

...was blind but now I see

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[0 : 0 0] And then the next day, so it was like Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, another guy out of the blue asked me, an atheist said, George, what are you going to talk about on Sunday? And I said, well, I'm still trying to figure out a little bit about it, but it's a little bit about, you know, suffering and whether sin causes our suffering.

And he said, my, and then I'm going to leave out the swear words and all that he said, but my bleep, bleep, bleep, bleep, bleep. He said, that's like one of the deepest, that is the deepest question that human beings ask.

Why does, why do bad things happen to good people? And we had a bit of a conversation about it. So let's look at the text. It's John 9.

All three of those types of issues sort of end up, I'm not going to really talk very much about how Jesus can be God, but all three of those things are in this text. So why don't we just turn and look?

It's John chapter 9 and see sort of what happens in the Bible text in light of these questions and the questions that you yourselves have as well. John chapter 9.

[1 : 0 4] And it begins like this. As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. Now, just sort of pause there for a second. And I didn't know this before I prepared this sermon, but there's a very interesting thing happening at the original language level.

And it's this very few first few words. John very skillfully does two things. First, he just says some period of time is now passed from what happened in John 8 to what's happening now.

Just some undisclosed period of time. Might have been a day. Might have been a week. Might have been two weeks. He doesn't tell us. Just some time passes. The other thing he does is in the original language, he uses the same words, a similar word, important word, as in the previous verse.

So he connects the two stories. And he says, basically, I want you to listen in because what I'm talking about right here is actually connected to what Jesus just talked about, whether it was a week earlier or a month earlier or two weeks earlier, but it's directly connected.

And in the earlier story, in John chapter 8, what launches the story is when Jesus makes the claim, I am the light of the world.

[2 : 1 6] Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. And that statement of Jesus that I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

That sort of is what happens in John 8. And now Jesus, John is saying, this next story, even though it happens a bit later, that listen in, because it's really interesting, Jesus is going to take this idea and sort of do some really interesting things with it.

And that's how John writes it, very simply. And I didn't pick up on it in English because it's something that's in the original language. So read verse 1 again. As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth, and his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Now just sort of pause there for a second. He's just asked the big question, hasn't he? I mean, I have had times in my life, in fact, I've even had times just within the last week where I wonder, I catch myself, or actually I didn't catch myself at first, but I found myself drifting into asking, like, are some of these things that are happening to me, is that because I've sinned?

In fact, it's a very, very human problem for Christians and non-Christians wondering if what's going on in their life is because they've done some particular sin or some pattern of sin in their lives.

[3 : 49] In fact, for many of you, or maybe not many of you, maybe some of you this morning, you're really struggling with that. There's some really, really hard things, some maybe dark things, some unpleasant things that you're going through, and your life is filled with this sense of doom that somehow or another you've done something that makes the unhappiness and the trouble that you're going through that you somehow or another deserve it.

And you're not quite sure what to do about something like that, but it can be a very, very... Some of you this morning, you came here reluctantly because that really describes your inner life.

You put on the Christian smile and welcome people, but the smile is on the outside and the inside. There's a type of suffering and a type of darkness that you're struggling with. So this is a real question.

They say, Rabbi, in verse 2, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind. So how does Jesus answer? How does he answer? He answers in a very, very interesting way.

He says in verse 3, It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

[5 : 02] We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. And then listen to this.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. I am the light of the world. So he repeats this thing that was in John chapter 8. He makes the claim the second time in a very different context.

I am the light of the world. It's a very, very, very big, very, very grandiose claim. Now, I'm going to return to this, circle back around to these opening verses, because in a sense, everything that's going to happen after this helps to put in context what Jesus has just said.

But it's really important for you to note here that Jesus doesn't say that suffering never follows from sin. I mean, that would be foolish, wouldn't it?

I mean, the person who drinks too much, gets behind the wheel of the car, and then goes off the road and crashes and becomes very disabled.

[6 : 05] We can see there's a very direct connection there between a particular sin of drunkenness and the second sin of getting behind the wheel of a car and the suffering that they happened. But Jesus makes the more general comment that as a general rule, what does not happen is that there's sin, and then there's a particular type of suffering that comes with it.

By saying this, he denies karma. By saying this, he says that, in a sense, Buddhism and Hinduism are wrong.

