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**Series: The Gospel of John**  
**Message: I Once Was Blind**

**Transcribed Message**  
**January 18, 2026**  
**John 9:6-23**

I know that almost everybody here is familiar with the well-known comedy skit by Abbott and Costello, Who's On First? And if you remember that skit, the whole storyline of that skit is Abbott trying to explain to Costello the different positions on the baseball field and the names of the players. And of course, the problem is that those players have names like who and what and why and I don't know and a pitcher who's named tomorrow and the catcher who's named today and, you know, the outfielder is nobody and because. It just makes for mass and total confusion as he's trying to explain these different positions and these different players. Well, believe it or don't, I thought of that skit as I read John 9 this past week. We'll tee you up when we get to that one, but I think you'll probably see it coming as well.

But what is of far more importance that we would see this morning is this matter that unless and until God opens our eyes and until God does this supernatural work of grace in our lives and opens our eyes, this life-changing gospel that we so desperately need, this life-changing faith is a gift that He gives to us. And that is exactly what we heard these parents commit to and desire in the lives of their children.

So, the setup of chapter 9 looks like this once again. It's tied to the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles is also, of course, called the Feast of Lights. Jesus does something in this 9<sup>th</sup> chapter that we don't see any other place in the gospel of John. He repeats again the "I am" with the predicate, and He says again, I am the light of the world. Now, John had told us that back in the opening chapter in the 9<sup>th</sup> verse when he said, the true light that is a light to everyone is coming into the world. John had already told us that back in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter. When we get into this 8<sup>th</sup> chapter and we see this wonderful example of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Lights, we see it very dramatically portrayed.

The second thing we see is chapter 9 reveals what happens when this light shines. What happens when the light shines? Well, you almost have an acted-out story in this chapter of this

truth of Jesus as the light of the world. It's almost like it's a parable being acted out right in front of us in the lives of these people in the ministry of Jesus. The light comes, and the light shines, and the light does what it often does. It creates conflict.

Have you ever been a part of a situation where you at least thought to the best of your ability you were shining light on something that needed some light, and the end result was there was conflict because of the light that you brought? Light isn't always appreciated. If there's anything that we're seeing in John's gospel, it's that light isn't always appreciated, and that's clearly in the life of our Lord. Some people see. Some people are blind. Some people worship. Some people reject. And so, that's on display here.

Then thirdly, chapter 9 prepares us for chapter 10. And you say, well, that's a wonderful insight. Chapter 9 prepares us for chapter 10 in this way, because when we get to chapter 10, it's going to be Jesus saying, I am the good shepherd. And I think what John would have us see is the contrast between Jesus in chapter 10 as the good shepherd, and then what we're seeing in chapter 9, which is the shepherds of Israel are anything but good. The shepherds of Israel, in fact, are evil in their intent and in their actions. So, this is what is before us. The blind, this morning in this 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, see, and the seeing are blind.

So, we come to the miracle. Verses 6 and 7 read like this. Having said these things. Well, what things? Having said what things? All the things that we saw last week. About the very purposes of God in suffering. About what Jesus said in terms of his own life and ministry. Working while it's day, because night is coming. All of that, okay? So, you come to verse 6. Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, go wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent. So, he went and washed and came back seeing.

Now, you start off by just reminding ourselves again of this man that we were introduced to last week. And this man, John tells us repeatedly, was a man who was born blind. From the moment of his birth, at some point, his parents make this very difficult discovery that their little baby can't see. I don't know what that would have been like in the first century. It may have taken them a little while to understand what was going on, just because they didn't

have the medical technology that we have today. But at some point, they understand that this little baby isn't seeing.

And so, this young man grows. And whatever age he is, which we are not told, but he has never seen anything. He has never seen anybody. That's the condition, of course, in which we find him. It just causes me to wonder of the degree of difficulty in this man's life to get up day after day and to be motivated to go out into what had to be ... challenging isn't even the word, is it? Because he was at the lowest level of society, begging on the side of the street, the road every day. You can't help but just sense the great weight that this man carried all his life.

