



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 9:8-41

"The Progress of a Man's Faith"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is a rather lengthy section from John chapter 9, one of the most interesting sections in the Gospel of John and also a rather important one.

Remember, John has written his gospel around the unfolding of a number of miraculous signs. And it is his intent that by the reading and studying of the signs men might come to see that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that in believing in him they might have life through his name.

Last week, for the benefit of those of you who were not here, we looked at the miracle that our Lord performed on the man born blind. And today we turn to the remainder of the story of this man born blind, looking at the rest of the chapter. Now, Jesus has just said to him, after having spat upon the ground, made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." And in verse 8 John continues the story of the blind man by saying,

"The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I

know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. (Of course, they're speaking of our Lord using these demonstrative pronouns in a very condescending way.) We know this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, (By the way, that word "again" that adverb is not in the original text at this point, but it's obviously a questioning again of him in the same way, and so it's proper to the sense of the passage.) Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? (That's an insight into the character of this man. He does not mind embarrassing the religious leaders. And so he asks, "Tell me, do you too want to be his disciples?" Of course that's the last thing they want to be, but he now is pulling their leg.) Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous 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. (So you can see he not only is pulling their legs, he's now challenging them. They're supposed to be the ones who know everything about spiritual things, spiritual miracles. And surprisingly they don't know anything about this man, and he's done something that no man ever did.) They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? (Now that, of course, is one of the most heinous things that any man could do. The most heinous sin that anyone can do spiritually is to attempt to teach his teachers. And so when they say, "Are you trying to teach us, that's the last word. And so we read, "They threw him out.) And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of Man? (The Authorized Version has Son of God; probably the preferable text is Son of Man.) He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

In case you notice that my voice comes and goes and occasionally it's louder than at other times. Sometimes it's weaker. It is not simply because I am growing old, but the amplifier in our system is just about to come to the end of its days. It is a question whether I will outlast it or it will outlast me. And in case you're interested in the odds, you might want to go back there and check on the odds if you want to put some money on one or the other. [Laughter] But anyway, that accounts

for some of the changes in volume. They are actually working on it right at this very moment. That is the reason for the problem.

The subject for today is "The Progress of a Man's Faith." There are those who insist that God never does the sensational. But he does. And this man about whom we are reading and speaking in John chapter 9 is certainly an illustration of the fact that God does the sensational. And not only that but this event itself is an illustration of the sensational. This man, who is plainly a mortal man, a man born blind, a man who had spent a great deal of his life, evidently, begging on the street corners, becomes a sturdily independent individual. And not only sturdily independent but courageous, and courageous before religious authority which in his day was the ultimate authority. And finally he becomes magnificently loyal to Jesus Christ in the midst of the criticism that was lodged against our Lord and against him, which ultimately meant all of his earthly existence. And so this man himself is an illustration of the fact that God does do that which is sensational.

The event is as well an illustration of the fact that God does the sensational. Here is a remarkable conversion, not only the miraculous event of the removal of the blindness physically, but here is a man who was also spiritually blind, who comes finally to a faith in Jesus Christ that is remarkable. There is a story of a young butcher in Canada who was converted many years ago. He boasted that everybody knew him. He finally became well known in the place because he stood on the street corners and testified to the amazing change that had taken place in his life. And he used to begin his testimony by saying something like this, "All you folks here in this city know me. You know what a sinner I have been. And now you can see for yourself what Jesus Christ has done for me."

Well, the beggar was like that. This blind man from his birth, he was known by all of them. And from the time of his conversion onward he became a tremendous testimony to the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. One thing I know that whereas I was blind, now I see." And the remainder of the community knew that as well.

Well, we're going to look at it, and we'll notice that in this chapter we can see the progress of a man's spiritual faith. Now his healing was physically instantaneous. Jesus had said to him after he had spat upon the ground, taken the clay, put it upon his eyes, "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash." And he had gone in obedience to the Lord's words, and he had come seeing. Now that was physical healing, but that was not spiritual healing. The remainder of the chapter details the progress of this man's faith from physical healing on to spiritual healing, from blindness of heart to openness and clarity of heart and saving relationship to the Lord Jesus. That's the story of the remainder of this chapter.

Now, of course, it begins as one might expect with a lot of interrogation following this remarkable healing. And first of all, the neighbors are involved. We read in the 8th verse of chapter 9, "The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, is not this he that sat and begged?" They noticed that there was something familiar about him, but nevertheless they weren't quite sure. And so some said, "Yes, that is the person who was blind." And others were not quite so sure, and so they said, "Well he's like him." One might wonder if that indicates if there was really some question about it." Well there was some question about it, because if you have ever seen blind people you've noticed that occasionally there is a rather vacant look about their eyes. And when the vitality of sight came to this man, undoubtedly there was enough difference for people to wonder. But some said, "Yes, it's he." Other said, "He's like him, for the vacant look is no longer there." But he said, "I am he."