He also says that Islam is wrong, because in Islam, there is this idea of this overwhelming fate, that God has predetermined the course of your life.

And so if things happen to you, it's all part of God's direct plan. And nobody can ever make any claim against God or ask him what he's doing. There's nothing like the book of Job in the Koran.

And what Jesus is saying here is, Jesus is saying these whole ways of thinking are wrong, that what's going on in sin and whatever is going on with suffering, the way we're going to try to understand this is what's going on is that the works of God might be displayed in that person's life.

[7 : 18] But it's not going to be very obvious at first what that means until we read the rest of the story. But before we do that, you know, if you think about it for a second, anybody can make a claim like that, can't they?

I mean, this is one of the hardest things I have to try to communicate to people when I talk about the Christian faith with those in coffee shops, is that, you know, a Christian believes that this is true.

But anybody can make a claim like that. I mean, you know, Gary could say, I'm the light of the world. Dana could say, I'm the light of the world. You know, George could say, I'm the light of the world.

Well, I don't know, sunshine, you know, maybe your friends think you're a ray of sunshine, you know, but that's a pretty big claim. And like, and so what's going to happen here is that Jesus is going to vindicate his claim.

And I mean, he's going to really vindicate his claim by the end of the story, but he's going to vindicate his claim. How? In a very, very dramatic way, by doing something that human beings cannot do.

[8 : 33] Let's see. How does it go? Verse six. Having said these things, right? So having said, I am the light of the world. I'm the light of the world. Having said this, what does he do?

He spits on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which means scent.

So he went and washed and came back seen. And by the way, nobody's ever thought that this is, Jesus believes that somehow spitting in mud will cure a person who's been born blind.

That's a whole other topic of conversation to why he might have done that. But he does this partially just to show that he can do a miracle in different ways. He doesn't have to do it all the same time. And so he does this particular thing.

And the neighbors, in verse eight, and those who had seen the man who before as a beggar, sorry, verse eight, the neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, is this not the man who used to sit and beg?

[9 : 34] Some said it is he. Others said nobody is like him. And he kept saying, I am the man. It's me. I'm the guy who was there, you know, that you all saw. So they said to him, then how were your eyes opened?

And he answered, the man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and received my sight. And they said to him, where is he?

He said, I do not know. Now, if you think about this, this man is a, it's a very remarkable thing. It's in fact, I can't even begin to imagine what it's like for this man because he has never seen.

That means he has never seen light. He, if you were to say to him, it's bright outside, there would be no place in his brain to understand what that means.

He's never seen a color. Like he doesn't even have a memory of color or a memory. In a sense, he can't even long for color because all he's ever known is darkness, the dark, his entire life.

[10 : 45] So he has no memory, no longing, no yearning. And on one level, he doesn't even really know what he's missing on one level. And so in a very powerful way and in a very particular way, Jesus is saying he is the light of the world and he does a remarkable miracle to actually bring light and sight and openness to this man who once only knew darkness and now he knows light.

And, yeah, I'll take a minute. This miracle actually is a really significant miracle in another way because it helps us to understand a little bit about how most miracles work.

I mean, in a sense that this is a miracle and it works because God has the power and he just does it, right? And Jesus doesn't pray that the man would receive his sight. He just does it. He just, he just, he just does it.

And in all miracles, in most miracles, you see this combination of things that goes on. On one hand, what, and by the way, medicine can't disprove miracles and the more we know about medicine, all it would do is it would just increase the wow.

Wow. This must have gone on. And I guess, I don't know if Jeremiah is here today and maybe he'd be able to tell us about different ways that a person might never have been able to see and maybe he's missing an optic nerve, maybe there's something actually physically missing in the eye.

[12 : 14] You know, we don't know what it is. But what would have happened is that Jesus would have had to do an act of creation within the man. Maybe there is an optic nerve which was never there from birth and Jesus would have created an optic nerve where no optic nerve existed before.

He creates something out of nothing within the man. But you see, that's exactly what God does at the beginning, isn't it? The beginning of the gospel, how does it begin? You know, in fact, I quoted this to the guy trying to understand miracles and who Jesus was.

I said, you know, the gospel begins, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made.

In him was life and the life was the light of men. And so what, God makes everything out of nothing and Jesus, who is God, the son of God, he makes something within the man that wasn't there.

