

I Was Blind But Now I See

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 August 2021

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[illegible]

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 40] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Let's pray together. Pray with me. Pray for me. And let's ask God to teach us from His Word. God, thank you for the privilege now of being able to gather around your Word. I'm very aware that on topics like tonight, it's very sensitive and gets to the heart of life.

And I pray, God, that you would just give me words, your words to share that would be faithful to your Word and sensitive to the things that many in this room have been through.

And I trust that when all is said and done, we will, like this man, worship Jesus. That's my prayer. That's my prayer. And we pray it in His name and God's people said, Amen.

Amen. You can be seated. Well, He's one of the most famous pastors and evangelists likely in American history. He was internationally known.

[4 : 50] When He would speak, He would often speak to thousands, if not tens of thousands of people. He experienced an enormously successful ministry.

His name was Dwight L. Moody. In 1858, in the heart of the industrial expansion and urbanization, Moody started, as many of you know, a church in downtown Chicago.

And it did not take long for that ministry and church to explode. Moody started an educational program that was focused on young children and parents.

It became known, some of you will know this terminology, as Sunday school. And by 1860, less than two years after the church was founded, they were running over a thousand people in Sunday school.

It was the largest, most well-known outreach program in America, so much so that actually President Lincoln visited one of their meetings.

- [6 : 0 0] By 1864, they built a 1,500-seat auditorium on Illinois Street to accommodate the exploding growth that Moody was experiencing there in Chicago.
- Ministry was booming. The church was flourishing. People in the city of Chicago were being impacted by the gospel. And on Sunday, October the 8th, 1871, Moody lost all of it. The great fire of Chicago that devastated not only the city of Chicago, it burnt Moody's ministry to the ground.
- The church destroyed. Many of his church members' homes were lost. Moody sunk into a deep, deep depression.
- He became physically weak. He couldn't focus. He stopped preaching. He had more questions about life than he had answers. Have any of you ever been there?
- [7 : 0 9] And he deeply struggled with what God was doing. And later on, sometime later, he's in New York City.
- He's in New York City because he's trying to raise some money to rebuild the church and to help his church members find homes. And as he was walking on the streets of New York City, like a waterfall that just started rushing over him, Moody said, listen, he experienced God's love like he had never experienced it before.
- Out of nowhere, it came rushing down upon him. Let me let Moody share with you his words. Here's the quote.
- One day, in the city of New York, oh, what a day. I can't describe it. I seldom refer to it. It's almost too sacred an experience to name.
- I can only say that God revealed himself to me, and I had such an experience of his love, I had to ask him to stay his hand.
- [8 : 2 7] I had to ask God to stop. I can't take any more of your love in this moment. I went to preaching again.
- The sermons were not different. I didn't present any new truths, yet hundreds were converted. Now, you notice this last statement.
- I would not be placed back where I was if you should give me all the world.
- What is Moody saying? There in the streets of New York City, he looks back on the thriving ministry he had before, the heartbreaking devastation that came afterwards, the deep and dark depression that he experienced, and yet upon experiencing this fresh work of God's love on the other side, he looks at it all and says, I wouldn't change a thing.
- I wouldn't go back to where I was. Faith family, hear me tonight. Moody came to accept there was purpose in his pain.
- [9 : 4 7] Amen? I wonder if any of you have ever experienced a situation in your life that while you would not have chosen that path, you look back and realize there was purpose.
- Are you with me tonight? You wouldn't have chosen that path, but you believe and know it was on purpose. You made it to the other side of suffering, and while it was not the road you would have chosen, you wouldn't, like Moody, go back for the world.
- The divorce that was hard and painful, and yet God proved himself faithful. The months of unemployment, which were some of the most worrisome and anxious of your life, and God proved his provision in extraordinary ways.
- A season of grief as dark as you've ever known in your life, and God through that did a work in your soul. The permanent disability that happened as a result of the accident.
- It's not how you wanted to spend the rest of your life, but it gave you an entirely different perspective on life, one of which you are thankful to God for.

[10 : 55] Here's what I know about Faith family, and many of you watching online, that there are many of us that have walked down the path of pain, and many of us that have gotten to the point where we look back and realize God had a purpose.

Would anybody like to testify to that tonight? It is not the road you would have chosen, but you wouldn't trade it for the world. Faith family, that is exactly what we see here in John chapter 9, in the healing of a blind man.

