



Stand Alone Message | Blind Sight | Blake Austin | 11.9.25

Opening Prayer

Open with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give your group spiritual sight and humble hearts to receive what God wants to teach.

Icebreaker

Share a time when you were physically lost or couldn't see clearly (fog, darkness, etc.). How did it feel to be disoriented? How did you find your way?

Key Scripture

Acts 9:1-19

Key Takeaways:

1. Doing the Right Things the Wrong Way

- Saul was religiously active, highly educated, sincere, and passionate—but spiritually blind
- We can attend church, serve, and appear spiritually engaged while missing what God is actually doing
- The difference between being a consumer vs. a contributor in church

2. The Danger of Ignorance and Self-Righteousness

- Pride and self-trust blind us to the wonders of Jesus
- When we think we've "arrived" spiritually, we become unteachable
- The Pharisees missed Jesus because of their arrogance

3. Spiritual Awakening Requires:

- **A heart for what God's heart beats for** (especially His church)
- **Obedience following the encounter** (responding to God's invitation)
- **Submission to community** (allowing others to speak into our lives)

Discussion Questions:

Section 1: Recognizing Spiritual Blindness

1. **The toddler story:** Pastor Blake shared how his daughter threw away a dirty diaper in the wrong place—doing the right thing the wrong way. Can you identify an area in your spiritual life where you might be "doing the right thing the wrong way"?
2. **Read Acts 9:1-2.** Saul was passionate, educated, and sincere—yet completely wrong. What does this teach us about the limitations of sincerity without truth?
3. **Practical blindness:** Pastor Blake mentioned spiritual blindness shows up in our homes, workplaces, schools, and church. Which area resonates most with you? Where do you sense you might be spiritually blind?
 - Home: Neglecting spiritual leadership or discussions
 - Workplace: Lacking integrity or compassion
 - Education: Prioritizing knowledge over character
 - Church: Consuming rather than contributing

4. **Consumer vs. Contributor:** On a scale of 1-10, where would you rate yourself? Are you primarily consuming church (services, programs, teaching) or contributing to it (serving, investing, building community)?

Section 2: The Heart of God for His Church

5. **Read Acts 9:4-5.** Jesus asked Saul, "Why are you persecuting ME?" not "Why are you persecuting my church?" What does this reveal about how Jesus views the church?
6. **Church hurt:** Have you experienced hurt from church or church leaders? How has that affected your view of the church? What would it look like to have Jesus' heart for the church even when people fail you?
7. **Defending the church:** When was the last time you defended the church instead of joining in criticism? What makes this difficult in today's culture?

Section 3: Encountering God and Responding

8. **Read Acts 9:6-9.** Saul had a powerful encounter with Jesus, but he still had to obey. Why isn't the encounter enough? What's the danger of settling for spiritual experiences without obedience?
9. **The invitation:** Can you identify a time when God gave you an encounter but also an invitation to obey? Did you respond? What happened (or didn't happen) as a result?
10. **Read Acts 9:10-18.** Ananias was afraid to go to Saul, but he obeyed. Saul could have rejected this unknown man's ministry, but he submitted. What does this teach us about:
 - Obeying when God's direction doesn't make sense?
 - Receiving ministry from unexpected sources?
 - The importance of community in our spiritual sight?

Section 4: Community as God's Design (Not an Idol)

11. Pastor Blake mentioned that community can become an idol when we make all our decisions based on where the "coolest" or most comfortable community is. How do you balance:

- Desiring healthy community (which is biblical)
- Being obedient to where God calls you (even if the community looks different than expected)

12. **Submission to community:** What does it practically look like to submit to community? Why is this difficult for us? What are we afraid of?

Personal Reflection Questions

Take 5-7 minutes of silence for individual reflection:

- **Where am I spiritually blind right now?** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of pride, self-righteousness, or ignorance.
- **What is God inviting me to after this encounter with His Word?** Don't just settle for the "good sermon" feeling—what specific action is He calling you to?
- **Am I submitted to biblical community, or am I holding people at arm's length?** Who has permission to speak truth into my life?

Practical Applications

This Week:

1. **For Fathers/Spiritual Leaders:** Set aside 15 minutes this week to lead your household spiritually. This could be:
 - Family prayer time
 - Reading a Bible story with your kids
 - Having a spiritual conversation at dinner
 - Praying over your spouse

2. Shift from Consumer to Contributor:

- If you're not serving, sign up to serve in one area
- If you are serving, invite someone else to serve with you
- Look for one practical way to contribute to your church community this week

3. Defend the Church:

- If you hear criticism of the church (in general or specifically), practice defending her rather than joining in
- Pray specifically for your church leadership this week

4. Obey the Invitation:

- Write down one specific thing God has been inviting you to do
- Take one concrete step of obedience this week
- Share it with someone in your group for accountability

5. Submit to Community:

- Identify one person you trust spiritually
- Ask them to speak into a specific area of your life where you need wisdom or accountability
- Join or commit more deeply to a serve team or life group

Memory Verse

Acts 9:17-18 - "So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight."

Closing Prayer Points:

- Pray for spiritual sight—that scales would fall from our eyes
 - Pray for humility to receive correction and direction from God
 - Pray for fathers and spiritual leaders to rise up
 - Pray for a renewed heart and passion for the church
 - Pray for courage to obey God's invitations, not just enjoy encounters
 - Pray for authentic, submitted community relationships
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Next Steps

- Follow up with each other mid-week about your practical applications
- Consider fasting one meal this week and using that time to pray for spiritual sight
- Read through Acts 9 daily this week and journal what God shows you