The Lord, of course, breaks into his world. Jesus sees him. He doesn't see Jesus, but Jesus sees him. And Jesus validates his very existence by stopping and talking to him. I think the thing that we should appreciate is the fact that Jesus is the initiator in this. There are miracles recorded in the Gospels where people, as Jesus is walking by, are yelling and screaming. Remember in some of those examples, there are literally people saying, be quiet, be quiet. There's nothing in the text that indicates that this man knew that Jesus was even coming by. It's really a picture of divine grace, isn't it? Of God moving into his life, just as he's moved into our life, and how this man doesn't call out. This man doesn't know who Jesus is, but Jesus knows who he is.

And then let's look at the miracle itself and just the method that is used by Jesus in this sixth verse. I'm going to read it, and then I'm going to ask you a question. Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with mud. And you say what? Well, I should have said, why mud? It says the mud, but I should have probably said, why mud? But we'll speak to that in a moment. I mean, to be totally honest, and I'm not going to ask you to yell out a word, but if I had asked you to yell out, if I asked you to fill in the blank, when you read this account, Jesus spitting on the ground, making some mud, putting it on this man's eyes, and if you had to come up with one word to describe what would first come to mind, if we're totally honest, one of the words would have to be, that's kind of gross, right? I mean, literally, Jesus spits on the ground, and you have to think that He had to spit more than once to make this happen. Just being honest. If you spit on the ground, you

don't have a whole lot to work with, but whatever Jesus did, He makes this, and of course, He puts it on this man's eyes.

We said last week that this matter of Jesus and the blind is the most recorded miracle in the Gospels regarding individual people. Now, I don't know if you tallied up all the miracles that is necessarily at the top, but when the Holy Spirit saw fit to tell us of specific miracles that Jesus did in interacting with individual people, the one that is most recorded is this matter of giving sight to the blind. The idea of putting mud on this man's eyes seems kind of counterintuitive, doesn't it? This man can't see, so let's put something even more difficult over his eyes so that he can't see even at all. Just think about what Jesus did here, and it says He put mud on his eyes.

Now, all of us who have sight, if you come towards my eyes, I'm blinking, right? I'm blinking like crazy. I can't help but wonder, obviously, this man didn't have that reaction because he was blind. Did Jesus literally put this mud on his physical eyes? Did He put this mud on the man's eyelids? In any event, as this man walks away, anybody who saw him at that moment would say, there's mud on that man's eyes, and that's, of course, exactly what we're told.

What's the meaning of this? Why would Jesus do this? Would it surprise you if I told you there are quite a few different theories as to why Jesus would put mud on a man's eyes? It wouldn't surprise you at all, would it? Would it surprise you that I'm going to give you the right answer? No, I don't. I don't have the right answer to that. But there's a lot of speculation about what that might be, so let me just give you some. I think some of them have real value. One of the first is it's suggested that saliva in the first century, and maybe in other ancient times, was viewed as having some special quality to it, so that saliva itself had a special quality. In the miracles of Jesus, three different times, this is not the only time, three different times, Jesus uses saliva in miracles. Remember the one where the man was deaf, and Jesus took saliva and put it in his ears, and his hearing was restored. We have another instance where a blind man came to Jesus, and Jesus took saliva and put it on the man's eyes, and his sight was restored. And then we have this one, where Jesus uses saliva to make this mud. And so, we have this picture in the Gospels of Jesus doing this.

I was trying to think. I don't know. I would need help from moms on this one. Primarily moms. Dads don't seem to be quite tuned into this. But back in the day, most moms in their purse had a cloth hanky, or they had a tissue, right? And if little Johnny or little Susie had a little smudge, or a little leftover breakfast, or a little something on their face that mom didn't want to have there, they would reach in, take their hanky, and they would moisten it with a little saliva. Then they would just clean up little Johnny and little Susie with a little saliva. So, I guess, there is a value to it, isn't there, even in more recent times? But here it is that Jesus utilizes this method, first of all.

