## **Blind Man's Love for Jesus**

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[0:00] I'd like us to think this morning for a little while, but this verse is 30 to 33 in John 9. The man answered and said unto them, Why, here it is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. Now we see here, first of all, I suppose you would say the strength, the courage of this man who was blind, but what we see more than anything else is the willingness to love, the love of Christ whom as yet he has not seen, who has opened his eyes, and who has given him now this strength and this ability.

The Lord has obviously now put this love in the heart of this man, a love which, we should point out first of all, is not something initiated in the man himself.

Like all love for the Lord, which any soul may have, it can only ever be a reciprocated love, a love which is being returned.

[1:21] The love comes first from the Lord to us. And with this man here, we see that this love is now being returned to the Saviour, who, remember as yet, he has not seen.

When Jesus comes and speaks to me, he says, Oh, Lord, it's you. Oh, you opened my eyes. He doesn't know what Jesus looks like. Remember, if we go back to the beginning of this chapter, which we didn't read the opening few verses, but it all is part of the whole.

When he had spoken, verse 6, when Jesus had spoken, he spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto them, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation sent.

He went his way, therefore, presumably either with the help of a stick, or healing his way, or somebody helped him, and came seeing. But we don't read that Jesus said, Oh, here you are, right, welcome back, sort of thing.

Jesus sent him off. And so he went away blind. He washed in the pool of Siloam. When he came back, it's only his neighbours that had saw him, and spoke to him, and some had said, This is the man who was born blind.

[2:26] Others said, No, it just looks like him. And so on. He says, I'm blind, and it's called Jesus. Open my eyes. Now, Jesus could have been standing three feet, away from him, and keeping his mouth shut, and the man would be none the wiser, because he didn't know what he looked like.

When he came back, he could see, but he didn't know who Jesus was, or what he looked like. Because when he spoke to him, when he amounted his eyes, when he went off to wash, he was still blind.

But such power as he knows, he recognises, can come only from God. He says, If this man were not of God, verse 33, he could do nothing, he is filled with wonder, and humility, that such power should have been expended on him.

Oh, little him, who is insignificant in terms of the world. He can't do anything for anyone. He is, in one sense, humanly speaking, we might say, cruelly, but perhaps, of no earthly use to anyone.

He sits at the roadside, begging. He saw a man, which was blind from his birth. Verse 1. Now, when the Jews say to verse 34, thou wast altogether born in sins, this is a reference back to what the disciples also asked in verse 2.

[3:40] Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Obviously, if he's born blind, then any sin he must have committed, they would think, must have been in the womb, or it must have been before he was born.

Otherwise, how could he have sinned in such a way as to merit being born blind? Oh, well, was it the parents, then, that sinned, that caused their child to be born with this defect? And Jesus said, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.

Now, by that, it doesn't mean they're sinless. It doesn't mean they've never done a thing wrong. But what he means is, it's not any sin of theirs which has caused this blindness, but rather that the works of God should be made manifest, in the peasant.

It's not any sin they have committed which has caused this. Likewise, where he says, you know, God doesn't hear sinners. Obviously, God does hear sinners, verse 31.

But, what the blind man is doing is, he is throwing back at the Pharisees their own mantra, their own doctrine, which meant, as far as they were concerned, the Lord only listened to good people.

[4:50] People who sought the Lord, people who were devoutly religious, people who went to the temple, made the sacrifices, obeyed the laws, God would listen to them. And rightly so, because they were good people, and they deserved to be heard.

But sinners, it doesn't just mean anybody who commits sin, ever. Sinners in Jewish parlance, in the New Testament times, meant a particular category of people.

It meant those who, yes, they were Jews, they weren't dogs of the Gentiles, but they were Jews, but they were irreligious. They led Diana for the marketplace, or ordinary, the world, the flesh, and so on.