And here's what I mean. Jesus is going to perform a miracle, and in performing this miracle, he's going to teach us that there is purpose in our pain, that God is sovereign over our suffering.

Now, if you've already zoned out, the sermon is just now getting started, so zone back in, all right? I don't know how you could dare do that, but I need you to hear your pastor share this. I'm going to touch on a few things that are very sensitive and very hard.

Why? Because it's in the text, and we preach the text, right? And so sometimes there are hard things in the text, and I'm going to preach them as I understand God's Word.

[12 : 13] My hope is that you trust me enough to know that I'm doing my best to be biblical, and I can be wrong, and if we disagree, that's okay. But my desire is to serve you by preaching, thus saith the Word.

That's my hope, okay? And the reason I'm saying that, the reason why I'm giving that bit of warning is because I have no doubt that there are many in this place, and many throughout this weekend, and many who are watching online, that you have gone through real pain and real suffering, and I would never belittle or undermine your situation ever.

But there is the glory of God that we must see even in our suffering, and we see it here.

Here's the first big idea that I trust is faithful to the text that I want you to see, and it's this, that God has a purpose in your suffering. God has a purpose in your suffering. I don't know why you're here this weekend, but maybe this is the very thing you need to hear, that God has a purpose in your suffering.

Verse 1. As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth, and his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned? Was it this man or his parents that he was born blind?

[13 : 34] Jesus is walking along. A play on words here. John says he sees a blind man, and what we know of this man is, one, he's blind from birth. Two, that made him a beggar.

You'll see that later in verse 8. He's likely homeless in that his parents could not afford to take care of him. And so this is a man in all likelihood that is blind, poor, homeless beggar, and that has been the condition all his life, and that will be the condition for the rest of his life without a miracle.

Now, the disciples who no doubt, can you imagine this, how many questions the disciples must have asked Jesus? You know, I imagine, this is just me, this is not like in the text, all right?

But I just wonder if Jesus could hardly sleep at night because Peter was like, well, can I ask you about this? You know, did Adam really have a belly button? Or just, you know, some type of random theological question. Well, they have a theological question for Jesus.

And the question is, is this man's blindness because of his sin, or was it something that his parents did? That's not the most sensitive of questions, would you agree?

[14 : 51] Maybe you can ask that later. Probably not appropriate to ask it now, but that's what they suggest. Now, there's two observations from this question in verse 2.

Number one, the question reflects a common understanding, namely, in the ancient Near East, there was the idea that a sickness was directly related to a specific sin.

And so, if you were sick, you did something wrong. And so, there was always a direct correlation. Now, you might even say, yeah, but if this guy was blind for birth, what could he possibly do before birth?

Well, the rabbis taught that if a Jewish pregnant woman went into a pagan temple, the baby sinned in that very act and therefore could be born a suffering child.

And so, we see a bit of the reflection here. Now, we might not take it that far, but how many of you, when something bad happens, you think, what is God getting me back at for? What did I do wrong that he's punishing me or getting back at me?

[15 : 57] And so, we even have that mindset sometimes as well. Here's the second thing. Is this question that they ask reflects a common desire? Namely, we all want to know why. Amen?

Why is this condition? Why is this man in this situation? Help me make sense out of what's taking place here. And we ask that same question, the question of why.

Now, what Jesus is going to do is he's going to correct the understanding of the day, and he's going to answer their question as to why the suffering, why the pain. Verse 3.

Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. Oh, mercy.

There is so much in that verse. And I do not have time to unpack everything, but I will, I trust biblically and faithfully, and we can disagree, but this is what I see in that response.

[16 : 57] Two things. One, Jesus will not allow the disciples or us to make a direct correlation between a specific sin and a specific suffering.

It's not because of his sin or his parents' sin. That's not the issue. Now, what we can say is that suffering happens because of sin generally.

Let me explain. When sin entered into the world, the world became cursed. And because of that, we experience a host of pain, disease, disabilities, dangers, destruction, death.

I couldn't think of more D's, right? But all kinds of serious, devastating things happen because of sin. Or let me say it this way. We'll get it on the screen. If there was no such thing as sin, there would be no such thing as suffering.

Are you with me? If there was no such thing as sin, there would be no such thing as suffering. For instance, in heaven, there will be no suffering. Why?

[18 : 04] Because there will be no sin. Now, that said, Jesus wants us to refrain from making direct correlations between specific sins and specific sufferings.