The other possibility, and I think this is a very valid one, what is man made of? In Genesis 2:7, when it says, And God formed man out of the dust of the ground. It has been suggested by many that we have here Jesus reverting to the original design of creation, in which we are made of the dust of the ground. Adam was made of the dust of the ground, and God breathed into him the breath of life. What you have in effect here is Jesus reversing the curse. In Genesis 1 and 2, we have perfection, don't we? You get to Genesis 3, and the fall of man into sin, and everything breaks loose, and disease, and death, and disability, and all these things enter into God's perfect world. And Jesus is in effect saying, I made you. When you ask the question, what did God use to make man? He made dust. And you say, well, who made man? Well, Jesus did. That's what John started off his gospel saying. Without him was not anything made, that was made. Jesus is the maker. He utilized something that was a part of the original creative story that gets all twisted and turned upside down because of sin. And now Jesus comes back into that context, and in a reversal of the curse he's restoring this man's sight in such a miraculous way.

Then the third thing, and I'm just going to touch this because we're going to speak to it later. But this miracle is a deliberate violation of the Sabbath. We're going to see that in verse 14. So, when you say, why did Jesus use mud? Why did he do this? Why did he act this out in the way that he did? One of the answers is, in verse 14, it was a violation, as they understood it, at least, of the Sabbath. Jesus is going to use that in his teaching, so we'll come back to that.

But look at the command then in verse 7. And Jesus said to him, go wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent. Go and wash. I've put mud on your eyes. Now go wash it off. Now,

let me ask you, does that sound reasonable? You're a blind man begging on the side of the road. A man you have never met. We have no reason to think that he knows anything about Jesus as this story unfolds. This man literally stops, enters into a conversation with you, goes to the trouble of making mud out of saliva that he has spit on the ground, puts it on your eyes, and tells you to go and wash it off. Does that seem reasonable to you, sitting there in the condition that this man finds himself? Does that seem easy to you? Or does that seem hard and difficult and unreasonable?

Well, as you think about that, Jesus tells him to go to the pool of Siloam. And it is at the pool of Siloam, which he tells us means sent. Which is interesting, isn't it? Because John tells us about 25 times in his gospel that Jesus is the sent one. Now, as best we can tell in the layout of Jerusalem at this time, if this event takes place somewhere on the Temple Mount or near the Temple Mount, then to go to the pool of Siloam is not the easiest thing to do either because the Temple Mount is elevated and you are going to descend wherever you go from the Temple Mount. You're going to go a distance of at least half a mile to get to the pool of Siloam. And so, this man obviously has done this all his life, but you would hope at this point to go to that specific place that he might have help in doing that.

But then notice the outcome at the end of verse 7. And he said to him, go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent. So, he went and washed and came back seeing. I like John's total understatement, right? Just total downplay, if you will. He went and he washed and he came back seeing. There is so much in those words. I want to just take a couple minutes, and I want to point out five things in that last part of that 7<sup>th</sup> verse.

Does it strike you as kind of fascinating that there's no interchange between Jesus and this man? There's no questions. There's no hesitation. But maybe the most amazing part of it all is there's no promise on the part of Jesus that if you go and do this, you are going to receive your sight. There's nothing mentioned about a miracle happening if you go do this. So, there's no interaction that we have recorded for us between Jesus and this man about what all of this means and why should I go and do this and what's going to be the outcome. This man, again, I just simply say to you, is not seeking anything from Jesus when all of this happens. Christ found him. Christ moves towards him. Christ heals him.

This picture, thirdly, is the exact opposite of the experience of Naaman in the Old Testament. Remember in 2 Kings 5 when Naaman, this Syrian, realizes that there is maybe somebody in Israel. He's a leper, remember. He hears, through an incredible providential work of God, that there may be a prophet of God in Israel who can help heal people with leprosy, something that was unheard of. And remember, he goes to Elisha, and Elisha doesn't even see the man. Elisha sends his servant to tell him, well, if you want to be healed, go wash in the Jordan River seven times. The guy is so ticked off that, number one, the prophet himself doesn't talk to him, and number two, he has the audacity to tell him to go into a dirty river and dip himself seven times. He's like, I'm not doing that, and he's headed back to Syria. And his servants, remember, say, sir, what are you doing? I mean, if he told you to do this or that or the other thing, would you go and do it? And remember, he went and did it, and he was healed. But that man had been promised that this would be the outcome.