And also, Jesus would have had to maybe have removed something that was there. Maybe there was something that was blocking, something that was clouding. And so at the same miracle where Jesus just wills something to be there that wasn't there before, he wills things that shouldn't be there that were stopping the sight just to be gone.

[13 : 26] He removes them. God can bring things into existence and he can take things out of existence because he is God. And the third thing that goes on in the miracle is that there's inner healing. Because even in ancient times they knew that if a person started to, if a person's eyes were open, you have to learn how to see.

Somebody really unhappy, eh? You have to learn how to see. It's not just something that just your eyes are there and all of a sudden you can see. You have to learn. So it's a very interesting thing. It shows that the miracle of Jesus, there's an act of creation, there's an act of removal, and there's an inner healing in the mind so that the mind, as soon as the eyes are open, he's able to see.

For the first time in his life, he sees red and blue and brown and green. and the warmth that he always experienced at certain times of the day, he now realizes is from the sun.

And, I mean, I'm smiling when I can say this, but can you imagine the way his face would change to all of a sudden see color and see faces, see people?

people? And so the people don't believe at first that it's the same guy. I mean, who can heal a man born blind? And his face even looks a little bit different. It really is the same guy.

[14 : 54] So some of us might say, okay, George, well, that's very easy, you know, but people back then were gullible. So here's a bit of a timeout. People back then were gullible. We're not, right?

Like, we don't have anybody bothered by conspiracy theories or anything like that. We're, we just effortlessly believe that a few people can tweak things in Facebook and we, like, automadons, like we're robots, we just vote one way?

Really? Come on. Who's gullible? Like, okay, you know what? Being gullible is a human problem that's existed in every age. Right?

It's existed in every age. It's not that we're not gullible and they were. And so one of the things which is so interesting in this text is that this text, 12 times in the text, remember, this is an ancient biography of Jesus, 12 times in the text it's emphasized that the man had been blind.

And what we see is an investigation into whether or not he actually had been blind. And the investigation is carried out by skeptics.

[16 : 02] It's carried out by those in the position of the elite who are skeptical. carry out an investigation. And John records it.

Look at what happens in verse 13. So the crowd, they bring to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. So what they do is they bring, you know, they say to themselves, I don't know, we're just all simple people.

You know, we're just business people. We're just people who sweep and stuff like that. We're going to bring this guy to the educated people, the people who understand, they've learned, they know how to read, they know how to write, they've studied, and they're in positions of power and authority.

And if you really want to know something, you go to them. And they know the scriptures and they know the way the world works and they just know and understand things. Let's bring this guy to them. So that's what happens in verse 13.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Uh-oh. Right? Once again, Jesus isn't breaking the Sabbath.

[17 : 05] He's breaking one of the regulations that was humanly invented. Okay? That's what's going on. Anyway, the same humans who invented it are a bit pissed off that he's gone ahead and done something he shouldn't have done according to them.

Verse 15. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And the man who had been blind, the he, said to them, he put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see.

So some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God. He does not keep the Sabbath. But others said, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

So they said again to the blind man, what do you say about him since he has opened your eyes? And the man said, he's a prophet. Now, they all just go, okay, well, I guess he did it.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, they're skeptics. They're just as much a skeptic as the next real skeptic that you meet. And so they said, verse 18, the Jewish leaders did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight.

[18 : 13] Why? Well, because, you know what, back then there were con men and con women and there's con men and con women today. I mean, there are, right? There's all sorts of crazy people. People who make all sorts of claims. People who claim that they were, you know, UFOs captured them and they spent time and there's all sorts of crazy people, right?

Back then and now. So they're not going to just take a big claim like this at face value. So, verse 18, the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, is this your son who you say was born blind?

How then does he now see? Two questions. His parents answered, we know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes.

Ask him, he is of age, he will speak for himself. His parents said these things because they feared the Jewish leaders for the Jewish leaders had already agreed that if anyone should confess this to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore, his parents said, he is of age, ask him. Now, just sort of pause here for a second. This is so contemporary, isn't it? This is just so contemporary.

[19 : 25] I mean, the fact of the matter is is that we always deal with groups that are completely and utterly closed. I mean, some of you have probably been in situations, maybe you're in the civil service and you have to prepare a report and maybe, you know, the deputy minister or whatever, somebody like two or three or four levels above you, they're telling you how everything is going great, everything's going rosy, and all the other people who are just underneath that top dog, you know, when she's saying all these things, you know, they don't want to rock the boat and you're down like four levels below that person and what she's saying and you don't want to put up your hand and say, well, actually, the program delivery sucks and nothing's working and no, it's very hard to do that when there's groupthink, isn't it?

