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## BLIND MAN HEALED

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### Part 18 of The Gospel of John

Pastor Mark Driscoll | April 01, 2001

John 9 tonight. Tonight is a special night. I will be brief, which means I will preach as long as the average pastor does, and will keep it fairly simple tonight and just tell the story. So, if you would, turn to John 9. If you don't have a Bible, you can just listen, and I'll read it to you in its entirety.

"As he went along, he" – Jesus – "saw a man who was blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means sent)." A quick note – the reason that it is called Siloam, the well was outside of the city gates and they bored almost 600 feet through pure rock to pipe the water into the city, and so the water was sent.

"So that man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' Some claimed he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.' 'How then were your eyes opened?' they demanded. He replied, 'The man that they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. And so I went and washed, and then I could see.' 'Where is this man?' they asked him. 'I don't know,' he said. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore, the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.'

"Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others asked, 'How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?' And so they were divided. Finally, they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' The man replied, 'He is a prophet.' The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that he can see?' 'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know that he was born blind. But how he can see, or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him. He is of age and he will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

"A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.' He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know. One thing I do know. I was blind and now I see!' And then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' 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?' Then they hurled insults at him and 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 came from.' 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 man 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.' To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out.

"Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of God, in the Son of Man?' 'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.' And the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him. Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.' Some Pharisees who were there with him heard him say this and asked, 'What? Are we blind too?' and Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.'"

What I want you to do, I want you to use your imagination a little bit tonight. We'll keep this really simple and just stay with the story. I want you to close your eyes, and I want you just to enter into this man's world, utter darkness, inability to see, and we'll walk through a story.

"I was blind from birth, and for me, it was a terrifying thing, and for my parents, it was shameful. Growing up, I remember as a small child being terrified of going to bed at night. I would hear things, or I would sense that there was something or someone in my room, and being unable to see it, I was afraid. Growing up, I felt ostracized from the kids. I could hear them playing outside. I could hear them having a good time and enjoying themselves. But I usually didn't get to play with them. My parents were afraid that I might wander off and be lost. My mother was afraid that some of the mean-spirited children would harm me. A lot of the children would often poke fun at me. They would mock me. They would insult. They would taunt me. When I was young, some of the boys would walk up and hit me and then run, knowing I couldn't defend myself. And the worst part of it was

I knew that my mother and father feared and loved God. But people had this false notion that they must be wicked people and that God must be punishing them for some sin that they have not confessed, and that is why I was born blind.

“As I grew, I came to the conclusion that I would never marry. I would never be a husband. I would never be a father. I would never have a career. I would never live the kind of normal life that all young boys desire, and as was customary, as I approached age 13, all the other boys were talking about their careers and what they were going to do to provide for themselves. It was customary in that day for all the young men, once they approached 13 years of age, to become financially independent and responsible, and I was ashamed that I was unable to pursue a career and pay my own way and take care of my own responsibilities. So, I decided that even though it would be difficult, I would take a career and try and pay my own way through life. The only thing that I could find that would provide a sufficient income was begging. It was disgraceful, it was humiliating, but I took that job because I didn’t want to be a burden to my father for all of my days. I felt as though I’d been a burden for long enough.

“So, I began begging. At first, it was very shameful. As I got to know some of the other beggars, I came to find that some of them weren’t even necessarily in need. They could work, and they were pretending that they had legitimate need to prey upon people’s compassion. It made me very angry to see that because had I their health, I would be happy to work. People would walk by, and some would mock, and some would jeer, some would make fun of me. Young boys were always the cruelest. I did find over time, though, that the best place to beg was near the temple, and the best day to beg was on the Sabbath, because as people were going into and departing from worship of God, they tended to be at their most compassionate point, and people love to give in public ways so that they can be seen, so that everyone who is traveling with them thinks that they’re very holy and righteous people. And so, I began begging particularly on the Sabbath and particularly near the temple.