They weren't sinners, were those who weren't particularly bothered about pursuing the religious life. Everybody fitted into the category, pretty much, of sinners, except for the scribes, and the Pharisees, and possibly the Sadducees, and so on.

Apart from the overtly religious, everybody else was categorized as sinners. Those who were either of immoral life, or else pursued merchant practices, which were questionable.

[5:48] You know, it's said of Jesus, this man eats with publicans and sinners. That's a category of people. It's not just, oh, we're all sinners. It's a particular category of people.

And the Pharisees, we say, God doesn't hear sinners. And so this man is throwing back, and saying, oh, you know, God doesn't hear sinners. So by your own definition, he can't be in that group, if he has this power of God, since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. And they can't exactly argue with this. So they personalize it, and they feel it back, well, who are you the left to? That's, you know, you were only going to be born in sins.

You know, it's because of sins, and your parents are you, that you were born blind in the first place. Well, if that's the case, what does it say now about the fact that you can see? Whatever may have been the sin, it must have been completely overcome.

And washed away, and dealt with, which of course it is when he professes his faith in Christ. Oh, any sin of the past, washed away through the blood of Christ, through faith in his name, Lord, I believe. [6:56] And he worshipped him. Here we have it at verse 38. But this love that he has for Jesus, he has initially not knowing him perfectly.

Now, for most people, whether it's love for another individual, aside from, you know, your mother and father and family that you grow up with from infancy, but when love develops in the heart of an individual for somebody else, sometimes, yes, it's wow, zap, bang, instant, occasionally.

Usually, it grows. Usually, it begins with a little kind of seedling. Usually, it begins with just a little growth of interest. And then, perhaps, the interest, or the desire, or the attraction grows, and then the heart becomes majorly involved, and you get to realize that you just can't live without this person.

Now, in the case of this man's love for Jesus, he begins loving one whom he doesn't yet perfectly know. And his love is not yet perfect, but this love has simplified things for him, and that's partly what love does.

It simplifies things for us. As you know, one of the candidates in the American presidential race just now is Hillary Clinton, and I'm not getting into the politics of it.

[8:17] I remember reading, though, many years ago, how when she and her future husband, Bill Quinn, were young lawyers, and he was dead set that his legal future, whatever he was going to do, was back in his home state in Arkansas.

And she was, in her own right, in that time, quite a highly capable, brilliant young lawyer, but her future, if she was going to have one, was in New York, where, you know, she had connections and so on, and she had this choice.

Does she follow a potential, you know, glittering career in the legal profession, or does she follow the man that she loves to Arkansas, which to the metropolitan elite of New York was like backwater, or, you know, really sort of back with sticks, back and beyond nowhere, and it was like a dead end for her, but what does she do?

Now, again, this is not passing any caught on politics or presidential hopeless, but at that young stage in life, it was dead simple for her. She knew that she loved the man more than anything else.

Love simplifies things. And so, whatever else New York might hold for at his futures in Arkansas, that's where she's going to go, because she loves him. That's what love does. It simplifies things for us.

[9:32] It makes it clear to us what is really important. Now, of course, as things stand, Mrs. Clinton may, well, for all we know, end up being the next president of the United States, so it hasn't harmed her career too much if that ends up being the case.

But leave that aside. That's for the Americans to sort out. What the point I want to make is, that love simplifies things. Well, that love is powerful and strong.

It makes things clear what is really important. This man reciprocates the love that the Lord has shown to him. Because everybody would have regarded him clearly he's brought something on himself, or his parents have.

It's almost this kind of Indian sense of karma. You know, if you were the leper or the beggar by the roadside, you must have done something bad in a previous life. So in other words, it's your fault. So you don't really deserve too much compassion because, you know, you brought it on yourself.

And this is partly the attitude here. That was altogether born in sins. Does that teach us? And his disciples asked him, say, who sinned? This man or his parents that he was born blind? Why this tragedy?