Now, that does not mean that you can't say something like this. You know, this person stole a car and went to jail, and they went to jail because they stole the car. Well, of course.

That's not what Jesus is talking about here at all. He's talking about something more like, and I'm not trying to get political here, but I think this is a good example. The late Jerry Falwell did after 9-11 when he blamed 9-11 on homosexuals and other types of sins.

And I think that's in direct violation of what Jesus is teaching here. He's saying it is not for you to know why this event happens and what specific sins are being addressed.

I don't think that's what we're at liberty to do. We can say suffering happens because of sin, and God has a purpose in suffering.

[19 : 12] But it is not for us to say that that act was because of that sin unless it is black and white in God's Word. Are you with me? Say amen. Amen.

Okay. You haven't kicked me out yet. Now, I've made comments, and then I've got to move on. I believe that God is using COVID for His purposes. I believe that, in fact, I can trace themes biblically, whether it's Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Rome.

There's significant trends in Scripture where God brings calamity into nations to wake them up, that they would repent. I think it's biblical to do that.

But what you won't find me saying, because I don't think Jesus gives me the freedom, is that this calamity is because of that sin. I don't know. Those are according to the purposes and plans of God.

You still with me? Okay. Oh, it's going to get more intense. Okay. Number two. Number two. So that's the first thing. He corrects their understanding. Secondly, and what may be harder for us to accept in this text, is that Jesus makes clear that this man's pain exists for God's purposes.

[20 : 29] The text says, The man was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him. To which you say, Pastor, are you saying this man was born blind on purpose?

No, I'm not. Jesus is. Jesus is. Is that a way to get out of it? Was that a way to get out of it? Okay.

I'm not saying that. I'm saying Jesus is saying that. And I'm saying that Jesus is much more of an authority on the purposes of God than I am.

That was a great place for an amen if ever there was one. All right. Listen, I can't explain this and I don't understand this, but my job is not to understand this.

My job is to preach what the Bible says. And the Bible says, according to Jesus, the man was born blind that the works of God would be displayed in him. And what I have come to discover, faith family, if I might speak freely and personally, is that in my life studying the Scripture, in my life and experiencing suffering and pain, I have come to realize that this actually is the basis of hope.

[21 : 39] Here's what I mean. I would far rather know that God has purpose in my pain, a purpose I can't understand, than to think that life is happening at random without any purpose at all.

I can't understand why this man is born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him. But I can tell you that it's comforting to know that his blindness doesn't happen apart from the glory and purposes of God.

Because if you take that away, and this is just a random thing that just happens, you've taken hope away. And I think dethroned God, but that's another sermon.

People will say here at this point, well, God allowed this, but he didn't cause it, to which I say that doesn't help. If God allowed it, but he could have stopped it, it means he didn't stop it for a reason.

There was still a purpose involved here. Not to mention a clear denial of Scripture. I'll just give you a couple. I could give you a hundred. Exodus 4 verse 10, Moses said to the Lord, Oh my Lord, I'm not eloquent either in the past and since you've spoken to your servant.

[23 : 03] I'm slow of speech and of tongue. I have this inability to speak well. And the Lord said to him, Who made man's mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf or seeing or blind?

Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be your mouth and teach you what you shall speak. I gave you the mouth I wanted you to have, Moses.

Because I'm going to be your mouth. Psalm 139 verse 13, For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

My question for you, maybe keep that verse on the screen for just a moment. Is this verse only true for healthy people? Would we dare say that people born with disabilities were somehow less of a work of God than you?

Absolutely not. God knitted us in our mother's womb.

[24 : 13] And I can't explain why he made you look the way you look. But you look the way you look according to the purpose of God.

Here's my point, faith family. I hope you have received this. You're certainly free to disagree. I'm just trying to preach the text.

Here's my point. Pain has a divine purpose. Pain, suffering has a divine purpose.

And I can't explain it more than that because I'm clay. I'm not the potter. But I believe the only way that we will embrace this reality is when we realize that there is something more important to life than our physical condition.

And that is the glory of God. And I say that again. There is something more important in life than our physical condition. It is the glory of God. That the works of God might be seen through us.

[25 : 15] That is far greater than any physical suffering. But there is good news for this man.

You're like, he's through three verses. There's no shot. Hush. Here's the good news that's coming for this man. And whatever his suffering may be and whatever your suffering may be.

Verse 4. Jesus said, 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.