“It was customary that teachers, as they would go back and forth from the temple, would have around them large numbers of students. You could always tell because the students were continually asking questions of their instructors, seeking answers, and on more than one occasion, I had been the topic of conversation. One of the popular questions was always why God had made me this way. It was humiliating because as I lay there in the dust of the earth, blind, people would stop to talk about me and not talk to me. They would ask questions of their teachers – their teachers who did not know me – and their teachers would speculate and wander off into theological inquiry as to why God would have this happen to me.

“I remember one particular day where a teacher was coming by with his students. I could hear them. The students were, as usual, asking a great number of questions to their instructor, and, as usual, I became the topic of conversation. They stopped right in front of me, and they began asking questions as to why I was blind. A student said something that angered me very deeply. He left only two options for the reason that I was in my predicament. He asked his instructor, ‘Is this man blind because of his sin or the sin of his parents?’ I was angry because I had heard that for so long. He was assuming that I was so wicked that maybe I had sinned in my mother’s womb before I was even born. Or that my parents were so wicked that when my mother was carrying me in her womb, maybe they did something evil. Perhaps killed someone or blasphemed God. And I wanted to blurt out and tell them that indeed, some people suffer because of their sin, and some people suffer because of their parents’ sin, and some people because of Adam’s sin, but some people’s sin is not the reason for their suffering. Some people suffer just because and we do not know why.

“I can still remember that day as a young boy when my mother read to me from the book of Job, and the story is told that Job was a righteous man who loved God and feared God, and he recognized he was not perfect, but when he suffered, it was not because of his sin. There was something else that was going on that people did not see, but his friends would continually come to him and accuse him of being wicked and sinful and have suffering because of his own consequence. And I knew – I knew that my situation was like Job’s. That I loved God and that my parents loved God and that there was something more than just sin that had caused this situation.

“I wanted to tell this to this young student, but I knew it wouldn’t matter. I just wanted them to leave and to leave me alone, and so I waited for the teacher to answer his question. I wasn’t certain whether he would say that it was because of my sin or my parents’. Either way, I knew I’d be angry. And then the teacher said something, though, that struck me. He said something that I had always felt but had never heard taught by a teacher of the law.

“With great compassion, he said, ‘This man is blind not because of his sin or his parents’ sin,’ which was a tremendous statement to me that he knew about my sin and my parents’ sin. Instead, he explained, ‘This man is this way because this is how God wants him to be, and God has permitted him to be this way so that his glory and his power would be shown in him.’ This gave me tremendous hope. This was the first time I’d ever heard a teacher leave open the possibility that God was good and that this was in God’s will, and somehow God was going to use this for something beautiful.

“Then I could just sense the teacher kneeling down in front of me, and I could hear him spit in the ground, and I could hear his hands moving in the dust of the earth, and it reminded me of that moment in Genesis where God created man out of the dust of the earth, and then he took that mud, and he placed his hands over my eyes. At first, I was startled. It was unexpected. I wasn’t anticipating that he would touch me, but he did. And then he gave me an instruction. He told me to go and to wash in the pool of Siloam, and he did it with such authority that I just did what he told me to do.

“So, I found my way to the pool, and I bent over, and I cupped in my hands water, and I raised it to my eyes to wash the mud out of my eyes, and I was stunned. I wasn’t exactly sure what had happened, but all of a sudden, I felt this excruciating pain. Instead of darkness, everything was light. It was overwhelming. I didn’t know how to respond to it. It was sort of shocking. It was hopeful for me. Perhaps I was healed. Perhaps I could see for the first time. But having never seen, having never seen light and shape and color, I was completely overwhelmed and stunned.”

You can open your eyes.

“It was amazing because throughout the course of my life, I had had this opportunity to smell things, but I had never seen them, and I had had the opportunity to touch things, but I had never seen them. And then all of a sudden, I was able to connect all of the sounds and all of the smells and all of

the senses with shape and with movement and with color and with shadow and with lighting. It was overwhelming. I had never experienced that. And I stood there for I don't know how long, just sort of taking it all in, and I assumed that I had been healed, and I was hoping that it was going to last and that it would not go away. People walking by could obviously see that I was in some sort of amazement, just sort of stunned. Some of the people began to ask if I was okay and what was going on and what was happening. Other people recognized me as the beggar by the side of the road that they had passed day after day for such a great number of years. Some of them had likely given me money.