[10:39] And Jesus said, neither this man, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. Now we might think, well, that's a bit rough, isn't it? You know, I mean, all these years he's had to sit by the roadside begging.

He's blind from birth so that Jesus can come along and do this miracle. Well, it's not just as simple as that, is it? This man is born blind. He remains blind for all his years of infancy, youth, childhood, until this day when Jesus passes by.

And then not only is he able to see, but he is enabled to love and to believe. Love simplifies things. It causes belief and faith and obedience to be thrown into their correct perspective.

Why do we seek to obey God's law? Because God thunders from silence and says, if you don't, you're going to get zapped. No. Because God says, well, if you don't obey me, you'll be cast into eternal hellfire.

Well, there is an element of that, but that's not the overriding concern. The overriding concern for the believer is that they, as Jesus taught us, love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and mind and strength.

[11:51] Every five of their being loves the Lord. Therefore, because we love the Lord, it's simple. If God says, do this and the world says, do that, we love the Lord, so we do this.

We do the thing that God says. If we love him more than anything else, if the Lord says, be here on this day and the month, it says, I'll be somewhere else. We love the Lord, so we want to be where he says to be, just like Hillary Clinton going to follow a building to Arkansas instead of all the bright lights of New York.

We follow the Lord if we love them. We desire to be where he is. We desire to be where he tells us to be, where he teaches, where he commands us to be, to do what he commands us to do.

And it's not fear of punishment that drives that. Yes, there is eternal punishment if we leave this world without the Lord, but that's not our main driver. Love is more powerful than fear.

As John writes in his first letter, perfect love casts out fear. Whatever may be the fear in our heart, love is stronger than that. Some of Solomon tells us, love is stronger than death.

[13:02] The coals that are over are coals of fire. The jealousy is cruel as the grave. The coals that are over are coals of fire which are the most vehement flame. Many waters cannot drown love.

Neither cannot quench love. Neither can the floods drown it. It doesn't matter what the power of this world is. Love, and especially love of the Lord, is stronger than that.

That's how this man is suddenly articulate in the face of these scribes and Pharisees before which his own parents cower and tremble. He who only a short while before was a blind man at the roadside begging has answers for them.

The Lord has put answers in his heart. The man answered and said, here's a marvellous thing. You don't know from whence he is. And what that doesn't mean, oh, you know, he's from Nazareth, or you know, he's from Capernaum.

That's not what he means. There's only two possibilities, both to the Jewish council here and to these people. Either this man is from God, he's from heaven, that's where his power comes from, or else he's serving the devil.

[14:01] And his power comes from the pit of hell. He can only be one but the other. Which is he? He says, well, here's a marvellous thing. You don't know who he is. You don't know where he comes from. And yet he has opened my eyes.

He has done not only this great kindness, but exercised his massive power. Because since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

We know that God he hath not sinners. This man was in the category you people describe as sinners, they're religious and not caring about the Lord. God wouldn't listen to him. You guys admit God wouldn't listen to him.

Just like when Jesus turns it around on the Sadducees and he says, oh, well, you know, there's life after death. What about this woman who's had seven husbands? You know, whose wife will she be when it comes to the resurrection?

And Jesus says, you don't know the scriptures or the power of God. God says, I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And he trots back one of their mantras and says, you say he's the God of the living, not of the dead.

[15:01] Well, he's the God of the living, not of the dead. And yet he says, I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. You say he's the God of the living, not of the dead. So these guys love the living. They are still alive. They are risen. So likewise, he turns it back on them.

We know that God doesn't hear sinners, the publicans, the sinners, the immoral, the worldly. He doesn't hear them. So where is this man from? He must be of God.

If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. Love simplifies things. It simplifies it for this man. He loves the Lord.

He reciprocates the love that the Lord has shown to him. Jesus said, I must work the works of him that sent me. While it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Life is that by which we see. Where there is no light, we can't see. Where there is pitch black, we can't see our hand in front of our face.

