

I Was Blind but Now I See

The Word Became Flesh

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: John 9:13-34

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"For I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of salvation for everyone who believes first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." I begin by asking the question, "Are you ashamed of the gospel? Are you ashamed of your relationship with Jesus Christ? I wish that I could stand before you today and tell you that I have always quoted Romans 1:16, and there has never been a time in my life that I was ashamed, but that is not true.

Let me share a story with you. I remember back in middle school, on one particular morning for no reason whatsoever, I had grabbed a pink marker and I drew a cross on my hand. I don't know why I did it, but I got to school that day and I didn't think anything of it. And I remember the particular morning because it was raining outside. And so as we all got off the bus, we went into the gym of the middle school, and we got to play around in the gym before school started that day. And so I remember it was like any other day.

We were just playing in the gym, and the first bell would ring, and we all had to sit in the bleachers, and then we would get dismissed by classes by one of the teachers that was in the gym. And so that particular day, I went up on the bleacher after the bell rang, and I remember sitting down. And to this day, I remember the kid that was sitting next to me. His name was Chris Brissett. Isn't it amazing how he remembers some of those details? He had a twin brother, Josh Brissette, and I knew them. I had gone to school with them ever since elementary school, and we had kind of been friends for a little bit, but as we got into middle school, we definitely drifted apart.

And I was sitting there waiting for the teacher to dismiss us. And Chris looks over at my hand, and he sees the cross, and he says to me, "Joel, did you draw a cross on your hand this morning?" I could tell by the way that he said it that he was less than impressed with the fact that I had drawn a cross on my hand. And so not wanting to be made fun of, my immediate reaction was, "No, someone else did that," to which he didn't buy, of course. And so he made fun of me.

I remember him even kind of making fun of me and yelling to people that were down the road from us, "Hey, Joel drew a cross on his hand." And so the rest of the day, he would go around and tell people that I had drawn this cross on my hand, and I remember being ashamed, and I could not wait until I could get home that afternoon and wash it off my hand. I am ashamed of that day in my life. Why was I ashamed of a cross that I had on my hand?

I understand I was only in middle school at the time, and you say, "That's not a big deal, but I wish that I could go back many times and wear that cross with pride." Say, "Yeah, I drew that on my hand because I have a relationship with Jesus Christ." So I ask you the question, "Have you ever been ashamed of being associated with Jesus? Have you ever desired the approval of man over the acceptance of God?" I can tell you personally that I have vowed to never let that happen again.

It is amazing how strong the approval of others is in our lives. We are often influenced to make decisions because of the people around us. As we continue in John chapter 9 today, we are going to see a grown man who refuses to be intimidated by the religious leaders, as well as an older man and an older woman who actually end up bowing to the fear of the Pharisees, and that older man and older women happen to be the parents of the man who stands strong.

We have been doing a series in the book of John called "The Word Became Flesh." And if you weren't here last week or didn't watch last week, we left off in the story with a blind man who has been healed by Jesus. The miracle was a little strange in how it took place because a blind man was there, and Jesus spits on the ground, and he makes some mud, and he puts it in the man's eyes, and he tells him, "Go to the pool of Siloam in wash, and you will see." So the man goes to the pool, and he washes, and he opens his eyes, and he can see for the first time.

And John tells us that that man's blindness, the reason he was born blind, was for this exact moment so that God could receive glory. There's no doubt that this man has been healed. He was blind, and now he can see. But the question for most remains, how? How was he healed? So if you haven't already, I encourage you to open your Bibles to John chapter 9:12 as we continue in the story, John chapter 9:12.

Let me pray, and then we will jump back in to our text. Heavenly Father, we come before you today with anticipation of hearing from you. Thank you for receiving our worship this morning as we lifted you up, as we continue to praise you and thank you for our own healing. May our eyes be open to who you are. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

So in John 9:12, the blind man has been healed and now something different is going to take place. There's a transition here in verse 13. We find that those that are around the blind man, they decide to bring to the Pharisees the man who had been born blind. Some have come to the conclusion this man has been healed. He was blind and now he can see while others are not really buying it. They're not sure if it actually happened. They don't know if it's some scam.

They're not sure whether they believe it, and so they decide we're going to bring it to the Pharisees. We're going to let them kind of try this case and find out was this man really healed. I'm sure you've come across similar people to like that in your life where they say something along the lines of, "You know, I would believe in God if he would just reveal Himself to me. If He would just write His name in the sky, I would believe in Him. If I could see a miracle, I then would believe that God exists.