Here's the second big idea that I trust is faithful to the text. Is that Jesus has power over your situation. God has purpose in your suffering. And Jesus has power over whatever situation you are in.

Whatever darkness you may be in, there is light that can break through. And his name is Jesus. There is no darkness that light is not victorious over.

[26 : 18] This blind man's situation was dark and hopeless and impossible. And Jesus is about to let him experience light. And how light can break through the darkness and break through the hopelessness.

And overcome any situation you think is impossible. Verse 6. Having said these things, he spat on the ground. And made mud with his saliva.

And then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud. And said to him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam. Which meant scent. So he went and washed.

And came back seeing. Notice it on the screen. There is always hope in darkness. Because Jesus is light.

And I'm not saying that as some generic theological category. I'm talking about your darkness. We have been through darkness. There are many of you that know darkness.

[27 : 18] And I am telling you, Your darkness is not greater than his light. There is nothing impossible with him. And we have seen this throughout this series.

You run out of wine. Jesus has the power over that. You have a sick son. Jesus has the power over that. You haven't walked in 38 years. Jesus has the power over that. You're blind from birth.

Jesus has the power over that. I am the light of the world. I am the light of the world.

Now, some of you will say, But what about the person who isn't healed? And some of you have maybe been feeling this tension throughout a series on miracles. Like, well, where is my miracle?

The man had his son healed, but not mine. This man's blindness is removed, but not mine.

[28 : 17] I think that this is an important point to bring out that there is another way that Jesus demonstrates his power in our suffering. And the Apostle Paul is an example of this.

2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul speaks of his thorn in the flesh. Much has been debated about what that was. Was it a physical suffering? Was it some kind of disability?

Some argue that Paul had serious eye problems. Whatever the thorn in the flesh was, here's what Paul said about it. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

For the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses and insults and hardships and persecutions and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

[29 : 22] Here's the point, faith family. Notice this on the screen. Sometimes God's power is seen in healing, and sometimes God's power is seen in enduring. God didn't remove the thorn in the flesh for the apostle Paul.

That ought to give you comfort, because if you're feeling in this series like, Well, because I haven't experienced what this blind man experienced, am I somehow less in the kingdom?

Oh, no, no, no. In fact, I'd say you're probably more normative in the kingdom, because Paul's experience, I feel, is often the more common one, that God gives us power to endure, not power just to heal.

But whatever the case, look at this on the screen. Whether he gets us out or whether he gets us through, both display his power.

The only way either one of them are happening is the glory of Jesus. My grace is sufficient for you.

[30 : 28] And I'm going to prove that to you, not by removing the thorn, by helping you endure the thorn. Not by taking away the suffering, but giving you endurance in the suffering, and both leave us saying, Only God could have done that.

Amen? Now, what does this teach us about Jesus? This is a question we've been asking upon every miracle. Miracles are not about the miracle. They're about the miracle worker.

And I'm not going to spend much time here. I'll just point a couple of things out here that this miracle shows us about Jesus. The first is his compassion. We've seen this repeatedly in just about every miracle.

Now, you say, Where are you getting this from? I'm getting this from this. And there's a whole sermon here. There really is. The disciples, when they see this man, they see a theological question.

When Jesus sees this man, he sees a person. When the disciples see this man, all they see is something to debate about.

[31 : 34] Where did the sin come from? Why this condition? Jesus sees the man. And that's really important. You think, for instance, like the Good Samaritan.

How many walked on the other side of the road when they saw the man suffering. But Jesus does what? Goes and shows compassion on the man.

Oh, that he would give us that compassion. As we deal with people who may have different calamities and different issues than we have, that he would give us a heart of compassion towards them.

That we would not see them as a statistic or a condition, but we would see them as people created in the image of God. Are you with me? Secondly, is the restoration of Jesus.

Oh, there's so much I want to say here. The reason is, is because I think there's something to dirt and light that take us back to Genesis.

[32 : 38] I'm just going to throw that out there. But I think what Jesus is showing here by taking dirt and healing and saying, I am light, is he's showing us that he's the true Adam.

He's the one that has dominion over the creation. He's the one that is sovereign. And he can take dirt and spit and bring healing.

He can restore what has been broken. And remember I told you that miracles are simply putting things back to right. You're not supposed to be blind.

That's a part of sin in the world. And Jesus is showing that he is the one taking us back to the way life is supposed to be. I've got to hurry up. Number three is the power of Jesus.