[16:00] Where there is the light of the world. Where there is Jesus, it is made clear. We can see. Therefore, this love that this man has, it is placed there by the Lord.

It reciprocates the love of the Lord. It is not initiated in itself. It is responding to the love of the Lord. And it clarifies things.

Now, none of us, by nature, love the Lord from birth or conception or from all eternity. We are born and conceived in sin. That is our natural condition.

To love the Lord or to become aware of the Lord is something that involves a change in our lives. We have to be taught, yes, the facts and the truths about the Lord. The actual changing of our heart only if he can do.

Just as a child has to be taught how to swim. It doesn't be, it's not born paddling about and it's a natural amphibian. You throw a child in the deep end of a swimming pool when it can't swim and say, you know, make your own decision.

[16:59] It's okay. You decide whether you want to swim or it's not for me to teach you. This is how you do the breaststroke. This is how you do the crawl. That's rules. I don't want to force that on you. You make your own decision. You decide. Well, the child's not just laying down there when you do nothing.

And yet so many people treat the Christian upbringing of their children in that way. Oh, make your own decision. It's okay. Just decide. No, you teach them what they're required to learn, what they're required to know.

You teach them the facts about the Lord. You can't change their hearts. You can't change their hearts. You can't change their spirit and soul. Only the Lord can do that. But you teach them what they need to do.

You give them the tools to do the job. But we're not born loving the Lord. We're not born with that in our hearts. It is only something to which we respond when the Lord shows his love for us.

The Lord makes things clear. It simplifies things. The scribes and Pharisees said, well, this man, he must be either from heaven or from hell. He must be either serving the Lord or the evil one.

[18:06] We think he's serving the evil one because, look, he doesn't keep our rules about the Sabbath. And I'm stressing that our rules. It's not that Jesus dishonored his father's day. Of course he didn't.

But opening the eyes of the blind, that's as God-honoring as you can get on his own day, on the Holy Sabbath. This is honoring God. This is serving the Lord.

This is resting from the darkness. This is giving the light. Honoring the Lord is never wrong on his day. doing that which simply fits us in with the world or makes things easier with us or means that we're following their values instead of God's or suiting ourselves rather than him.

Yeah, that may not be so pure, may not be so loving, may not be so clear, but is he from heaven or from hell? There's only the two options. He's opened my eyes. He has such power that only God could give him.

If this man were not of God, verse 33, he could do nothing. It's never been seen before. Since the world began, verse 32, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?

[19:13] Now, of course, when we love, there are consequences. There may be others, perhaps, who may have hoped that our love might be directed in their direction.

The world might want to claim on us. Other hearts might want to claim on us. Once we choose for Christ, others will be disappointed. This is what we find here with the Jewish leaders. When he chooses for Christ, they cast him out of the sin of God.

When we settle on one heart that we love, other hearts may be broken or hurt or rejected or whatever. They cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out.

And when he had found him, he said, I didn't disturb, believe on the Son of God. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord? That I might believe. And it's possible that he's hearing the voice and thinking, I know that voice.

I don't know who this is, but I know that voice. And Jesus said, Thou hast both seen him. Now you have. And it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe.

[20:13] And he worshipped him. It was only enough to be told who Jesus was because he heard the voice. He hadn't seen him before. Remember what Peter says, 1 Peter 1, verse 8.

Whom having not seen, ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Love simplifies things. Who do you really love? What are your real priorities? Is it self, convenience, the world, money, career?

Or is it the Lord? If it is the Lord, all these other things come secondly. All these other things fall into their place. If the Lord is our priority, then we love the Lord, our God, with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength.

This means that the man is willing to take the consequences of that love. Just I believe on the Son of God. Well, it's like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, isn't it?

