 Upon the bread of God,  
 Here drink with thee  
 The royal wine of Heaven;  
 Here would I lay aside  
 Every earthly load  
 Here taste a fresh  
 The calm of sin forgiven.

V. 35 - Jews cast him out of the Temple -  
 The Lord of the Temple found him - Jesus never  
 leaves you to witness alone.

Blind Man's idea of Jesus:

- 1 - Begins by calling Jesus a Man - v. 11 "a man called Jesus opened my eyes"
- 2. He calls Jesus a Prophet - v. 17 "a prophet brings God's message"
- 3. He confesses Jesus was the Son of God <sup>v. 36, 38</sup> "He came to see Jesus had power beyond man, prophet, - The Better you know Jesus the greater he becomes!"



John concludes the chapter by saying - it is the judgement that I have come into this world to make the sightless see - to make the seeing blind. This puzzled the Pharisees about Jesus. They inquired - and are we blind. Jesus said if you were blind you would not be guilty. But as it is, you claim to have sight and

The first is C. H. Spurgeon, to whom many owed their souls. When a boy of fifteen he set off one New Year's morning for church, but there was such a blizzard of snow that he was not able to reach the church he was in the habit of attending. "When I could go no farther," he said, "I turned down a court and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel." The preacher who was to have conducted the service never got there for he too was held up by the weather, and quickly one of the office-bearers had to be brought forward to conduct the service with a congregation of perhaps fifteen people. "The man," said Spurgeon, "was really stupid. His text was 'Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth,' and he kept repeating it because he had nothing else to say." Something about young Spurgeon caught the impromptu preacher's eye. "Young man," he said suddenly, "you look very miserable; and you will always be miserable - miserable in life and miserable in death - if you do not obey my text." Then suddenly he literally shouted, "Young man, look to Jesus! Look, look, look!" "And," said Spurgeon, "I did and then and there the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun!" It looked like a series of the sheerest accidents which made Spurgeon stumble on the grace of Christ.

this day. Even in religion, people say -  
 1. It is a veneer of religion. And true