"Some people stopped, and they asked, 'Are you not that man that we gave money to who was supposedly blind? What has happened?' So, I told them my story, that a man came, a man they call Jesus, and he had placed his hands upon my eyes, and he sent me to the pool of Siloam, and when I did, I was healed miraculously, and I could see. And so, some of them began to argue and debate. Some thought that maybe God had indeed performed a miracle, and others thought that perhaps I was lying or that I just resembled the man who had been previously begging. So, to verify my claim, they brought me before the religious leaders, the Pharisees.

"The Pharisees asked me my story, 'What happened?' and I told them very simply that I was blind and I'd been blind since birth and I had never seen a thing, and on this day, I was begging near the temple as I always do on the Sabbath, and a man came by, and he knelt down, and he put his hands on my eyes, and he sent me to wash, and when I did, I could see, and it was a miracle. I was healed. They asked me who this man was that had healed me. I told them that he was a prophet. I assumed he had to be a prophet. A prophet always comes with God's power and God's authority and is always authenticated by a miracle. So, this man must have been a prophet. With that, some of the people present started murmuring, and it was evident to me that this man, Jesus, was a very controversial figure who had healed me. The religious leaders became immediately divided, and they erupted into a conflict. Some said that Jesus was a wicked and sinful man and that this healing was not from God. The others disagreed and said that only God could do such a thing.

"So they began to debate and to argue, and it was amazing because it was the first time in all of my life that I had seen anger in the face of another human being. It almost made me mourn the fact that I could now see. There was such hatred and such violence and such animosity in their countenance. So, as they began to sharply debate and argue among one another, they came to the conclusion that they actually could not trust my statement. Why anyone would conjure this up, I have no idea. But they demanded that someone go get my parents to verify the fact that I had been blind since birth, and so, they did. They went and they got my mother and my father. It was amazing because I waited for at least a few hours, and finally my mother and father were brought in for interrogation. And as the door opened, for the first time in my entire life, I saw the face of my mother, and she was weeping bitterly. I could see that she was hopeful, that she was anticipating that the miracle had indeed occurred.

"Alongside of her, holding her hand, was my father. As I looked down, that was the first time I ever saw the hand of my father. I had felt it my whole life. He had guided me with that hand. He had held me with that hand. He had comforted me with that hand. He had disciplined me with that hand. I had held that hand through the great trials of my life, when I was most afraid, and I saw the hand of my father and I saw the face of my mother. And I became angry because no sooner had my parents walked in the door than the religious leaders began interrogating them with questions. They didn't even give me a moment to celebrate with my mom. They didn't give me an opportunity to embrace her, to pray, to thank God, to celebrate what God had done.

"They began asking my mother, 'Is this your son and was he blind from birth?' and my mother answered, of course, truthfully. She said, 'Yes, this is my son, and he has always been blind.' So, they began to press my mother for further answers. 'Who healed him?' and 'What do you think about this man?' My mother and father looked at one another, and they knew that this was more than just a series of normal questions to verify a miracle among the religious leaders – that there was something far more controversial that was happening. They could tell that there was a conflict here and that now they had been brought into it as I had been brought into it. And they put my mother in this terrible place. And they put my father in this impossible position. Because if my parents sided with Jesus, then they would be kicked out of the synagogue. And if they didn't, they may be betraying God's own prophet. So, it was a losing scenario.

"My parents essentially said that they did not know. At first, I was frustrated because I wanted my parents to defend Jesus and what he had done. Even though we didn't know him, what he had done for us deserved some loyalty. But I understood because my parents were wise, and they could see that if they supported Jesus, they would be kicked out or excommunicated from the synagogue. You need to understand that there are two forms of excommunication that happens among the Jews. One is a 30-day excommunication to where your friends do not speak to you, and your employer will not hire you, and your friends will not visit with you, and you are not allowed to worship God. You are not allowed to come to the synagogue. The other is far more grave, and it could last a lifetime. They would kick you out, and so your employer would fire you, and your friends would abandon you, and your family would disown you, and your name would be destroyed, and you would be forced to leave that town. And your reputation would be devastated, and you would be considered a God-hater and an enemy of God, destined for the fires of hell.