I mean, and it could just be, you know, the, I mean, I don't know, you know, it's just the governor general of the, not at the, who is it, who just reported that all of the spending things of the Ontario government were way wrong.

You know, I'm sure, I'm sure there must have been a couple of people in there who knew, but it's really hard when all the people in power are saying one thing and you know you're not going to be liked, it's going to ruin your career, you're going to be in trouble if you actually try to speak the truth.

It's a very human problem. That's what's going on right here. In fact, I wish now that the first fellow who asked me my question about these things, he had, he had been formerly behind the Iron Curtain and escaped from the Iron Curtain and it would have been a real way to relate to him and say, listen, you know, they're dealing right there with the same things that you dealt with when you live behind the Iron Curtain and you're allowed to speak the truth because it just gets the powers mad and that's what's going on here.

There's this, they're afraid to speak the truth. It's a very, very contemporary issue. And so, how is it now? They've done an investigation.

[21 : 20] They know that he was born blind. And by the way, this was probably a very, very public figure because there's only a certain number of entrances into a place.

He would have been there all of the time. He would have been there for years and he would have been a well-known fellow. This is a guy, there's lots of people who know that he used to be born blind. His parents said he was born blind. Now he's seen. So verse 24, what do they do?

What do they do? What do the educated, the elite, the people in power, what do they do? Well, let's look. So for the second time they called the man who had been born blind and said to him, give glory to God, we know that this man is a sinner.

Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that exactly what powerful people do when the truth is inconvenient? Like, I don't know what's going on, but we know this can't be the truth.

So, give glory to God is like calling him to make a solemn oath. Like, if you go into court and you have to declare the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth or however they word it.

[22 : 24] So they basically say, listen, we're going to make you take an oath and by the way, before you take the oath, we already know what the answer is supposed to be.

So give us the answer we're expecting you to give us. So how does the man respond? Verse 25, he answers, whether he, isn't this, this is one of the greatest lines I think in the Gospels and it's in the hymn Amazing Grace as well.

He answered, whether he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know that though I was blind, now I see. The inconvenient truth.

One thing I know that though I was blind, now I see. They said to him, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?

He answered them, I've told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples? Remember, this guy had been a beggar for 25 years. He knew how to take guff.

[23 : 32] He knew how to give guff, right? Like, you know, they're not pushover street people, right? They know how to give it back. Like, they've gotten it from lots of people. So, he's being cheeky now.

Oh, you want to be his disciple, eh? And, verse 28, and they reviled him. So, you can see they really are interested in the truth. They reviled him. You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from. The blind man who now sees, answered, why? This is an amazing thing. You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.

We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

Like, this is the most remarkable miracle in the history of the world. He's not making any comment about whether or not a surgeon could do it now. That's science. He's talking about a miracle.

[24 : 33] This is the most, this is an unbelievably remarkable, this is just a spectacular miracle. He continues, if this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

Isn't that true? He could do nothing. They answered him, you were born in utter sin, and would you teach us? And they cast him out. Kicked him out of the synagogue.

They expelled him. And, you know, this is, how does he, how does he respond to all of this?

I've lost my spot in my notes. Actually, yeah, this is, this whole story actually is going to shed a little bit of light into something that happens at the end of the Gospels and takes place in the book of Acts.

See, there's a really, I mean, one of the undeniable historical facts about how the Christian faith began. I mean, other than maybe a few Marxists who live under a rock, like, other than a few Marxists living under a rock, everybody knows that Jesus existed, everybody knows he dies, even the most hardened skeptics do not doubt that he died by crucifixion.

[25 : 52] And, and yet, within a short time after his death, literally, and I mean literally in the old-fashioned sense of literally to mean literally, like literally, tens of thousands of people come to believe that he had risen from the dead in the very city where the crucifixion happened.

That's an undeniable historical fact. It's not as if, you know, in most other religions, there's, in most other religious movements, I, you know, I say, by the way, guys, I'm the light of the world, you know, believe in me, and I suck one of you into believing it, and they go, whoa, okay, give me all your money, by the way, because we have to live on it.