But at this point, I'm just not sure that I believe it." To those people, I say, "Listen, God knows us better than we know ourselves. Even those people who want a miracle, if they see a miracle, they will explain it away or just not believe it." This is where these people are at right now at this point. They're not sure whether they believe this has actually happened. John doesn't tell us whether these people that are bringing the blind man before the Pharisees, whether they're excited, whether they're jealous, maybe they're just not sure of what is going on.

We don't know their motivation. All we know is that they're looking for answers, and for whatever reason, the Pharisees seem like the logical choice. So how are the Pharisees going to handle this? Verse 14. John tells us, "Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath." So here we go again. If you've been following in the book of John or in the gospels, if you know the stories, we know this has been an issue in the past.

The Pharisees only argument against this healing and against Jesus is that it took place on the wrong day, the Sabbath. If it had been a day earlier or a day later, they wouldn't have had a problem with it. But why would Jesus break the law in order to heal this man? Because according to them, they had made these laws

as to what was appropriate and inappropriate to do on the Sabbath. What you could do and what you couldn't do on the Sabbath.

And one of the things that they said you couldn't do was any type of work, and apparently healing a blind man was work. And so they were more concerned about that than the fact that there was a man there who had been born blind but now was healed. To which I ask the question, how often do you and I struggle and overlook God's amazing blessings in our life because he doesn't do things exactly how we think he should do them.

We are blessed in so many ways, but there's one little piece of our life that we say, "You know what, God, could you kind of change this? Could you help me out?" Let me just give you an example. We might have a beautiful home that we live in, have a beautiful spouse, amazing kids, a wonderful job, food to eat, friends, a great church family. But then we say, "You know what, God, I'm upset with you because you won't let me have a Corvette," right?

All of these blessings, all of these gifts, but we focus on this one thing and we say, "But God, if you could just do this," we go on in verse 15, "Therefore the Pharisees also asked this man how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." The interrogation begins. The man remains calm before the Pharisees, and he answers their questions.

Knowing they're not going to be satisfied, he's narrowed down the story a little bit, hasn't he? Right? Let's see. He put mud out of my eyes. I washed. Now I can see. That's the story. He doesn't talk about the spit. He doesn't talk about where he went to wash. He's just saying, "This is what happened." We go to verse 16, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath. But there were others who asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" And so they were divided.

Even amongst the Pharisees, those that were standing around, they were divided. How could this happen? This man was blind and now he can see, but the healing took place on the Sabbath. Help us make sense of all of this, to which I ask the question, "Do we ever discredit the work of God in the life of someone else because they don't look the way we think they should." Here, they're looking at this man, Jesus. They're saying, "Why would he heal on the Sabbath? He knows that's wrong. He's not supposed to do that." And so he doesn't look the way that the Messiah was supposed to look.

Again, remember, they wanted a military leader, somebody that was going to rise up and rebuild the nation of Israel so that they could become a world power so that they could free them from the bondage of the Romans. And so Jesus did not look how they thought the Messiah would look. Are there people in our world that maybe God wants to use, but we relegate them off to the fringe of society because they don't look the way we think they should look.

Now you need to understand that I am probably just as conservative, if not more so than most of you. But is it possible that we dismiss people that God wants to use just because they look different from us? I'm not talking about things that are obviously sinful, but I am talking about things like how they do their hair, the color of their hair, the types of clothes that they wear. Maybe they have a tattoo.

Maybe they play golf on Sunday afternoons, or maybe they play cards. You guys need to understand the church that I grew up in, how conservative it really was. When I was growing up in my church, playing cards was sinful. It was wrong. Even if you wanted to play solitaire or war with your kids or whatever, because cards were associated with gambling and bedding and everything else. And so you were not allowed to play cards. Now, I'm going to make an admission to you. I don't really want it on the internet, but I did it in first service, so you guys need to know the story, right?

So as a teenager, because we weren't supposed to play cards and being a teenager that was a little bit rebellious and wanted to fight back a little bit, I remember my group of friends taking some cards into the

church one night after a youth group, and we knew that nobody wanted us playing cards, but we did anyway. And just as a way to get back at them, it doesn't really even make sense now, but you know a teenager's mind. It doesn't really work or think. You guys get that, right? But we took those cards and we spelled out devil and left them for the janitor afterwards.

Yeah. So I shared that in first service. Some people came up to me and said, "That's the worst you've ever done," and other people said, "I can't believe you did that." So you're all somewhere in there. Now you know I'm human, right? One of the other things in my church that was frowned upon, that it's just amazing how things change. Some people would look down on you if you went out to eat after church, if you went and ate at a restaurant. And especially if that restaurant had a bar in it and served alcohol like Applebee's, I mean, going to do something like that on a Sunday afternoon was just totally wrong.