The blind man has nothing like that, and yet you see this incredible response of faith and obedience to the Lord. The physical is illustrating the spiritual, isn't it? He's physically blind. He's spiritually blind at this point. He is going to physically see, and he is going to spiritually see, so it's a beautiful corollary between the spiritual and the physical.

And then, this is what we're going to notice the rest of the morning. There is a triple repeated form here that we're going to see again and again. That triple repeated form is, he went, he washed, and he saw. He went in obedience, he washed in obedience, and he saw. It's a present participle. He saw. His sight was restored. A man who had never seen anything or anyone in his entire life, now for the first time, sees because he went, he washed, and now he sees this miracle.

Now, of course, you begin to think the celebration begins, right? It's time to celebrate this amazing, unheard of miracle. It's time for a party. Nope, not quite. Instead, what we have is controversy and we have conversations. And so, beginning here at verse 8, all the way to the end of the chapter. We're not going to get to the end of the chapter. We're not even going to get through all our notes this morning. That's just a heads up that we will go as far as we can, all right? So, we start off in the controversy and the conversations between this man and his neighbors, all right? Verses 8 through 12. When we read in verse 7 that he came back seeing,

the one person he didn't see when he came back was who? The right answer in church is always Jesus, yes. When he came back, the one person he didn't see was Jesus. Jesus was gone. Jesus does not reappear in this story until you get to verse 35. He's going to be the focus of every conversation until then, but we have to wait to get to verse 35 for Jesus to show back up. This man comes back and he doesn't see Jesus because Jesus is gone.

So now, this is the sequence that looks like who's on first. Are you ready? 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? Some said, it is he. Others said, no, but he is like him. He kept saying, I am the man. You get something of the humor of John the writer, don't you, at this point as he shows us this interaction. These people, remember, have seen this man all his entire life. Those who are his neighbors have seen this little boy grow up as a blind little boy, and they have seen him as a young man, blind from birth, and they've seen him now as a young adult, blind. They have literally seen him, some of them, maybe every day. Many people have seen him on the side of the road begging. He has never seen them, so he has no idea who he's looking at. They all know what he looks like, and they know, well, they should know that it's him, but they're not sure. They're not sure, and he's saying all the time, it's me, it's me. I am the man who was born blind. Yes, it is me. I see. Now I see you. You've only been able to see me, so it's really an amazing story.

Our son, Mark, when he was in the third grade, was at Southwest Covenant, and he needed speech therapy. We live in the Mustang School District, and the Mustang School District offered to all their constituent's speech therapy. Mark, I don't know how often he went there, but he would go over to Mustang Valley and do a speech therapy class. Well, one day, he and Bonnie are sitting out in the hall, ready to go in to see the therapist, and our neighbor boy, who lived right across the street from us and was a friend of Mark, came up to Mark, got real close to him, and said, you look just like a friend of mine named Mark. And Mark said, it's me, it's me. That was so funny, because he couldn't connect him with being at the school, but he sure looks like my neighbor friend. Well, that's what's going on here. This guy looks just like the neighbor that we've watched grow up blind from birth, but it can't possibly be him, because obviously he sees.

Now, that was who are you, right? That was who are you. Now, what about what do you know? What do you know? Verse 10. So, they said to him, then how were your eyes opened? And he answered, the man called Jesus. So now he knows his name. He knows a little bit about him, right? The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, go to Siloam and wash. So, I went and washed and received my sight. They said to him, where is he? He said, I do not know. They're grappling with the impossibility of a blind man from birth now being able to physically see. It's unheard of. They don't know what to do with it. They don't know how to explain it. They're not sure he's even the guy. And so, they ask him what he knows. Verses 11 and 12.