And then, you know, I suck in a couple of others, and there's this slow growth. Now, this is like a spectacular, this is like from zero to, in fact, what happens in the book of Acts in chapter two, the disciples proclaim that the tomb is empty because Jesus has risen from the dead.

He is the one that the scriptures had predicted would come that God had promised, and the, is it not just me, it's going in and out, right? A little bit? Okay.

And the Bible says that 3,000 men are baptized that day, and what that means for, I don't know why they just said men, that means it might have been 10,000 or 12,000 people, and then like a week later, there's another 2,000 added to it.

[27 : 15] That means there's like maybe 10,000 people. That means like within like a month and a half, there's like 20,000 Christians in Jerusalem who all believe that Jesus rose from the dead. So on one hand, this miracle helps to put a little bit of light on that, that on one hand, I mean the man comes to believe as we're going to see in a moment, right?

But then some people just refuse to believe. The problem isn't evidence, it's just an absolute, complete, utter, willful refusal to believe.

And that goes on in all of our lives. But look how it happens with this man. Verse 35, Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him, he said, do you believe in the son of man? And the son of man is from Daniel.

It's sort of a figure that it's hard for Jewish people to read that text because it basically sounds like Daniel's describing God. And he's called the son of man. It's in the book of Daniel.

And the man answered, and who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? Jesus said to him, you have seen him? And it is he who is speaking to you. And he said, Lord, I believe.

[28 : 22] And he worshipped him. Just so you know, that word worshipped is the exact same word that's used in John 4 when the woman at the well says to Jesus, are we supposed to go to worship God in this mountain or in Jerusalem?

Same word. It means worship as God. And verse 39, Jesus said, for judgment I came into this world that those who do not see may see and those who see may become blind.

Some of the Pharisees heard these things and said to him, and by the way, when I say these next words in the original language, it's scornful. It's not like, good grief.

Are you talking about me? It's like, who are you? Who are you? You ignorant hick. Who are you, you ignorant hick, to call me blind?

Like, how dare you? You're hardly smart. I mean, you don't have the education. You don't have the smarts. You don't have the connections. You don't have the family.

[29 : 28] How dare you? That's how we're to hear, are we also blind? It's scorn. It's a sneer.

It's a put down. Jesus said to them, if you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say, we see, your guilt remains. So what's going on here?

Just to sort of wrap this, what's going on here in this story? It's a wonderful story, isn't it? And, you know, the most important thing I can do to you is help you to hear the story because the words of the Bible will do its own work in you if you just hear the story.

But here's the first thing. If you could put it up, Andrew, what Jesus is saying is that every human being is blind from birth. Jonathan, you are blind from birth.

Daniel and Christine, you are blind from birth. Don, you are blind from birth. George, I was born blind. Every human being is blind from birth.

[30 : 31] You know, it's a very, very wonderful thing. If this starts to grip us, if this was the only thing, by the way, it would just be unbelievably depressing. Obviously, this story says a whole lot more. But it's a very, very, very wonderful thing, you know.

how is it that we could possibly share the gospel with somebody who has maybe an ideology or politics that we just abhor, a lifestyle that we think is completely wrong?

Well, if this grips us, there's a real power. You know what? Because that person, you know, that we just think is so wrong or so evil, you know what? Me and him or me and her, we're the same.

we were both born blind. We're both born blind. This text isn't saying that Christians were born seen and that other people are born blind.

This is saying every human being is born blind. It's a very, very powerful equalizer. I mean, I have to confess that I have fear about trying to share the gospel with some people and I, in fact, just a couple of months ago the Lord convicted me that why was it in a coffee shop that I, I'm just going to be really honest with you.

[31 : 43] Why is it in a coffee shop I invited three people to consider coming to one of my Easter services but the fellow, the gay fellow who was in a partnered relationship I didn't invite him.

And it, and it, and the Lord convicted me of sin. Like, why did I do that? Why did I have that sin of omission? You know, the fact of the matter is that every human being is born blind.

And, and here's the second thing, the hard part for us is that, well, why doesn't Jesus just heal our blindness? Like, why does it, he's up in heaven, why doesn't just heal, heal your blindness, heal your blindness?

Well, I really, I have to confess that sort of, that question struck me this week, especially as I'm trying to figure out how John 9 fits in with the rest of the book that why it goes on to the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection.