I will tell you I do that sometimes now, all right? Again, online. Now my church can be mad at me, I guess. But I just want to caution us here. I never want to be on the other side of God, right? Here were these Pharisees looking at Jesus, and He was breaking one of their man-made laws. It was not in Scripture that you couldn't heal on the Sabbath. This was something that they had kind of built up over the years, all of these laws and regulations that they thought people had to follow.

And so they found themselves fighting against God because he didn't look how they thought he was going to look. Verse 17, "Then they turned again to the blind men. What do you have to say about him? It was your eyes he opened, and the man replied, "He is a prophet." The blind man is given another opportunity, another open door, to share his experience with God, and he takes that opportunity, to which I remind all of us, just like I said last week, if we allow God to work in our lives, people will notice and they won't be able to deny that something is different about us.

You will have the chance to answer the question, "What do you think about Jesus?" And there's no greater open door to share your faith than when somebody asks that question, "What do you think about Jesus? What happened in your life? Why are you different?" We go to verse 18, "They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents." The Pharisees still don't believe it.

Here is this man who was born blind. He's testifying before them. I was blind. I was born that way. You can ask anybody. And now I can see, but they still don't believe it. They still don't believe that he has been healed, which proves another point to me that it is possible to be blinded to the work of God, even if it's staring you in the face. This man boldly proclaims what Jesus has done. He's not ashamed. Don't you have people in your life that you have shared the story of what God has done in your life?

Something amazing happens and they still just go, "Yeah, I still don't believe. It is possible to be blinded to the work of God." Verse 19, "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one that you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" So now the Pharisees are going to question his parents. They didn't get what they wanted from him, so now they're going to bring somebody else. They didn't get the answers they wanted. They've already come to their conclusion, which proves another point.

If you look hard enough for anything, you can find it even if it isn't true. If you search hard enough and you're looking for the answer you want, you can find it. Do you know how many people don't want to believe in a moral God that has moral standards? And so they look for anything possible to deny Him. I just don't want to believe it. So I'm going to ask everybody, every question I can possibly come up with because I don't want to believe it's true. So they ask his parents, "Is this really your son?"

Was he really born blind? How will they respond?" Well, we know he is our son, the parents answered. And we know that he was born blind, okay? So we've now got the facts. Yes, he's our son. Yes, he was born blind, okay? Verse 21. But how he can see now, these are his parents talking, or who opened his eyes, we

don't know. Ask him, he is of age. He will speak to you, to which I say liar, right? Liar, they had to know the story. Their son had to have shared with them, "This is what happened.

Jesus came. He put mud on my eyes. I washed. Now I can see." Were they even excited about their son? Why wouldn't they answer the question? Why did they push it off on their son? Why weren't they willing to testify before the Pharisees? Yes, a miracle has happened. Well, fortunately for us, John gives us the answer. Verse 22, John tells us that his parents said this because they were afraid.

They were afraid of the Jewish leaders who had already decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. His own parents were not willing to testify to the goodness of God because they were afraid of what others would think. Has your fear of man ever hindered you from sharing about the goodness of God?

I wish that I could stand before you and say, "No, I've never done that," but instead I now say never again. Never again will I allow my fear of man or what other people are going to say hinder me from sharing God's goodness? Are we more concerned with what men think of us than with what God thinks of us? We should not listen to the fear. Verse 23, "That is why his parents said he is of age.

Ask him." They wouldn't defend their son. The Pharisees are getting nowhere. They didn't get anywhere with the man. Now they're not getting anywhere with his parents. They're just verifying the facts. Yes, he was our son. Yes, he was born blind. Yes, he can now see. So now they've got to try to answer this. Okay, we've gone back. We've tried to prove that wrong. Maybe it's a hoax. Maybe this isn't the man. Maybe he was never blind, but his parents are now giving testimony to that fact. And so here we come to verse 24. "A second time, they summoned the man who had been blind.

"Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." Now, I'm not a lawyer, but it seems like I could object to leading the witness here, right? The Pharisees already made up their mind that Jesus was guilty. This is not true. Unfortunately, most people in our circles today, if you live where I live in this country, even those who may attend church with you if you ask them, many of those people have already made their judgment of who Jesus is, and that can be discouraging.

You may have family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors that you love, and you care about, and you say, "I need you to understand who Jesus is." And that person says, "I already know. I've already come to my conclusion. I don't believe that He was the Messiah. I don't believe He was raised from the dead. I'm here to encourage you we should never give up. We need to respond just as this man does and keep speaking the truth." In verse 25, he replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know.