I've already gotten pretty passionate about this one, that light overcomes the darkness. It's what I've said throughout this series. There is nothing impossible with Jesus.

[33 : 37] You with me? God has a purpose in your suffering. That is, I think, clear from this text. Jesus has power over your situation. I think that is clear from this text.

Now, I want to ask this question. Why does Jesus spit in dirt and make mud to heal the man? Does anybody wonder that? Like, Jesus has already been like, in previous miracles, get up and walk.

Walk. And he did. Take your mat and walk. And he did. Your son is healed. Right? Your son is well. And it just happened. Why couldn't Jesus just say, open your eyes and see?

Why did he take, I mean, gross, you know, spit in dirt and make mud and puts it on the guy's eye? Like, is this like art class? Like, what are you doing?

This doesn't make sense. Except verse 14 helps this make sense. Let's look at it. Now, it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

[34 : 45] Of course, it was the Sabbath. I'm starting to think Jesus only did miracles on the Sabbath. Because this happened again in John 5, did it not?

So, Jesus here, you got to see this. He is intentionally breaking their man-made rules. Now, if you want more on this, go back to a couple of sermons ago when we looked at the lame man in the pool of Bethesda.

But they had all the man-made rules. You know, you were to rest on the Sabbath and that wasn't good enough for them. So, they made all these other things you couldn't do. Well, one of the things you couldn't do was you couldn't mix things on the Sabbath.

So, like, for instance, dough. You weren't allowed to do that and cook things like that. So, Jesus is intentionally mixing the spit and the dirt in order to break their rules.

I love Jesus. Can I just say, I mean, there's a lot of reasons I love Jesus. But I love that Jesus sticks it to them, right? But, of course, Jesus isn't breaking the Sabbath. He's providing it.

[35 : 53] Let me take one moment to explain this. The Sabbath was given for the purpose of rest and restoration, for healing. In other words, look at this on the screen.

Healing on the Sabbath was the purpose of the Sabbath. You num-nums. That's not in the text. That's from me, okay? You know, Pharisees, Jesus is actually doing the work of the Sabbath.

The whole point of rest was to heal and be restored and be made right and be whole. And that's what he's doing when he heals on the Sabbath.

But, oh, no, no, no, no, not for them. He was breaking their traditions. And I'm not going to spend much time on the religious leaders because I did that a couple of sermons ago.

What I want to focus more on, which I think, and there's a clue in the text, I think is what John's getting at, which is, watch how a blind, poor, homeless beggar has the courage to stand up against the political and religious institution of his day.

[37 : 02] That's what I think the rest of the chapter looks at. So here's the third big idea, which I'll try to prove from the text, is that we have confidence because of salvation. God has a purpose in our suffering.

Jesus has power over our situation. And we ought to be a people of confidence and boldness because of our salvation.

Now, let me prove that to you. The rest of this chapter does not focus on the miracle. It focuses on the courage the man has because of the miracle.

Are you tracking with me? It's now not about the miracle specifically. It's about the courage the man has because of the miracle. And if you wanted to outline the rest of the chapter, there are six specific conversations that flow throughout the rest of the chapter.

Here's the first. It's between the man and his neighbors. Watch what happens. I'm going to go fast. Put your seatbelt on. Here we go. Verse 8. 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?

[38 : 11] And some said, it is he. And others said, no, but he's like him. They brought in a stunt double. He kept saying, I am the man. Seriously. And they said to him, well, then how are your eyes open?

And he answered, the man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, go to Siloam and wash. And so I went and washed and received my sight. And they said to him, where is he? And he said, I do not know.

Jesus has a strange way of just vanishing after these things. The point here is the man's neighbors have a hard time believing it's the same man. I wonder if that's ever happened in your life.

Are you the person I used to go to school with? Are you the guy I used to party with all the time? What in the world happened to you?

You got to be somebody else. I wonder if that's ever been said about our life as a result of our encounter with Jesus. Oh, don't misunderstand me.

[39 : 17] Notice this on the screen. While we will never be perfect. Oh, that God would help us be peculiar. We're not going to be perfect. We're not going to be perfect.

We're going to drop the ball. We're going to fall on our face. And thank goodness that our salvation is not based on our perfection, but his perfection. Amen. But oh, that God would make us a fragrance of Christ.

Where others would be like, you must be somebody else. Now, so shocked are they by this man's change in his life. They take him to the Pharisees, which opens now our second conversation, verse 13.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. Now, it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight.