"My parents, knowing what was at stake, simply deferred the responsibility to me, and they said, 'That is our son. He was blind from birth. He has been healed. We do not know about the man who has done this. He is of age. He is an adult male. You ask him, and he will tell you what has happened, and his word should be honored.' So then, all the leaders their attention on me again, and they asked me again to tell my story. 'How were you healed? How did he do it?' And this point, I was angry, I was frustrated, and I was tired. I had already told the crowd. I had already told the leaders. And now, they were demanding that I tell them again, and I could sense by virtue of the fact that they continually asked me these questions that it was not that they were seeking a truthful answer, they kept asking me in hope that I would change my answer. That I would tell them something negative about him. That I would make something up, that I would falsify the miracle, that somehow I would join them in their opposition of him. But I refused to do it.

"I could sense that what was happening is that Jesus was a teacher and they were teachers, and that Jesus was teaching with authority and that he wanted

all people to follow him, and they refused to do so, so they regarded him as a threat. All of a sudden, it became very simple and very plain to me. What had happened was simple and true. God healed me, it was a miracle, and that was the truth. But they were trying to make the situation far more complicated. They were trying to convolute the truth. They were trying to take away the simple, obvious things that God had done. And so, I would have none of that. Somehow, God gave me in that moment great confidence and great boldness because in the face of all these lies, I knew that someone needed to tell the truth. So, I asked them their motives. 'Why do you want me to tell my story again?' I, at that point, identified myself as now joining Jesus' side. I was a disciple of his. And I was asking them, 'Do you want to be his student as well?'

"And they were angry. They were almost violently angry when I questioned their motives. It seemed very simple to me that Jesus was a teacher, and the only reason I should tell my story again is if others were wanting to follow him. If not, it was a complete waste of my time and energy. So then, they began to insult me. They became very angry. They became very obstinate, and at that point, I realized that Jesus must have been from God. That only a man with God's power could heal. So, I gave them my argument. 'Jesus healed, and only a man who loves God and walks with God has God's power at his disposal to heal. Therefore, if Jesus healed, he must have been from God.' At that point, they called me a sinner, they said I was an enemy of God, and they literally kicked me out of their presence and wanted nothing to do with me.

"As I made my way out, I sat down, and it was the most lonely moment of my entire existence. My family was gone. My friends were gone. The religious leaders had turned their back on me, called me a sinner, said that I was a sinner since birth, and basically inferred that I was in this condition because I was so wicked that I had sinned in my mother's womb. And this great day that I had prayed and hoped and longed for, this day that I would be able to see, had become this atrocious nightmare that was now jeopardizing the state of my family, was now jeopardizing the state of my spiritual community, and had put me at odds with the strongest and most powerful men in the entire community, and I could not be more simple, I could not be more poor, and I could not be with fewer allies. So, I sat there by myself, trying to contemplate what I should do next.

"Amazingly, to my great surprise, a man started walking at me with a countenance of joy and hope. I wasn't sure who it was. I assumed it was Jesus, but I had never seen his face. I had only felt his hands and heard his voice. He came to me, and he sat with me, and he revealed himself, and he said who he was. It was amazing. He had apparently heard that I had been kicked out. He had apparently heard that I had been rejected. He apparently assumed that I was lonely and hurting, and so he came to sit with me. He looked at me and he asked me a very peculiar question that echoed the book of Daniel in my mind, and he asked me, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' I looked him right in the eye, and I said, 'Yes, I do.' I knew by that he was asking me if I believed that God would send a Messiah who would liberate his people from sin and bring them into freedom and usher in the kingdom of God. There was so much loaded in that language that he used. I said, 'Yes. I believe in him, and if you tell me who he is,' I told him, 'I will follow him. Who is he? Who is the Son of Man?' And Jesus, with great love, looked at me, and he said, 'You are speaking to him now.'