But one thing I do know, I was blind, but now I see." I told you last week, this is one of my favorite verses in all of Scripture. I often have people that want to meet with me in my office or have a conversation with me just because I'm a pastor, just because I have that title. And they want to argue with me about various things, or they have questions, and I love to look at this verse, and I allow this verse to dictate how I speak.

And I say, "Listen, we can argue about how old the earth is, what the end times are going to look like. There's lots of things that we can argue about that I don't have answers for, but there is one thing that is undeniably true. I was blind, but now I see. I was without hope, but now I am filled. I was discouraged, but now I have joy.

Every single one of us that has proclaimed Jesus as our Lord and Savior has a testimony to share of His goodness. It is the proof of who He is and that He exists and that He still changes hearts and lives. And so this man says, "Listen, I don't know what you guys are talking about. I don't know if He's a sinner. I don't know anything about Him. All I know is that I was blind and now I see." How do we explain that?

So we go to verse 26. Then they asked Him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" Are you getting sick of this yet? I mean, how many times does He have to tell them? It's getting old. And so He

answered, "I have told you already, and you did not listen. Why? Do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become His disciples too? Can you hear the sarcasm there? Don't you love that? This man's like, "Okay, you keep asking me the same question.

I'm admitting to be a disciple of Jesus." He's saying, "My life has been changed not just physically, but spiritually as well. You keep asking me. You must want to be His disciple too." Of course, they do not respond well to that. Then they hurled insults at Him, and they said, "You are this fellow's disciple. We are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from, to which I say, isn't that ironic?

They claim to be disciples of Moses, and if Moses were there, he would have passionately asked them to submit to Jesus. Yet they claim to be disciples of Moses." Verse 30 through 33, the man answered, "Now that is remarkable. You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes." We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. This blind man sees the irony in the situation, pun intended. He can see the irony in what is taking place. These are supposed to be the spiritual leaders, the Pharisees, of the people of Israel, and yet this man recognizes they are the ones that are actually blind. While this man who has been blind for his entire life, saved the last few moments can clearly see who Jesus is.

Isn't it remarkable? You don't know where this man comes from, but yet he has healed me. Verse 34, "To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us?' And they threw him out. Which leads me to my final truth this morning. When there is no logical argument left against Jesus, people will default to name-calling threats and physical harm.

When there's no longer any logical reason to not believe in Him or not confess Him as your Savior, when there's no really scientific reason that we can prove it's wrong or that we should believe in something else, when you just simply have to admit, yes, there is a moral God who created everything and loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for us and rose back to life on the third day when that can't be proven wrong, people default to name-calling threats and physical harm.

If you have not experienced that yet, you will because that's all they have left. And so John shares this story with us, and he doesn't want us to miss the truth that is right in front of our eyes. The story isn't so much about physical blindness as it is about spiritual blindness. He'll go on to talk about that and next week we're going to dive into that a little more.

But John is screaming to us, "Don't miss the Messiah." If you're here today or you're watching online or listening on the radio, maybe you are here today and you would admit, "You know what? I think I am spiritually blind. I'm not sure I understand all of this or I've accepted all this or I have received all this. Maybe this is all new. Can I just share with you that Jesus wants to open your eyes to who He really is.

He loves you more than you could ever imagine. He knows all of the mistakes you've made. He knows you better than you know yourself, and He loves you." He is asking that you would come humbly before Him and allow yourself to be healed. Think about this story. Yes, Jesus spit in the dirt and He made mud and He put it on the blind man's eyes, but then He said, "Go and wash and be healed." There was a step that he had to take in order to receive that healing.

He had to be willing to go and to wash and to have faith and to trust. Would you humble yourself and allow you to be healed and pray that God would open your eyes to see Him clearly. For many others, you're here, you're watching, you're listening, and you have been healed. God has transformed your life. You are a new creation. To you, I say, you have a story to tell.

When is the last time you have shared your story? When is the last time that you have shared your testimony of what God has done in your life, of how He has radically transformed you, so that you can look at others and you can say, "I was blind, but now I see." That is our story to share. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before You today, and thank You that You are a God who does miracles. You've done a miracle in my life. It transformed me into a new creation, taken out my heart of stone, and replaced it with the heart of flesh. Lord, there's no judgment here.

We're not claiming to be perfect. We're still sinners that have been saved by grace. But we have experienced the power of Your presence, and we long for others to experience that as well. And so do the work that only You can do, Father. The altars are open. People are welcome to come. There will be people that will be upfront that want to pray with you if you want prayer.

If you're watching or listening, find somebody to talk with. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.