And he said to them, he put mud on my eyes and washed and I see. Some of the Pharisees said, well, this man's not from God for he doesn't keep the Sabbath. But others said, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs?

[40 : 20] And there was a division among them. And they said again to the blind man, what do you say about him since he has opened your eyes? And he said, he is a prophet.

Now we see the Pharisee perspective on this. Namely, just like in John chapter 5, they're not concerned about this man at all. They're only concerned about who broke the law, right?

You don't see any, oh, that's fantastic. That's so awesome. Man, his name can't be Bob too, right? The last guy's name was Bob, right? We're so thrilled to see how your life has been changed.

No, all you get is more of this. I'm not happy. I don't like this chair and I don't like this desk and I don't like being here. I'm a grumpy old man.

I don't like everything the way it is now compared to the way it used to be. I so miss that sketch, right? You have basically grumpy old men where all they're concerned about is that they violated our law.

[41 : 19] Why? Why? Because the institution is more important than the people. And they're so stuck in their institutionalism, they question him and now they have to bring the parents involved, which leads to conversation number three, verse 18.

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who'd received his sight and asked them, is this your son who you say was born blind?

And then how does he see? 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.

I mean, ask him. He's of age. He'll speak for himself. Now notice what John gives us here. His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore, his parents said he is of age, asked him. Now John, in that parenthetical, I think is starting to give us a clue as to why the rest of this story is happening.

[42 : 36] And it's not just about the religious leaders, it's about the parents who are afraid of the institution. The parents are willing to say this.

He's our son and he was born blind. But anything else, you're going to have to talk to him. I mean, he's of age.

He's a big boy. He can take care of himself. Let him speak to this as they cowardly disappear into the background. They're afraid of what the Pharisees might do.

Listen, this is like going up against the National Football League. This is like Luther against the Catholic Church. Institutionalism will take your life away and leave you begging outside.

Listen, if they get cut off from Judaism, they will have no life anymore. And so they are terrified of what the Pharisees might do.

[43 : 39] Does everybody see that? Does everybody feel that? Now, you're supposed to see and feel that because now as we enter into this fourth conversation, you see the contrast with this man.

Verse 24. So for the second time, they called the man who'd been blind and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. He answered, Whether he's a sinner, I do not know.

One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see. Well, they said to him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? And he said, I've already told you. Will you not listen?

What? Do you want to hear it again? Or do you want to be one of his disciples? I bet that really got him fired up. And they reviled him. Think Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are those who are reviled for his namesake.

Saying, You are his disciple, but we are the 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 man answered, Why? This is an amazing thing.

[44 : 39] You don't 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.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. And they answered him, You were born in utter sin, and you would teach us. And they cast him out.

Because that's what religious people do. They cast him out. But what I want you to see, what I want you to see, and I hope you're still with me, is the courage this man has.

His parents are who knows where. We're not going to go up against the Pharisees. Are you kidding me? They'll cut our life off. But this man, this man, who the Pharisees keep trying to get him to change his story, keeps coming back at them and say, Listen, guys, come on.

I don't have all the answers to your questions. This is what I know. Yesterday I was blind. Today I see. That's all I can tell you.

[45 : 54] That's my testimony. And so you can go ahead and have your meetings, and you can do your investigation, and you can make your conclusions. But I know what Jesus has done in my life.

I once was lost. But now I'm found. I was blind. But now I see. And you can't take that away from me.

And the way this preaches to us today is this, Faith Family. Notice it on the screen. Obedience is not answering every question. Obedience is sharing your story. I mean, you talk about boldness and evangelism.

Some of you are terrified because you're like, What if I get asked some big theological question? You don't have to answer every question. All you have to do is have a story that centers on Jesus and goes something like this.

All I know is I once was blind, and now I see. That's my testimony. And I'm sticking to him. Some of you feel you can't answer the questions.

[46 : 57] And I'm telling you, you ought to have confidence because of your salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen? Amen? Amen. That leads to conversation number five.

And you say, You don't have time for conversation number five. And I say, Hush. Verse 35. Here we go. I'm going as fast as I can. Now we got Jesus and the man. Verse 35.

Jesus heard that they cast him out. And having found him, he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? And he answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?

And Jesus said to him, You have seen him. And it is he who is speaking to you. And he said, Lord, I believe.

And he worshipped him. You notice the progression. The man, Jesus. He's a prophet.

