

John

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: 26 October 2003

Preacher: Crowter, Harold (1923-2011)

- [0 : 00] I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.
- Jesus had a path to tread here in earth that was ordained of God, and he must needs go through Samaria.
- He must needs be here at this point of time, at this particular place, when we read, And Jesus passed by and saw a man which was blind from his birth.
- That was just not a coincidence of circumstance. That was a divine appointment, my friends. The Lord Jesus had to be there when that blind man was present also.
- And we can think of the Pharisees and those that subsequently criticized Christ and held up to ridicule the man that was delivered.
- [1 : 18] Nevertheless, God was in control. And even those things spoken by the enemies of Christ and of this man who was so signally delivered, they were there to fulfill a divine purpose and to make us realize, though these Pharisees boasted to be the religious people of the day, the teachers as it were.
- But nevertheless, here was a man blind from his birth, with little opportunity of advancing his knowledge, nevertheless brought into the knowledge, the most important knowledge that any of us will ever know.
- In time, that is, to know the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal way and manner. And you know, with the great, great knowledge, and I don't want to speak of it as though it was almost unlimited, because the Apostle Paul only knew what God taught him.
- He only had an understanding in so far as the lot and circumstances of his life, whether in his unregeneracy or subsequently when the Lord quickened him by his spirit, I say the things of the life only benefited him spiritually in so far as God used them.
- God used them. God used them. God used his strange means, as we shall come to in our subsequent meditation in this truth this morning.
- [3 : 16] But there it is, a poor blind man, deprived of so much that, we may say, increases our knowledge through our eyesight.
- I wonder how much we should have known without the benefit of sight, the ability to read, the ability to see and comprehend so many things that, as it were, passed before our gaze.
- But this man was in darkness. He was in darkness from the day of his birth. And his knowledge must have been exceedingly limited.
- Nevertheless, the Lord was his deliverer. Now, his disciples asked him, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?
- Are we justified in looking upon other people with their various infirmities and think that those infirmities are a judgment of God?
- [4 : 25] And if we hadn't the like infirmities in ourselves, that we must be better than that. My friends, we can't judge sinnership by circumstance.

And we do feel sometimes that God uses adversities to make us realize that he's chasing us upon us.

And in some way, we're grieving him by doing what we're doing or saying what we're saying. But nevertheless, it's not a sound judgment. Look at what the Lord says about Job in the opening chapter of that good book.

And look what he says at the end about the righteousness of Job. Comparatively, the friends of Job thought Job must be a great sinner because he was suffering so much.

But the Lord, the righteous judge, doesn't see and didn't see as man seeth because Job was an excellent character.

[5 : 43] Not a perfect character, but an excellent character by the grace of God and his end was better than the beginning. And my friends, that is the purpose of God in his dealings to make the end better than the beginning.

God, in the exercise of his fatherly discipline, adds to the knowledge of his people. You know, we could pursue that principle, but I won't say much more on that.

I want to come to the text. But the Lord answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. Now, how are you going to look at that?

How are you going to interpret that? Well, we're sinners by nature, aren't we? And no doubt, he had sinned, and his parents had sinned, but the Lord was having mercy upon the situation.

And he says, the reason that this situation is as it is, is that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

[7 : 08] I wonder how many of us can say, knowing that we're sinners and that we deserve the just judgments of God, that we're not ignorant.

of the works of God being made manifest in us. You know, there is a sense in which when the works of God are made manifest in us, spiritually, we're completely different.

We're completely transformed. We're completely changed because the work of God is a perfect work to salvation, and the indictment through sin that is due to us has been perfectly paid by the Savior.

I'm clean. I'm clean. Just God. I'm clean. It's not a pharisaical boast. It can be a genuine, spirit-wrought conviction when God, in the wonder of his works, performs salvation in our hearts and in our lives.

And my friends, if that is so, there's one thing which you would wish you could do, but you can't. And that is, you wish you could live the rest of your life without sinning.

[8 : 53] But you can't. because while we're in this body of sin and death with all its weaknesses, with all its propensity to bring forth the fruits of the fall, we have to learn with the Apostle Paul when he says, I would do good, but when I would do good, evil is present with me.

And how to do the thing that I would, that is to live a holy, sinless life, I can't do it. I can't do it. And my friends, we've got to lose this body, this body of sin and death, to be free from the contagion of the Adam's fall.

Well now, they're beautiful themes of meditation, but I've got to come to the text. when he had thus spoken, saying, as long as I'm in the world, I am the light of the world, when he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle.

Now, what do you think about that? What do you think about that? And I'm going to say, the spittle was an essential expression of the working of the Most High.

