

The Light That Opens Our Eyes

Luke 18:31–43

Handout on page 10

Have you ever noticed how those who are blind often develop heightened senses? Their ears catch whispers we miss; their fingers read the world in ways we can't imagine. I want to suggest to you that just as physical blindness can heighten other senses, spiritual blindness can do the same if we humbly turn to Jesus, recognizing our need for His light. In John 9:39, after healing a blind man, Jesus said, *"For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."*

Jesus' light brings judgment not by condemning but by exposing hearts. And those who humbly seek Him, find their faith sharpened to see His glory, but those who trust their own wisdom, grow darker in rejection. In a world that calls "evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20), spiritual blindness can cloud our vision of Jesus, the Light of the World. As we saw last week, the rich young ruler was blinded by attachment to his wealth and missed seeing the worth of Jesus (Luke 18:18–30).

Listen to what the psalmist prays, *"Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death"* (Psalm 13:3). Do we seek persistently for God to light up our eyes? Adrian Rogers warned, "All people have some light as image bearers of God. But light refused increases darkness." Yet, the opposite is true. When we respond to God's light, He grants more light to see Jesus clearly.

Main Idea: When we respond to the light of Jesus' revelation, God opens our eyes to see Him more clearly, but rejecting that light leads to deeper darkness.

Building on these spiritual principles, we will consider from our text this morning, (Luke 18:31–43) three types of people with vision issues: the disciples, with dim vision; the crowd, resisting Jesus' light, and a blind man, who demonstrated his spiritual sight by persistent faith.

1. The Disciples' Dim Vision

First, we see the disciples, whose dim vision grew as they obeyed Jesus' light. In Luke 18:31–34, Jesus pulls His twelve aside and says, *“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise”* (vv. 31–33).

We see here that Jesus declares to His disciples that as the Son of Man, He would be betrayed, mocked, flogged, killed, and rise on the third day. As the Son of God incarnate, He fulfilled all the law and the prophets by dying for sinners, revealing the Father's great love. But verse 34 shocks us: *“They understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.”*

Let me ask you, why was Jesus's revelation of His passion hidden from them? Kent Hughes explains, “The disciples' failure was not intellectual but spiritual... Their preconceived ideas of a triumphant Messiah clouded their vision.” David Guzik adds, “They could not see or understand the truth until God opened their eyes... Perhaps God did not open their eyes because they couldn't handle it yet.”

I want to suggest to you that the disciples had some light, but it was dim, like a foggy morning before the sun breaks through. They still had a lot of growing to do. Like a child learning to read, the disciples stumbled but their spiritual vision developed as they followed Jesus. Their obedience, though imperfect, kept them open to His light.

Brothers and sisters, are you seeing Jesus dimly? Does His plan for your life seem foggy? Are you having difficulty grasping spiritual truth? Don't seek a quick fix. Like the disciples, obey the light He's already given to you through His Word. Adrian Rogers said, “The way to understand the parts of the Bible you don't understand is to obey the parts you do understand. Understand?”

Read and meditate on Scripture daily and obey its clear commands, like loving others or abstaining from sexual immorality. “The way you discover God’s specific will for your life is by obeying His revealed will in Scripture. The Spirit takes the general principles of God’s Word and applies them to your specific circumstances” (J.D. Greear).

As the Apostle Paul urges in Romans 12:1–2, we must present ourselves as a living sacrifice, renewed by God’s Word, to discern His will. When you obey His light, the Spirit’s light will dawn brighter in your heart.

2. The Crowd’s Resistance

Secondly, some in the crowd refused Jesus’ light, choosing resistance over revelation. In Luke 18:35–39, as Jesus nears Jericho, a blind man sits by the roadside, begging. He hears the crowd and, as Luke records, “*he inquired what this meant.*” They reply, “*Jesus of Nazareth is passing by*” (vv. 36–37). He cries out, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” (v. 38). But in verse 39 we read: “*And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent.*”

“The crowd’s attempt to silence the blind man, says Hughes, revealed their spiritual insensitivity, seeing Jesus as a spectacle rather than Savior” (Kent Hughes). Some in the crowd were indifferent, caught up in the excitement; others were hostile, actively trying to hush a cry for mercy. Like those who “see” yet are blind (John 9:39), their resistance fulfilled what I’ve shared earlier: “Light refused increases darkness.” In Romans 1:21–22 Paul warned of this, writing, “*Although they knew God, they did not honor him as God... and their foolish hearts were darkened.*”

How many of you know, this darkening can happen sitting in church? We can’t hear God’s Word and then pick and choose what’s for us, like a buffet, thinking, “That’s not for me.” Each dismissal draws the shades tighter on our hearts, dimming the light. Some in the crowd saw Jesus pass by but chose darkness over His truth, yet others attempted to silence the cries of faith itself. As Adrian Rogers said, “When people reject the light God gives, their hearts grow dark.” You

can't put truth in your pocket and say, "I'll spend it someday." Refusing Jesus' call hardens your heart, which again deepens spiritual blindness.