"Jesus declared himself to me to be God. At first, I simply said, 'Well, the man who healed me is a man that others call Jesus,' and then I came to realize no, he must work with God's power. He must be a prophet. And now, Jesus in his kindness had returned to me, after already healing me, and revealed himself to me as God. It was sort of stunning in light of my day, having been healed, seeing the face of my mother, the hands of my father. Having seen anger and violence and hatred on those men who claimed to teach the Scriptures for God. And now, to sit with God himself, knowing that God had come to be with me, that God had knelt down in the dust of his own creation to place his hands upon my eyes and to heal me so that I could see him face to face, and then return to me to sit with me and teach me about himself – it was overwhelming. And so, I fell on my knees and I worshiped him as God, and he received my worship as God.

"I thanked him for creating me, and I thanked him for my years of infirmity, and I thanked him for coming to heal me, and I thanked him for giving me sight and life, and for giving me a family that loved me, for giving me the days of joy, and now giving me this great gift and the boldness to speak the truth. I just sat there for as long as I could possibly stand it, and I thanked him, and I worshiped him, and I gave him praise for everything that came to mind. He just put his hand on the back of my head, and he loved me, and he encouraged me, and he told me why he had come. I didn't even ask. He just told me.

"He told me that he had come to the world to judge and that for those people who were blind and could not see him, that he would open their eyes and reveal himself to them, and to those who were arrogant and proud and unteachable and assumed that they knew all that there was to know about God, that he would cause them complete and total blindness, and he would judge them because they had rejected all of the ways that he had sought to reveal himself to them. He told me that some people would see him and some people would not. That some people would believe him and some people would not.

"So, I became a student of his. I began to follow him at a distance. I saw him teach. I saw him heal others. I saw him feed multitudes. And the most tragic day, the most frightening day, was the day that, after years of pursuit, three years of intense pursuit, where the Pharisees had chased him down with anger and vengeance on their mind, they ultimately accused him of blasphemy. He had claimed to be God, and they said that that was a lie, and I knew that that was the truth, that he was God. But they accused him wrongly. They ran him through a series of false trials under the cover of night, and they put him to death. In the most terrifying moment, it made me despise the fact that I could even see. I saw him taken to his place of murder and crucifixion. I saw those same hands that had been placed upon my eyes and on the back of my head in comforting love. I saw spikes driven through them. I saw spikes driven through his feet. I saw him raised up on a Roman cross, and I saw him suffer and bleed and die. And I wished I was blind. I wish I had never seen that.

"They took him off his cross. They prepared him for burial. They placed him in a tomb. They rolled an enormous rock in front of it. They placed the Roman seal over it, meaning certain death to anyone who would try and break that seal. They posted guards in front from the Roman government to protect it. And three days later, I was told by some of his fellow disciples that he had risen from the dead – that he was gone. The Pharisees' first excuse

was that someone had stole the body, which was nonsense because who would have overpowered the Roman guards? Who would have risked breaking the Roman seal? Who would have rolled away the stone? And if they had just taken the body, certainly the Pharisees would have found it.

“And then I heard that Jesus was appearing to people, verifying his resurrection from death, his conquering of death. So, I went in a crowd of hundreds, and with the eyes that he had healed, I saw him, risen from death and very much alive. And I was glad that I could see, and I was glad that God had healed me, and I was glad to see Christ. Before Jesus returned to the Father, he explained to us that the reason he had died was to forgive our sins, that our sins were placed on him, and that he would be punished in our place and he would forgive us of our sins, and he has conquered our enemies of sin and death, and he then wanted us to go into all of the world to tell everyone who would listen about him and his life and his death and his resurrection. So, everywhere that I went through the rest of my days, I continually told my story of how I had met Jesus and how he had healed me and how he had returned to instruct me. And I told them about seeing him dead and seeing him risen with the eyes that he had opened.