You know, when the Lord performs miracles, something of the Lord is always present, because power belongs to God.

- [10 : 55] And these works that the Lord here is doing, this work that the Lord here is doing, is a divine work. Never had it been known that a man that was born blind received his sight. Yeah, no, never. But, under the wisdom, power, and purpose of God, this man, though born blind, was able to see.
- And the Lord did something toward him that would seem unnatural, that would seem, yes, harmful.
- No part of our anatomy is more tender than our eyes. No part has received so much protection by the wisdom and purpose of God, our creator.
- Look, he gives you so much, doesn't he? Eyebrows. He gives you eyelids. He gives you eyelids. He gives you a wonderful flow of liquid, as it were, to keep your eyeball easily movable.
- [12 : 29] It's like oil. And it keeps your eyeball so tender is the whole nature of the eye. especially the apple of the eye that, my friends, God has in his wisdom has created so much protection for this little but essential member of our anatomy.
- Now, you know I'm not a doctor but I like to think upon these simple illustrations of the wisdom of the creator and the wonder even of our own frame.
- Now, when he had spoken he spat on the ground. He spat on the ground.
- We would say, well, was that necessary? There's something obnoxious, something prohibitive in spitting anyway.
- [13 : 40] And to think that the Lord would condescend, so to speak, to express his power and his purpose by that means is very strange to us to accept, isn't it?
- My friends, I'm going to put this principle clearly before you this morning. Whatever principle God exercises by his wisdom and by his power is worthy of himself.
- Now, we might look at this as an unworthy gesture for the Son of God, God, that he spits upon the ground. It was a worthy gesture because everything associated with his person and his purpose is absolutely right.
- God but he uses strange means. He has a strange means. You say, well, he needn't have spat on the ground and he needn't have bothered with making clay, but these things bring to us the strange means that Christ at times uses to perform a miracle of deliverance.
- and everything wherein the Lord Jesus Christ is associated must be recognized as marvelous, as marvelous that he was in a body like our own and that he was going about doing good and that he condescended by whatever means pleased him to deliver a needy sinner who was absolutely blind from his birth.
- [15 : 53] He spat on the ground and he made clay of the spittle. Now there's an association between heaven and earth and earth.
- The Lord Jesus Christ and you say well that's a most insignificant exercise in his body to spit on the ground.
- Ah my friends it was consistent with his wisdom it was consistent with his purpose and anything and everything he may use for the glory of his name and the good of his people is to be admired is to be appreciated and he uses strange means oh but you say surely to anoint a tender eye with clay is absolutely antagonistic to the whole of our nature.
- We get a piece of sand in our eye. I remember taking my wife to meet friends we were staying in the area of Southampton for holiday and we heard that some friends were on the Isle of Wight so we decided by arrangement to go over to them and to spend a day with them.
- We hadn't got hardly to their company when the wind blew and some sand blew into the eye of my wife.

[17 : 34] It spoiled the day in that sense. She suffered she was so miserable with this foreign matter in her eye that we got no relief and when we got to back onto the mainland I'm afraid I'd have to ask you to do something about this you know.

I wouldn't let the word of God fall for anything. I'll use my own Bible.

That piece of that sand went into an eye and when we got back to the mainland I said my dear I'm not taking you to where we're staying until I've got that foreign matter removed for your mind. We went into the it was at Portsmouth we went into the naval dockyard and made some inquiries and I remember one of those times in one's life when one has to submit to circumstances that are not altogether easy.

There were two young men naval men I can see them now leading my wife down the long corridor to what was the place to what obviously was the place they were going to remove this foreign matter out of her eye but oh they said we don't want you you stay where you are we'll look after her and I had to witness my wife going down with two naval officers doctors to have this but she got relief so you know our eyes are very tender but the Lord's making clay you say well he's creating something that experience would tell us is totally antagonistic to the desired conclusion don't you judge God by feeble sense but trust him for his grace behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face my friends this was the means the Lord was using to show that everything was in captivity to his purpose for the good for the welfare of this poor person who was born blind and remained in the dark all the years of his life and had proved the impotency of his parents and all to deliver him until he comes to

Christ and there's the good position there's the one that can use the most unexpected means there's the one that as it were takes of something of an earthly nature that seems totally antagonistic to the conclusion that is desired but under his power and according to his purpose it works together for good for all things shall work together for good to those that love God and are the court according to his purpose my friends some things which shall I say the Lord has used we've trembled and quaked at the very onset of the experience whatever's going to happen by this means whatever's going to whatever good can come out of that means my friend remember the