[47 : 57] I don't know. But he changed my life. And then faith and worship. This man went from pain to praise because of the power of Jesus Christ.

And I guarantee you, this is just my impression, I guarantee that if you ask him, he would say, I wouldn't change a thing.

Would I have chosen the path of blindness? No. But notice this on the screen. My blindness made the sight of Jesus all the more sweet.

I wouldn't change a thing. There's one final conversation which gets to the last point.

I am sincerely almost done. But if we don't hit this, then you don't get the whole point of the miracle. I saved the whole point until now. And I'm going to show you.

[49 : 02] Here it is. Verse 39. Jesus said, For judgment I came into the world that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.

Some of the Pharisees heard him say these things and said to him, Are we also blind? And Jesus said to them, If you are blind, you have no guilt. But now that you say we see, your guilt remains.

Here's the last big idea, and it's this. Faith is the only true sight. Faith is the only true sight. God has a purpose in your suffering. Jesus has power over your situation.

We ought to have confidence because of our salvation. And lastly, faith is the only true sight. Here's what I mean, and I'll wrap it up. The story starts with physical blindness.

You with me? The man. The story ends with spiritual blindness. Why?

[50 : 09] And I say this sincerely, but sensitively. Look at it on the screen. As horrible as it is to be physically blind from birth, it is far worse to be spiritually blind until death.

One of those is temporary, and if it's not fixed in this life like Jesus did with this man, it will be fixed forever in glory.

But the other one, spiritual blindness, that fails to have faith in Jesus, is eternal.

And your eyes may see today, but you will be judged forever if you do not have faith in Christ.

The real blind man in the story is not the beggar. It's the Pharisee. It's the Pharisee.

[51 : 22] The one who refuses to worship Jesus. Miracles are signs that point us to who Jesus is and why He came. Faith family, Jesus came to give sight to those who know they're blind.

He came to give health to those who know they are sick. Life to those who know they are dead. And that happens by faith in Jesus Christ. And I tell you, it is better to be a blind beggar than a blind Pharisee.

Amen? So here's what we learned in this three-hour sermon tonight. Notice it on the screen. God has a purpose in your suffering, and I mean that. Jesus has power over your situation.

You have confidence because of your salvation. Live with boldness, and faith is the only true sight.

I grew up, I grew up, as many of you know, loving old hymns. I was raised on that, and many of the great hymns were written by a woman named Fanny Crosby.

[52 : 31] Songs like, Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior, Rescue the Perishing, Safe in the Arms of Jesus, and the one we sang earlier that some of you didn't even know. Blessed assurance.

When Crosby was six weeks old, she had an eye rash, and a doctor thought that he could put some salve on it to fix it, but it ended up burning her eyes, and caused her, at six weeks old, to be blind the rest of her life.

And yet, in her suffering, here's what she wrote. Oh, what a happy soul I am, although I cannot see. I am resolved that in this world contented I will be.

How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't, to weep and sigh because I'm blind. I cannot, and I won't. All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask beside?

Can I doubt His tender mercy, who through life has been my guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, hereby faith in Him to dwell, for I know what e'er befall me.

[53 : 44] Jesus doeth all things well. God has a purpose in pain.

Crosby, Moody, the blind man, and John 9, they all came to experience the love of God and the person of Jesus Christ, even in their suffering.

And while they would not have chosen their path of pain, they came to discover that there's something greater than a life of pain, and that's the glory God gets from our life.

And if tonight you are not convinced that God is glorified in suffering, then I take you as we close to the cross. Where the Savior who spit on the ground became the Savior who was spit upon.

Where the Savior who brought light into the world was the Savior who went through the darkness. And as He hung there on the cross, everybody was asking the question, who sinned?

[54 : 55] This man or someone else that He would suffer in this way? And Faith Family, the Bible in black and white gives us a direct correlation between sin and suffering on that day.

It was our sin that caused that suffering. suffering. And yet, from the pain came the purpose of God.

It was so that the work of God would be displayed in Him. And all God's people said, Amen.

Would you pray with me? Amen. Father, thank You for the opportunity tonight to study Your Word. There is so much in this passage tonight.

I trust that there are even just a few things we walk away with tonight clinging to. It's what we needed to hear. It was the encouragement we needed to walk by faith and worship You even in our suffering.

[56 : 13] You know every situation in this place and so God, I trust that You would speak to each of us by Your Spirit.

In Christ's name, Amen.