“So, I wanted to read for you just a few promises from the great gospel of the Old Testament, the book of Isaiah. It’s a series of promises that God has made that one day, all of God’s children will experience what I have experienced. That they will be healed, totally and fully. It starts in Isaiah 29. For some, we get healing in the midst of this life as a foretaste and a foreshadowing of the kingdom that is coming – a little preview of what God has in store for all of his children, and Isaiah writes about these things to give us hope. Writing over 500 years before Jesus even came, in Isaiah 29:18, we are told, “In that day, the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord and the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down – those who with a word make a man out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice.”

Isaiah also tells us in chapter 35 this great series of promises about the kingdom and the king that awaits those who are the children of God. “The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution, he will come to save you.’ And then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

“The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow. And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor will there be any ferocious beast get upon it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

In the 42nd chapter, Isaiah tells us, speaking about Jesus, he says, “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and the nations will receive justice from him. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.’

“This is what God the Lord says – he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk in it: ‘I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind and to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeons those who sit in darkness. ‘I am the Lord and that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.’ Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth.”

Lord God, we thank you so much for this simple and truthful story that John, the eyewitness and beloved youngest disciple conveys and relays to us tonight with all truthfulness. Lord Jesus, we come to you tonight in the spirit of Isaiah, asking how we might participate in your work to bring good news so that people who are in slavery to sin would be liberated, and those who are deaf to your grace and your presence would have ears opened to hear good news, those who are blind to see your work in their midst. Lord God, that you might use us as a means by which you open their eyes. And we come to you tonight, Lord Jesus, to sing and to sing even a few new songs as Scripture tells us to.

God, I thank you so much for sending your son, and Jesus, I thank you that you came and took upon human flesh, humbled yourself to walk around in the dust of your own creation. I thank you that with the multitudes that you could have been with, the rich and the powerful, the affluent, the educated, the religious professionals, that you took your time to kneel down in the dust of the earth with one simple man who was in great need and great poverty, that same man whom thousands had undoubtedly walked by. I thank you that you knelt down and that you spoke to him lovingly. That you healed him so that he could see. And that in his moment of despair and loneliness and rejection and strife, that you came to sit with him; that you did not abandon him. That you came to sit with him and teach him, and that you allowed him to worship you, which gave him joy. Lord Jesus, I thank you that you have done that with me and that you have done that with all of your children. That we have gone through this process of getting to know you better as you continually reveal yourself. That you’ve come to us, even when we weren’t seeking or asking for you. That you have touched us. That you have forgiven us. That you have loved us. That you’ve cared for us. And that after you have revealed yourself, you have returned to us continually to instruct us, to encourage us, and to teach us how to worship you.

Lord Jesus, it is my prayer tonight, if anyone is here who is spiritually blind and cannot see that you are God and that you have died for their sins, and

that you've risen from death, and that through you alone comes life, I pray, Lord God, that by your spirit and by your grace, you would open their eyes. For we all come into this world as this man was. Blind. Unable to see the grace that surrounds us and Christ who is ever present. So, Lord God, I'm asking that you would open blind eyes so that we might see and worship and celebrate and have the joy that this man had. Lord Jesus, for those of us who do know you and do know that you love us, thank you that you've come tonight just to sit with us and to comfort us and to instruct us and to reveal yourself so that we would have joy and hope and love and encouragement. And we come to you now in the spirit of this man's response to worship you. To give you of our finances, to give you of our song, new songs. To partake of communion to remember your body and blood shed on our behalf. To pray and to come to you, God, tonight with thankfulness for those ways that you've come to us.

And, Lord God, I thank you so much for the last few weeks of my own ministry, the blessing it has been to see people physically healed in my own presence. To your power at work in amazing ways. And, Lord God, for those of us whose time is not yet appointed for healing, we come to you tonight bringing our requests, knowing that you can heal and thanking you that one way or another, all of your children will experience complete and total healing and redemption. That one day we will, like this man, see you face to face when, like Christ, we get out of our grave and walk into your kingdom. The lame will run, the deaf will hear, the mute will sing, the sick will be healthy, the blind will see. And we long for that day. Lord God, if our moment of healing is not in this life, please give us the grace and the patience to continue down the road so that we can see it in the kingdom. We love you, and we thank you for that. In Christ's name. Amen.