Beloved, let the Spirit examine your heart today. Are you resisting Jesus' light in a particular area of your life? Are you selectively hearing God's word? Are you prioritizing comfort, work, or worldly approval over His call? Are you deceiving yourself to believe that somebody else is the bad person so you don't feel guilty for how you are treating them?

Like some in the crowd, you might not reject Him outright, but are you dismissing His truth to avoid disruption, or sacrifice. Don't let your heart grow dark. If the Lord is shining His light in your heart, and exposing darkness, confess it and turn to the Lord seeking His grace to obey His Word. If you're unsure how, come forward for prayer when the call is given or talk to a trusted believer this week. Ask them how to respond to Jesus' light before darkness deepens. Get some help and accountability.

Let's not be the crowd that resists the light or God forbid silences faith but one that welcomes His revelation.

This brings us to our final point:

3. The Blind Man's Persistent Faith

At this moment in Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples' sight was dim, others in the crowd resisted His light, yet one man—a blind man saw Jesus clearly and responded with persistent faith. In Luke 18:40–43, the blind beggar, unable to see, hears of Jesus and cries, "*Son of David, have mercy on me!*" (v. 38).

As one commentator explains, "When he learns Jesus is passing by, he springs to his feet and repeatedly calls out to Jesus using an Old Testament messianic title: 'Son of David.' The Son of David was prophesied to be the descendant of David who would rule on David's throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12–16). The Scriptures prophesied that the

Son of David would fulfill all God's plans for his people. Though the beggar cannot see... this man knows the Lord's true identity" ((Thabiti Anyabwile).

Although the blind man, lacked the teaching the disciples received (vv. 31–34), he saw Jesus as the Messiah, unlike their dim grasp of the "Son of Man" (Daniel 7:13–14). Moreover, despite the crowd's rebukes, the blind man shouts louder, as the Greek reveals—his initial cry (*ekrazen*), was a call for attention escalating to a desperate second plea (*ekraxen meizon*), which was "an instinctive cry of ungovernable emotion"(William Barclay). His persistence was very much like the widow Jesus highlighted in Luke 18:1–8, where He asks, "*When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?*" (v. 8).

Let me ask you, how did the blind man develop such persistent faith? I submit to you that his faith was formed by hearing about Jesus, whom he came to see as the Messiah, not just a mere miracle-worker. As I've noted, his blindness "lessened his distraction," letting him focus on the truth he heard, which fueled his faith, as Romans 10:17 teaches us, "*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*"

As I often emphasize, his faith wasn't in his faith, or positive thinking or declarations, as the false "word of faith" movement teaches. Jesus didn't tell the man to name it and claim it. Rather, Jesus stops and asks, "*What do you want me to do for you?*" David Guzik notes, "God still wants us to tell Him our needs as an expression of trust... You do not have because you do not ask."

The blind man replies, "*Lord, let me recover my sight*" (v. 41). Though this man already saw more clearly than the crowd, when his eyes were fully opened upon his request, the first face he beheld was Jesus. I have no doubt that because of what he already knew about Jesus that he wanted his sight to be recovered not just to see the physical world, but to behold the glory of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17–18).

Beloved, what would be your response, if Jesus asked you the same question today, *“What do you want me to do for you?”* Can we ask for something better than what the blind man requested? To the blind man’s request, Jesus responded, *“Recover your sight; your faith has made you well”* (v. 42).

Remember, the object of his faith was Jesus, not his faith-filled declarations. It was Jesus’ declaration that brought the healing. After Jesus’ declaration, the blind man sees instantly, follows Jesus, and glorifies God (v. 43). What made the blind man’s faith so dynamic and powerful?

- His faith longed for Jesus,
- knew who He was,
- appealed to His mercy,
- articulated his need,
- and called Jesus Lord (Guzik).