And then, believe it or not, I got, I got help from the movie The Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 2. I'm not making that up. I really was. I was praying to the Lord.

[32 : 51] Why is it? Why is it, Lord, like you don't just heal? And, you know, one of the things about prayer, I'm a real slow learner. Some of you folks are really good at prayer. So pray that I learn how to pray better.

But one of the things I try to slowly learn is that when you ask a prayer of God, often he puts a thought in your mind right away and often it's the answer. I don't like the answer.

I keep thinking for something else. So I've been praying about this for several days. Nothing's coming to my mind. All of a sudden, Volume 2, The Guardians of the Galaxy comes in. And what comes into my mind is how Drax defeats the monster towards the beginning of the movie.

And if you've seen the movie, it's a silly movie. But there's this big monster and all of the Guardians of the Galaxy are fighting the monster. And it's very, very funny. The little cute Groot is dancing to some music while all these, they're all being thrown all over the place.

And finally, the only way that the monster is killed is Drax, with his swords, gets eaten. And he kills the monster from the inside. And that's the second point you would put it up.

[33 : 55] But some things can only be defeated from within. You know, it's especially true if love and truth matter, isn't it?

I mean, what's one of the things that makes us feel that we are loved is when somebody has this bit of a sense, you can tell that they know what it's like to be within. Like love works from within.

Like you can see one teacher maybe with a kid who's crying and all they do, they don't really love the kid, so they just tell the kid, shut up, smarten up, you know, and if the strap was still allowed, you know they'd give the strap to that kid right then.

But other teachers, they know there's something going on in the kid and they love the kid and they want to know what's going on within the kid and they ask the question and they come and put their arm around them because, you know, if love matters, often in love, it has to be dealt with from within.

Same with truth, isn't it? Real truth doesn't coerce. Real truth doesn't coerce. Real truth is allowed to work within. And to God, love and truth really matter.

[35 : 08] He really does love you and he loves me. And so some things can only be defeated from within. And that's why if you could put up the next slide, Andrew, that on the cross, death and darkness devoured the light of the world to their doom.

that's what happens in John 19. In John 19, it is the light of the world who's hanging on the cross.

The light of the world is hanging on the cross and sin devours him in a sense.

Darkness devours him. death devours him. But you know what's just so interesting? This is why the resurrection is so important.

It isn't that death and darkness devour Jesus and then it's like they go, oh, he doesn't taste very good. Vomit him out. That would still leave death and darkness raining, wouldn't it?

[36 : 13] they don't vomit Jesus out. They are doomed when they swallow him and devour him and they're defeated in his resurrection.

The light of the world conquers darkness and the light of the world conquers dark and light is essential to life. And in the same way for you and me, I, like you, was born blind.

And you know what? If we are honest, every single human being is a little bit a walking darkness and every human being in some way is a, not in every human being, in the most literal sense is a walking death.

It's the one thing we know that will happen to us that's inescapable is our death. And Jesus, the light of the world, has to enter in. And burst asunder the darkness and death.

He has to enter in to defeat it from within, to deal with our darkness and to deal with our death. If you could put up the final thing, the light of the world enters in, my eyes are opened, sight is given, and the light shines within where darkness used to rain.

[37 : 36] The light of the world enters in, my eyes are opened, sight is given, and the light shines within where darkness used to rain. You know, first of all, one of the things about the gospel which is so wonderful is the already not yet, and that we need to understand all the time with the gospel.

On one hand, this is exactly literally true. When you invite Jesus into your life, the light of the world comes within. And that's a possession now, the light of the world, that's uncreated light, eternal light now comes and lives within you.

And that, it will never leave. How can you remove uncreated light? How can you remove eternal light? And in a sense, when we die, all that will happen is that that promise of that eternal life and light and uncreated light that's within us, it just, it carries us through the valley of the shadow of death into a brighter future, the new heaven and the new earth.

But that's the already, but on the other hand, there's the not yet, isn't there, where we still have to have God's will because he respects us and loves us. There's time when I have to let the light of the world to shine within the different things of my shame and my confusion and my darkness and my suffering where I really am.

And it's that already, not yet. But there's two other things, which I know it's already 41 minutes, but just very briefly, if you could go back and look at those early verses, they're very precious.