Isn't that amazing, his testimony? It's so instructive, what he says in return. He just tells them what he knows about Jesus. That really is it, isn't it? That's all we are asked to do. All we are required to do is just tell people what we know about Jesus and what he has done for us. He tells them what he knows and nothing more than that. And if you look at that, he knows his name. At least he knows that much. But here's this threefold report, right? He says he went, he washed, and he sees. And they're like, yeah, sure you did. They still do not believe. They want to know where is this man who healed you? And, of course, he doesn't know. That's the end of conversation one.

There's five of them. Let's look at the second one. The man and the Pharisees. The man and the Pharisees is part one because there's going to be more of this. In verses 13 through 17. How do you explain a blind man who can suddenly see? Well, when you don't know the answer to that, and who does, you go to the people who know the answer to that. And that's supposed to be the religious experts, right? So, verse 13 says that they brought the man to the Pharisees. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been formally blind.

The word "brought". You kind of want to know more, don't you? Brought in what sense did they bring him? Brought because he said, yeah, let's go. Let's talk to the religious experts. Or brought in the sense of we're taking you to the religious experts. The word itself doesn't tell us and the context doesn't tell us.

But here's what's important. It's verse 14, the Sabbath problem. It's the Sabbath problem, right? Verse 14. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his

eyes. John just kind of drops that in there, doesn't he? Almost like it's in passing. He just drops that in there and we know enough about the life and ministry of our Lord that we read that, and we go, uh-oh. This is not going to be good. This is not going to be good. This is going to be a problem.

There is no question that Jesus deliberately healed people on the Sabbath. There is no question that Jesus deliberately healed people on the Sabbath and there is no question that in healing people on the Sabbath he intended to provoke the religious leaders of his day and time. And you say that's not very nice. Why would he do that? Why would he provoke them knowing full well that they were going to rise up in conflict and antagonism and opposition to him every time he did it? That's the gospel record, isn't it? Every time he healed somebody on the Sabbath there was a conflict and he did it for this reason. He did it to say to them. I am the Lord of the Sabbath. He did it to in effect say to them. I am God. I am the Messiah. Sabbath wasn't made for man. Man was made for the Sabbath. You have so twisted what God intended to be a blessing. You have literally destroyed the blessing, and you have made it a burden. I'm here to provoke you at every hand so that you will understand and learn that God never intended what you're putting on these people in all these burdensome categories.

When Jesus spit on the ground and it says he made mud, It's the same word for the kneading of dough and you didn't knead dough on Sunday. Okay, let's say in their case Saturday. You didn't do it on Saturday. So, he's Lord of the Sabbath. He is in fact God. What better day would there be to heal somebody than to heal on the Sabbath? For there to be a celebration, a reversal of the curse, all of that is in play. That's why Jesus did it in the way that he did.

Matthew 12. If you're studying the gospel of Matthew, you can come to Matthew 12 and take out your black magic marker and draw a dark line between Matthew 12 and Matthew 13. In Matthew 12 this same thing happens. Jesus heals the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, and they get all up in arms at him. They say you're doing all this stuff through the power of Satan himself. And remember that was the defining moment in the ministry of our Lord. From that point on he began to teach it parables. It says, but Jesus said to them if your

sheep falls into the well, don't you go get him out of there? Well, how much more important is a man to you than an animal? That's the underlying story to this whole thing.

But here's what we want to see. The response of the Pharisees is stunning because it reveals the length to which people will go to deny the power of God. It reveals the nature of a heart that is untouched by the Holy Spirit and by the gospel. It's this whole picture of a blind man seeing and people who are seeing physically but have no capacity to see spiritually. So, we have an interrogation. The Pharisees basically say we can't have somebody going around healing people on the Sabbath. We just can't have that. That's not going to stand.

Let's just look quickly at three things. Verse 15. I want you to see his response and how terse it is, but how effective it is. Verse 15. So, the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight and he said to them, he put mud on my eyes, and I washed and I see. Now the word "asking" at the beginning of that verse. The Pharisees are asking him. Yeah, sure. They're badgering him. They're bullying him is the word. It's just this repetition of questions. I don't think there's any doubt that he senses at this point their absolute displeasure with him for having this miracle that's happened to him. They're not celebrating that he can see. They're disgusted with what he's bearing witness to regarding Jesus. It's almost like now he just says, well, this is my name. This is my rank and this is my serial number. I'm not telling you anything more. It's terse. It's to the point. It's all I'm going to say to you.