[21:15] He knew there would be consequences. And they say to King Netanyahu, and Medsir, and he said to them, if you don't fall down and worship me, you'll be thrown in this fiery furnace. There it is, it's being heated up right now as we speak. Whenever you hear the music, whenever you hear the sound fall down, worship my golden image or else be thrown in the fiery furnace. And this is what the answer, Daniel 3, verse 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the King, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful, that means we're not filled with care or anxiety to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

God is able to deliver. God is able to say, but if he chooses not to, I still won't worship the false gods. I will still love him most. I will still put him first in my life.

Love which is not conditional upon this or that or the next thing happening that pleases me. Love that puts God first. Love which simplifies things to the extent that the Lord must always have first place in our hearts, even if the alternative was the burning, fiery furnace.

[22:39] And of course, there's the irony, isn't it? Because if the Lord is not first in our hearts, we worship something else, so put something else as a priority above the Lord, then ultimately that fiery furnace is what awaits us.

The irony is just exquisite. But we have here also, way back in the Old Testament again, this reminder of the cost of following the Lord.

Isaiah 66, verse 5, hear the word of the Lord, yet tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, and said, let the Lord be glorified.

And that's what the Jewish council was doing. They're saying, oh, we are the ones that obey the Lord. We are the religious. We are the good. We are casting this man out. It's not really because he doesn't love the Lord as he should, because he's not reverencing us as he should.

And he said, let the Lord be glorified, but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Isaiah 66, verse 5. This is the Lord honoring those who honor him.

[23:42] Jesus said, of course, when he first came, when he embarked on his earthly ministry, Luke chapter 4, verse 18. Remember how he took the book? The minister's hand in the synagogue in Nazareth delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah, and when he had opened the book, he found a place that was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he had anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He had sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Never mind how you open the eyes of the blind. That's part of a messianic reality. You know, reality, it's part of the proof the Messiah was there, was coming, because he opens the eyes of the blind.

How did you heal the brokenhearted? A couple of weeks ago, we were looking at Genesis 24. It says at the end of Genesis 24, Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

You can't replace your mother, but how can you be comforted? Because there is another love. There is a close, intimate love which heals some of that brokenness in the heart.

[25:01] More love being poured into that heart helps to heal it, helps to comfort it. How does the Lord heal the brokenhearted? Because those who have been bruised and battered and broken in their hearts by the experiences they have had in the world, the Lord pours his love into their hearts and heals them up.

Healing the brokenhearted, brokenhearted. He doesn't change the history. He doesn't say, oh, I'm going to send you back in a TARDIS so that so-and-so won't break your heart, so that these bad things won't happen.

It'll all be made back. No, he's not going to change history, but he is going to be able to set it in perspective. He's not going to say to this man, look, I'm going to turn the clock back so you'll be made five years old again so that all the years you lost as a blind child and a blind man I'm going to give you back.

No, he's going to give him something better. He's going to give him eternity and he's going to give him the knowledge of God's love for him, love that will be poured into his heart to heal up the breakages and enable him now to overflow with such love as it cannot help but reciprocate, cannot help but respond because love simplifies things.

And this is what has happened with us, this man. Here is a marvellous thing. You know, not once he is, yet you have opened my eyes. Now when our eyes are opened, we see clearly.

[26:26] This man is enabled to do that which, you know, at the outset, Philip says to Nathaniel, he says, you know, come and see this man, verse 39, for example, when they say to Jesus, Rabbi Wood Willis, he says, come and see.

And when Philip finds Nathaniel, he says, we have found him of whom Moses and the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph. And Nathaniel said unto him, get any good thing commanding Nazareth. Philip said unto him, come and see.

And when the Lord opens our eyes, he enables us to see. He calls us to see him. What is it that you behold? Do you see the Lord's work in your life?

Do you see the way that he has protected you down the years? The ways by which he has brought you. Yes, there have been disasters. There have been pain. There have been difficulty. There have been heartbreak along the way.

There will have been sorrow. He's not going to send you back in a tardis. He's not going to turn the clock back. But he is going to set these things in perspective and say, yes, all of that is true.