[21 : 36] Lord uses strange means let me quote the scripture think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you how many times we've misjudged the situation we haven't oh we've prejudged the situation because we haven't waited for the end of the Lord but the end of the Lord testifies as this blind man was a witness of he could say good's come out of it my darkness has given place to the light of life I was blind now I see you see my friends how the Lord sanctifies and over rules strange means some of you might have come into this house and I wouldn't criticize you for so doing if you came in to the house of

God this morning and said oh it's Harold Crowder preaching and we can't expect much from him well you can't expect anything from him unless the same Lord that spat on that clay and made clay and anointed the eyes it's the Lord's work from start to finish he uses means and sometimes he uses the most feeble means and the most unexpected means and it may be the means that provokes you almost to despair but my friends if the Lord uses it if the Lord uses it it will be for your good leave the means look to the Lord and pray for his blessing that is the constructive approach in the situation but now let's come to the toward the text the

Lord the he answered and said whether he be a sinner or no you say well he was terribly ignorant wasn't he he he knew his name was called Jesus he'd heard about him but I wonder at this stage if he really knew what Jesus the name Jesus meant because the whole circumstance as it were is an interpretation of the name of Jesus and those works of deliverance which Jesus does for us in our spiritual life carry the hallmark of his name

Jesus saviour saviour his name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins and here he was saving a blind man born blind from his birth well whether he be a sinner or not I know not one thing I know one thing I know there is a sense and I'm putting this out just for your consideration don't attempt to go further than the knowledge that you possess this man was honest and when the Lord is working in our hearts it will make us honest in our profession we won't want to go further there may be a temptation sometimes to go a little further than you've really experienced but my friends stay within the limits of that experience go as far as the Lord has led you and instructed you and opened your eyes to see there is such a thing as straying into a proud and Pharisee spirit and giving claim to things in profession which are not honest and sincere may God make us meticulously honest in those things which we profess to have experienced through his presence his blessing and his power whether he be a sinner or not

I don't know but he says one thing I know that whereas I was blind now I see is there a difference between your past and your present I'm not talking about the things of this world I'm talking about the things of God and the Lord Jesus Christ can you say well for years I lived on and I had no appreciation of that at all and then the Lord has opened your eyes what a change what a change I was blind but now I see I'm going to put it in the present situation meeting together as we do this morning

[27 : 57] I'm going to put it in this context do you realise what is promised in such places as now we're in places God has ordained to be erased and maintained that are sanctified by his presence as the people of God meet together in his name I love the habitation of thy house the place where thine honour dwelleth now as the Lord opened your eyes to see the blessing of being in the house of God with the people of God for the worship of God you can say a day and night courts is better than a thousand you love the house of

God and you love to meet with the people of God and the Lord has opened your eyes to the fact that it's time well spent now the world would say well you're silly to keep going into that same old building and listen to various men telling you the same old old story over and over again the world don't see as we see do they because their eyes are yet blind to the spiritual benefit that God performs within his ordinance the ordinance of public worship and I could go on couldn't I what is your appreciation of prayer oh you perhaps say mother taught me when I was a child to say my prayers and I never strayed from the practice of it

I should feel guilty if I got into bed at night and hadn't knelt down by the bed and ask God for things that suited the occasion ah my friends do you know what it is now not just to pray at the side of your bed but to spend I say half the night in prayer within your bed prayer he

I once was blind now you read your Bible you say well that's right that's absolutely good we should read a chapter every day and I make a habit of it and I have done so for years well I'm not going to in any way discourage you in the practice but reading your Bible in the letter of it is distinct and different from reading your Bible when the Spirit has opened your eyes to see the wonder of the revelation God has given to us in his word. I was blind, I read the Bible, yes, I knew some parts of it off my heart, and I read through it methodically from Genesis to Revelation. But if it's true yes, you. And the limit is the limitation of your nature. You're like the clay, the sand before Christ spat on the sand, with that essential application from the Lord.

And the clay became effectual to the end of the Lord. That is, it opened the young man's eyes. He saw what he'd never seen before. And my friends, if the Lord sanctifies the means and grant you the Holy Spirit, in your reading, you'll see the Bible to be a different book from what you've ever seen it before. Because essential to all spiritual exercises is the power of the Lord Most High. You can read and read and read the Bible, you can read and read any other book. But what we need that we may see what God has written in his word to teach us and to lead us in the right way and preserve us from the wrong way in so many respects is as the Lord anoints the eyes of our understanding. Then we see light in God's light. Then we see some of the wonders of revelation that God has given to the comfort, consolation, and encouragement of his people here below. I was blind. I went for years reading the Bible in the letter of it. But there came a time when the Lord opened my eyes to realize that the scripture is full of spiritual instruction. It's full of means of grace to the edification and profit of my poor, poor, destitute soul by nature, enriched alone by the power, grace, and love of the Spirit of

[34 : 21] God, making known the hidden truth behind the scriptures. Yes. Well, no, I was blind, but now I see. Do you see, and I must draw to the close, mustn't I?