Not a lot of words, but very effective. I show you the effectiveness of that because when it comes time to say, what do you see here in this verse again? It is our triple formula, isn't it? He put mud in my eyes. I went. I washed. I see. He's so effective in that answer that he divides the religious leaders into two groups. They're now forced to look at this man who now sees. They have to come up with an explanation for how it is that he sees. It divides them into two groups, and they put forth two different syllogisms to explain what has happened.

The first syllogism of unbelief says people from God don't violate the Sabbath. They keep it. People who are from God keep the Sabbath. This man violates the Sabbath. He doesn't keep the Sabbath. Therefore, this man can't not possibly be from God. Well, you can end up with a syllogism like that because your premises are false. Jesus didn't violate the Sabbath, not truly. He did according to their way of thinking.

The second group, the second group sees it very differently. Now, who do you wonder that could be in the second group? A Pharisee, perhaps. His name starts with an N. From chapter 3. Jesus and him, they met at night. Nicodemus. Do you think Nicodemus was in this group? Maybe Joseph of Arimathea? They were secret disciples, John tells us later. But this group says only God can make blind people see. This man has made a blind man see. This man must be from God. So, they have two very different outcomes, don't they?

Verse 17. He's growing in his understanding. He's growing in his faith. So, they said again to the blind man, what do you say about him since he has opened your eyes? He said he is a prophet. You know what's fascinating about this? Earlier in the day, this man is at the lowest level of society. He's begging at the side of the road. Nobody cares at all about him. Nobody pays any attention to him. There's no validation of his existence. And now here he is. His sight is restored and the religious leaders, the top dogs of the day are asking him theological questions. This is incredible, isn't it? Nobody cared about him at the beginning of the day. Now midday, the theological geniuses of the time are asking him theological questions and he says to them, boom. He says, he's a prophet. Boom. He said boom, right? He's a prophet. Are you kidding me? He's a prophet? There hadn't been a prophet in Israel for 400 years. There hadn't been a word from God for 400 years. This man is now saying he has so grown in his understanding of what God is doing in his life. He's so growing in his boldness to declare his testimony that he says Jesus is a man sent from God. And he's bringing to us a word from God. Now, he's saying this to the religious leaders of his time and God is working through him. An amazing, amazing account.

What do you do with a miracle when you don't want to believe it? You have to come back next week and we're going to find out. Here's what we take away. We'll pick it up next week. This is a picture of all of us. This is a picture of all of us and what we need. And what we need, of course, is new eyes to see truth, right? We don't need religion. That's right. We don't need religion. What we need is a total transformation that only the gospel of Jesus Christ can accomplish in our lives.

For all of us who are believers, this is a beautiful picture of God's intent for every one of us. That is, we would grow in our knowledge of who he is and what he is about, and we would

grow in boldness in declaring that to the people in our lives. But it all begins, as it always does, with the gospel. And if you've never put your faith and trust in Jesus as your Savior, that's the beginning point. What every one of us needs, because every one of us is born into this world separated from God by sin. What every one of us needs is we need to understand that we have sinned, that we can't possibly reach the perfection that God requires, because that's right. God requires perfection. Not 99, not 90, 100% perfection. We'll never make it. We'll never achieve it. But Jesus did, and he died on the cross for us. And if we will believe that what he did was all that needed to be done, God will forgive us our sin. He'll open our spiritual eyes to see the glory and wonder of the gospel and of his word and of his desire for our life.

Let's pray. Father, we are in awe of who you are. Lord Jesus, we are enthralled at what you do in the lives of those people to whom you give sight. And Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are the one who gives us that understanding. And once again, Father, as we close, we pray that your Holy Spirit would open hearts and minds and eyes to understand this glory of the gospel, to believe and to trust Jesus and Jesus alone for our salvation. And then, Father, we pray for a boldness of spirit to follow you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We pray in Jesus's name, amen.