[27:31] All of that did happen. And the pain was real. He's not going to diminish it. He's not going to minimize it. He didn't say it didn't really matter. It did matter. It's part of what brought you to the stage you're at.

It's part of what made you who you are. All these past experiences, the joys and the sorrows, the pain, the heartbreak, the disappointments, and the problems. He's not minimizing that.

He's saying, all of that is true. But this now also is true. And this is a greater truth. This is a deeper love. This is a vaster hope.

This is a greater promise. He has opened the eyes of one who was born blind. Spiritually blind is how we are all born.

We do not know the Lord by nature. that by his love we are enabled to know him by grace. Lord, I believe. And he worshipped them.

[28:29] Jesus said, for judgment, I am coming to this world that they which see not might see. Open the eyes of the blind. Look glory to you. And that they which see might be made blind, unable to accept God in Christ.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said, are you blind? Not so much. They're following him. Everybody. Some of them accept him. Some of them want to be with him. Some of them do want to follow him. But they feel this kind of criticism here.

Jesus said, if you were blind, you should have no sin. Again, it doesn't mean you'd be sinless. It means you wouldn't be as guilty if you genuinely couldn't see. But you're the ones that say, we see.

We're clever. We're the religiously aware. We can dictate what is right and wrong. And because you've said, we know these things, therefore your guilt remains. Your sin remains.

Because you claim you know the truth. Okay? It's the truth that is convicting you. Just as this man said, you know, God doesn't hear sinners. And yet, here's this man working with the power of God.

[29:29] Go figure. What do you conclude from that? Ergo, God is with them. God is in this man. And they threw him at the sin. If you were blind, you should have no sin.

You wouldn't have the direct guilt. Well, that doesn't mean as long as I continue in my ignorance and know nothing of the Lord, well, that's okay. I'll end up in heaven. No, you won't. You'll still end up in a lost eternity.

But God will recognize the difference between those who didn't know any better and those who should have known better and those who had the opportunity. Yes, it will all be a lost eternity for all who leave this world without Christ.

But there are grades and there are many mansions or, shall we say, many dungeons in hell just as there are many mansions in heaven. And the Lord recognizes those who have given their lives to him on the one hand and those who maybe just scraped him at the last minute with the last breath of conversion.

And on the other hand, he recognizes those who didn't know any better, who never knew about the Lord and so they couldn't be saved by him. And those who should have known and who had the opportunity but who chose self-love instead of God's love.

[30:44] That isn't true love. That's only self-destruction. True love is that which responds, that which recognizes the love that the Lord puts into our hearts and which reciprocates it.

We don't initiate this love. We are born blind. We are born in transgression and sin. And when the Lord opens our eyes, he enables us to love him back as he has first loved us.

Love is reciprocated and love simplifies things. It makes it clear what our priorities have to be, what is more important, what is most important in your life.

All other things fall into place. And we have this first and foremost. We know that God he hath not sinners. Those who don't care about him, he doesn't obey, he doesn't do what they want.

But if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth his will, him be here. This is a marvelous thing. And ye know not from whence he is, yet ye have opened mine eyes.

[31:57] This is a marvelous thing. If you don't know who it is who is actually speaking to your heart, it's not the ramping words of an individual man. It is the still, small voice of the living God who speaks to the heart of every lost citizen.

What do you see? Do you have the desire to see? Do you have the desire to have your eyes open? Or is the darkness just a little bit too comfortable? It will change your life.

Yes, it will give you courage maybe you didn't have before. Yes, it will have a cost that maybe you didn't have to pay before. But it will show everything in shock relief. It will put everything into perspective.

Dost thou believe on the Son of God, said Jesus. Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

Now, we haven't seen him with the eyes of flesh, but truly, as Paul writes elsewhere, no, we see not all things laid on those feet, but we see Jesus.

[33:07] And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. For the sin, we breathe. Thank you. Thank you.