But do you see the advantage of sanctification in the normal experiences of life? How the Lord is always in control? You sing it, don't you? Not a single shaft can hit till the God of love sees fit. But do you really apply the principle and see how it works?

The thought opens your eyes. You'll see that some of those things that you consider to be the most detrimental to your peace and happiness have so been overruled by God that you wouldn't be without them for a thousand worlds. Because when you come to consider the workings of God in your heart and in your life, you go to these adverse situations when you were brought to the ends of the earth and there was nobody on earth could help you and you couldn't help yourself and you had to cry to the Lord out of the depths of I cried unto thee, O God, and God heard.

You look back upon the situation. You're thankful for the means that God sanctified in you.

Bitter as it was, contrary as it was to the flesh, it's been made. Meat and drink to your never-dying soul.

[36 : 20] I was blind, but now I see. Do you see the advantage of the people of God as opposed to the people of the world?

People may come to you and they're prospering. Everything seems to be going their way. They go from strength to strength, recommendations multiply, and they find their business, it's expanding and it's expanding and it's expanding and they employ a lot of people to assist them and they can't cope with the demand.

And you say, well the money must be rolling. They must, yes, they're off on holiday to this place and that place and the other place. In the British Isles or way overseas and everything seems going for them.

But, are you covetous? Do you wish that could be your lot? Or have you learned that a little under the blessing and presence of God is worth more than all the advantages earth can bring?

As the Lord opened your eyes to realise that a moment or two spent under the influence and power of his Holy Spirit, witnessing with you that Jesus Christ is indeed your Saviour.

[38 : 15] And that Jesus Christ has lived and died to put away your sins. And he's gone before in his ascending glory to prepare for you a place in paradise wherein you'll be happier than anything upon the earth can make you.

As the Lord opened your eyes to draw your affections to things above. To see in the promise of the gospel eternal blessings, everlasting favours.

A holiday in the best circumstances that money could buy comes to an end. Comes to an end.

Life and all the luxury, I was going to say, of royal living, it comes to an end. Life and all the luxury, it comes to an end. But the portion of the people of God and the promise everlastingly fixed upon them to make them happy.

To make them at peace with never a trouble rolling over them forever and forever and forever. That's the portion.

[39 : 37] As the Lord opened your eyes that you've chosen the better path that shall not be taken away from you. That death itself cannot rest from your grasp because the Lord has prepared a place for you in paradise.

And he's been your leader and teacher in the wilderness. And you've learned some lessons that are invaluable of a spiritual nature.

And you say, I could from all things parted be, but never, never Lord from thee. I was blind.

Oh, I was blind. I see things so differently now. I see things so differently. The potential of divine blessing resting upon things enhances the value of those things to me more than anything money can buy.

Sweet. Sweet the moments. Rich in blessing. Which before the cross I spend. You see, it changes our outlook.

[40 : 57] It causes us to see things in the light of reality. The world is blind. Blind to sin and its consequences.

Blind to the fact that life is only a short time and then it ends. Blind to the fact that every character under the sun has got to meet God.

In judgment. A God who has pronounced a law to be obeyed. And for every sin and transgression there is a just recompense of reward.

But my friends, yes, we're all under sentence of death by nature. We're all blind and ignorant by nature. But God in the great mercy of his love to sinners has provided a way by which their eyes may be opened.

Faith given to appreciate the blessed lot of the people of God. That with Moses, they choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

[42 : 16] For they have respect unto the recompense of the reward. They see the future. Not in time.

Not in time. But in eternity. They're pilgrims. Making toward a better country. Joyful. Joyful. Joyful.

Joyful. Joyful. Joyful. In anticipation of the rest that remains of the people of God.

Can you say from your heart, dear one, I don't mind whether you're young or whether you're older. Can you say from your heart this morning, numbered with them, would I be now and to eternity.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[43 : 37] There will be a prayer meeting on Friday evening and reading services will be our next Lord's day. Hymn 181, tune 866.

Believers, oh, they are the blind. They know themselves and why. But wisdom in the Lord they find, who opened all their eyes.

Hymn 181, tune 856. What are you doing?

What thewl, if God, could? Amen. Thank you. Thanks, man. Bye. Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 27] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We cross the dog of our champion of Indigenous worship.

[47 : 32] And the love of our champion of this award is to suit the great ones and the addresses of the fellow hailed Hawaiian meny.

We cross the world, we cross the world together to expand the wonder. Thank you.