By faith, informed by the word, he saw what others could not. And again, when he responded in faith, informed by the word, his physical eyes were opened, and the first face he saw was his Savior’s.

This brings to my mind Fanny Crosby the gifted hymn writer, who despite her blindness from infancy penned thousands of beloved hymns. She radiated joy and trusted Christ’s plan for her life. When a visitor pitied her, saying she must wish to see, she replied, “Oh, no... Blindness cannot keep the sunlight of hope from the trustful soul.” What’s more, she longed to see Jesus’ face in heaven, saying, “If I had one petition... it would have been that I should be made blind... Because, when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Saviour” (Moseley H. Williams, *The Man Born Blind*). Like Fanny, the blind man’s eyes were opened to see what his heart longed for to the satisfaction of his soul.

Now this mission to open blind eyes didn’t end with Jesus. In Isaiah 42:6–7, Isaiah prophesied, *“I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon.”* Jesus fulfilled this, and as the

Father sent Him, He sent us, believers, to do the same. This calling is captured in Paul's testimony before Agrippa. In Acts 26:17–18, Paul recounts that Jesus said to him, *"I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins."*

If you recall, when Paul had this encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road, he was physically blinded by the glory of Jesus. But like the blind man in our text, Paul, though he was physically blinded, saw Jesus more clearly than ever, declaring, *"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"* (Acts 26:19). But on the flip side, Paul's growing spiritual sight blinded him to the risk and cares of the world, compelling him to sacrificially work to free others from darkness. 1 Corinthians 13:12–13

The old hymn says it powerfully, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace."

Notice also that Psalm 97:11 declares, *"Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart."* Light was sown in the blind man's heart which produced persistent faith, and bore fuller sight and great joy.

What have you done with the light that has been sown in your heart? Charles Spurgeon explains, "Light is sown for the righteous; it is not merely given, but sown, implying a divine purpose that it should grow and yield a harvest" (*The Treasury of David*).

Now, how do we develop greater spiritual vision, insight, and understanding? Remember, last week I shared Marshall Segal's five brief prayers in the acronym FEAST to prepare to meet with God in His word:

- **Focus my mind** to shut out distractions (Psalm 119:37);
- **Enlighten my eyes** to see God's truth (Psalm 119:18);
- **Address my sin** to forgive and transform me (Psalm 51:10);
- **Satisfy my soul** with your love (Psalm 90:14);

- **Train my hands** to obey and serve (James 1:22).

Brothers and sisters, “We need God, by the power of His Spirit, to help us understand his word” (Segal). The Apostle Paul, for example, after teaching how believers are to pass on the faith, writes:

“Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything” (2 Timothy 2:7).

This passage implies two vital truths about developing our spiritual sight. First, that it’s God who gives us spiritual understanding, and secondly that it requires great effort and hard work on our part. Growing in spiritual understanding and wisdom isn’t automatic or easy. It requires meditating on Scripture and persistent prayer. Remember, as Tim Keller put it: “Prayer, essentially, is answering God... It is therefore impossible to have a rich prayer life apart from careful attention and glad submission to God’s word.”

Can I tell you, I have found that writing down what God is saying to me in His word helps me think more deeply upon its riches, but also responding in prayer to God’s revelation makes the word come alive in my heart more completely. Again, I use Daniel Henderson’s 4/4 pattern—Reverence, Response, Requests, Readiness—based on the Lord’s Prayer, to answer God in prayer which has so enriched every part of my life.

Let me ask you, what is blinding or distracting you from seeing the worth of Jesus and giving your all to Him? Are screens, or sensuality, or materialism, or some unconfessed sin dimming your vision and keeping you from being a light to those in dungeons of darkness? As Daniel Henderson often says, “The problem in our world is not the pervasiveness of the darkness, but the absence of the light.”

We are called to be light that overcomes the darkness and helps to open blind eyes, but to be that light we must, like the blind man, persevere in faith. The world, the flesh, and the devil will fight against us. There must be a holy determination in us to get to Jesus. Like the blind man, we must persistently cry out for mercy, not just to escape

problems, but to receive spiritual sight. And when God gives us light, we must respond to the light in prayer, faith, and obedience. When we do, the light of His love blinds us to the world's cares and ignites us to shine brightly in a dark world.