[39 : 07] Chapter 9, verses 3 and following, it was that Jesus says, it was not this man's sin or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day.

Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. And one of the things which is so powerful about this is that Jesus says here, this person, don't think in terms of whether this man's sin or his parents.

You know what happens when we think in those terms? It creates pride and inaction, doesn't it? Like if I think, oh, look at that poor street person, or look at that person who's suffering, just imagine the terrible things they've done in their lives to lead them to that, and look at me.

Like I'm healthy. Like I have a house. I have a beautiful wife. I have kids. Like just think how good I am. And like they deserve what happened to them. That's what happens when you get caught up with fate and karma.

It just, it furthers pride. It creates hardness of heart. It creates distance from human beings. But what does Jesus say? Don't think in terms of sin. What should you think of?

[40 : 23] Think of how the glory of God and the works of God can work in them. What is that saying to me? Walk towards the person. Walk towards the person.

Walk towards them to bring a comforting arm, to sit with them in their suffering, to deal with them and to bring some relief. That's why we, that's, that's why, that's why you have people who go to Angola and that's why you have people who work amongst the poor and that's why you have people who work, we walk towards them.

The gospel, one of the implications of the gospel is you walk towards the person, you walk towards the suffering. And then the final thing, the works, what is it, we must work, but the works of God might be displayed in him.

It means that it is possible that there is meaning in suffering and that God can redeem our suffering. that's what it means.

Sickness and failure and death can have meaning. That even if you are very old, your life does not have to be a waste.

[41 : 44] You do not have to listen to how the world puts you in your place and calls you and labels you failure. And your life never passed.

That no matter what point in time that you have given your life to Jesus and the light comes into the world, that that light can begin to redeem your suffering and give meaning to your life and that God can use you with your messy past and your messy present to bring him glory.

To bring him glory. as the light of the world shines within you and shines through you. You are not a failure when you put your faith and trust in Jesus.

He can and will redeem even the darkest things about you and turn them to great glory. glory. There was a same sex attracted man in a church that I had a long talk with a couple of years ago and he was saying to me that he couldn't understand how it is that he could be called to be a Christian.

This was in another city. I wasn't able to have a follow-up with him although I gave him a recommendation for a church. I never knew what happened to him. And I said to him, you know, I don't know how God is going to exactly redeem what goes on in you but I know he will.

[43 : 17] And you know, I said, men like me who are heterosexual, we have sexual problems and life isn't just a bed of roses just because I'm opposite sex attracted.

But here's what I do know. Who knows what unbelievable things you can accomplish for God when you let Jesus into your life and you choose to be faithful.

Who knows out of your struggle to remain faithful what works of literature or poetry, who knows how it will soften you for his passion in ways that will shock and astonish the world.

Who knows only the Lord knows what greatness might flow from you allowing the Lord in and the faithfulness to follow him. But I know that he will redeem.

what goes on in your life if you trust in him. I don't make that claim as a human being. It's what the Bible tells us. Please stand.

[44 : 17] if you're here and you have never given your life to Jesus there is no better time than right now to just to say Jesus for the light of the world please come into my life as the light of the world and shine your light in every aspect of who I am and make me yours.

There is no better time than now just to say that in the words of this scripture and for every one of us who are struggling with different parts of darkness there is no better time than now than just to say to Jesus Jesus I have been struggling with this darkness Jesus I just bring your light to bear and help me Lord to follow the light to know what it means to follow the light in this particular case help me to trust that as your light comes into that which is dark that and as you lead in terms of the light coming into the darkness that your light will only bring life where there is darkness Lord I believe help me to believe more and just shine your light in those dark areas of my life in those areas that aren't dark Lord I thank you so much for the light that is there I thank you so much that the light does not reign within me I mean the darkness does not reign within me anymore that you the light of the world reign within me do that business with

God Father pour out your Holy Spirit upon us pour out your Holy Spirit upon us draw us again and again to the gospel draw us again and again to Jesus thank you Father that the light of the world was devoured by darkness on the cross and that you defeated the darkness and the death and sin from within for us thank you Lord for that great victory for us thank you thank you that the darkness will never put the light of the world out you have conquered and you offer to live within ordinary human beings like us forever to fit us for the light Father thank you for Jesus Jesus thank you for what you have done for us and all this we ask and thank you in Jesus name and all God's people said Amen Amen