Conclusion

Again, the blind man's persistent faith opened his eyes to see the transforming face of Jesus. He responded to the light that was sown in his fertile heart, and Jesus gave him more light (Psalm 97:11).

As the psalmist pleads in Psalm 13:3, "*Light up my eyes,*" let's pray for God to open our eyes to Jesus. If you've never come into a saving relationship with Jesus, don't be like the crowd, brushing aside His truth. Cry out like the blind man, "*Lord, have mercy on me!*" We are sinners in need of forgiveness to be reconciled to God. Trust Christ's death for your sin and resurrection, not your works to save you (1 Peter 3:18).

If you're a believer, guard against distractions that dim your vision. Immerse yourself in His Word daily, not just to check a box, but to gain spiritual sight. Respond to His revelation not only to be transformed, but to be equipped to share His light to set others free from darkness. Obey the light He's given you, and let your life shine brightly to the praise of His glory and grace.

Handout: Preparing to Meet God and Responding in Prayer

As we seek to grow in spiritual vision, meditating on God's Word is essential. As Adrian Rogers said, "The Word will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Word." To help you engage daily with Scripture, this handout offers two practical tools: Marshall Segal's FEAST acronym to prepare your heart to meet God and Daniel Henderson's 4/4 pattern to respond to His revelation in prayer. Use these to immerse yourself in God's Word, respond in faith, and let His light shine through you (Psalm 1).

FEAST: Preparing Your Heart to Meet God

Marshall Segal's FEAST acronym provides five brief prayers to ready your heart for God's Word, ensuring you approach it with focus, humility, and openness. As Segal writes, "We need God, by the power of His Spirit, to help us understand his word" (*Desiring God*).

- **Focus my mind** to shut out distractions: This is a prayer for clarity amidst life's noise. "Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways" (Psalm 119:37).
- **Enlighten my eyes** to see God's truth: Your seeking the Spirit to reveal Scripture's wonders. "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18).
- **Address my sin** to forgive and transform me: You want God to expose sin, and give you strength to walk in His light. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7-9).
- **Satisfy my soul** with His love: Seek joy in God's presence. "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" (Psalm 90:14).
- **Train my hands** to obey and serve: Desire to live out God's truth. "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

4/4 Pattern: Responding to God's Revelation in Prayer

Daniel Henderson's 4/4 pattern, based on the Lord's Prayer, guides you to respond to God's Word in worship-based prayer, ensuring your prayers are Scripture-fed and Spirit-led. As Tim Keller notes, "Prayer is answering God... apart from submission to His Word, we talk to ourselves."

- **Reverence:** Worship God for who He is, revealed in the passage. Praise His attributes (e.g., holiness, love). “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name” (Matthew 6:9).
- **Response:** This response to God’s character in prayer involves yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit and recommitting to God’s kingdom purposes. “Worship is the response of all I am to the revelation of all he is.” Introspection and surrender mark this time of yielding to the Spirit’s promptings. It is a season of pledged obedience to the will and Word of God, desiring the accomplishment of his purposes in our lives. “Your kingdom come, your will be done” (Matthew 6:10).
- **Requests:** Present your needs and others’ in light of the passage. Trust God’s provision. “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).
- **Readiness:** We are praying to be battle ready through our trust in Christ. He is able to “provide the way of escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13) and his Word is sufficient to equip us in the face of any temptation (see the example of Jesus in Matthew 4:2–11). “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13).

Practical Tips for 4/4 Pattern:

- **Pray the Passage:** Having meditated on a scripture passage, use the 4/4 pattern to respond. For example, if reading Luke 18:42–43, praise Jesus as Savior (Reverence), confess and surrender hinderances to spiritual sight (Response), ask for strength to walk in His light in a specific area of your life (Requests), and seek the Lord to equip you for spiritual battle and overcome temptation—“Lord, let not distractions keep me from the word, but let the word keep me from sin” (Readiness).
- **Journal Prayers:** Write your prayers to deepen engagement.

Why This Matters

Like the blind man in Luke 18, whose faith was fueled by hearing God’s Word (Romans 10:17), we grow in spiritual sight by meditating on Scripture.

Deuteronomy 17:18–20 called Israel’s kings to copy and read the law daily to stay humble and obedient. Daily engagement with God’s Word, through FEAST and 4/4 prayer, keeps us from sin’s darkness, equips us to open blind eyes (Isaiah 42:6–7), and lets us see Jesus clearly, our greatest treasure (Psalm 73:25).