Then, of course, they asked the natural question, "Well then, how were your eyes opened?" I like his testimony, because it's a model testimony of a young convert. He didn't embellish it with how bad a sinner he used to be. But he simply told what the Lord Jesus had done for him. He said, "A man," notice that. That's all he knows about him at this point, "A man called Jesus made clay. He anointed my eyes, and he said, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' And I went and I washed, and I received sight." What a magnificently simple and clear testimony. It is simply a testimony to

that which Jesus Christ had done for him. They asked the natural question, "Where is he?" And he said, "I don't know."

Well now, in Israel which was a strongly religious society and also a society in which the religious authorities were the authority, the ultimate authority, for it was a theocracy like the kingdom that is to come. It will be a theocracy. We won't have to be under the politicians then. Or rather put it another way, the politicians won't be the kinds of politicians that we know about now. They will be politicians who are spiritual politicians. Hallelujah. Won't that be interesting? To find a politician who is totally honest.

Well, at any rate, at this time the Pharisees were the religious authorities, and so he was brought to the Pharisees. Now, the Lord Jesus had healed this man on the Sabbath Day. This was the day after the Sabbath. The Pharisees looked at him. They were told, evidently, the story. And they said to him, they probably knew him. But they said, "How did you receive your sight?" He said, "Well this man, Jesus, put clay upon my eyes. And I washed, and I do see." Now the Pharisees, remembering that he had healed on the Sabbath day said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." Other said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" And so there was a division, or as the Greek text says, there was a schism among them. Now, some of my Texas friends pronounce that schism, but really schism is the way to pronounce it, particularly in religious matters, a schism. Now this morning when I said that, someone came up to me afterwards and said, "Do you say then that a person is schizophrenic?" [Laughter] And I said, "No you don't, you say schizophrenic, I think," At any rate, in spiritual matters, schism has a little secondary place in the dictionaries, but schism is the proper pronunciation and particularly in spiritual things. So when we speak of a particular division in spiritual matters, a schism.

Well there was a schism here. There was a division among the Pharisees. Some obviously think that the Lord Jesus has violated the Sabbath and he is not of God. So before the official committee the next day, the miracle is discussed. Now, no doubt there was some question about this that was very important, because you see, the Pharisees had already said that if anyone confesses him

as Christ or as the Messiah he's going to be put out of the synagogue. Now that's very bad. And in case you want to understand exactly what that meant, that meant not simply that you would be put out of the church but out of the community as well. For to be put out of the synagogue was to suffer social, as well as spiritual expulsion. A person couldn't even make any money. It was economic ruin. It was social ruin. It was spiritual ruin to be cast out of the synagogue. For the life of the synagogue was the life of the whole community. We know many societies that are like that today. Our society is not, being the kind of pluralistic type of society that it is. But then to be put out of the synagogue was an economic disaster. It was a social disaster, as well as being a religious disaster in the minds of many.

Now, they already knew that the Pharisees had said that anyone who confesses him as the Messiah is going to be put out of the synagogue. So here we come [to] a reasoning of the Pharisees. Now, they use what we might call syllogistic reasoning. You know what a syllogism is. If you don't know what it is by definition, you know what it is in your own experience, because God has given us all rational minds. He has given us reason. And while you may have doubts about some people, nevertheless everybody has been given reason. One of the problems we face as believers is to subject our reason to the word of God, to the Lord. But a syllogism is a valid deductive argument having two premises and a conclusion. You've all been exposed to it. Let me give you an illustration or two so you will refresh your own minds. All automobiles are machines, premise number one. All machines wear out, premise number two. All autos, therefore, wear out. That's the conclusion. That's a good deductive syllogism. Or all idiots are happy, first premise. Second, all football players are idiots, second premise. [Laughter] Therefore, conclusion, all football players are happy. Or to bring one more closely to home, all singers carry tunes. Howard Prier cannot carry a tune. Therefore, Howard Prier is not a sinner. [Laughter] Is not a singer. [Laughter] I know you knew he was a sinner. [Laughter]

Now we need to distinguish between a valid argument and a sound argument. Now a valid argument is one that is based upon premises. A sound argument is one that is based upon premises

that are true. And so, of course, if these premises were true and all singers carry tunes, that Howard Prier cannot carry a tune, and Howard Prier is therefore not a singer. That would be a sound argument, but unfortunately it's not based on a sound premise, because Howard Prier can carry a tune. I've heard him sing up here. I know he can carry a tune. So while that's a valid argument, assuming the premises are true, it's not really a sound argument since the premises are not true. Now, we might even say all amplifiers are instruments by which voice is enlarged or something like that. And then we might say, all instruments wear out. Therefore, all amplifiers wear out. Like the one that we are listening to at the present moment.

Now notice in this particular description here that is given, the Pharisees are employing a syllogistic argument. They are saying this; they're saying, major premise, all people who are of God keep the Sabbath. Minor premise, this man Jesus does not keep the Sabbath. Conclusion, this man is not from God. All people who are from God keep the Sabbath. This man doesn't keep the Sabbath. Therefore this man is not from God. A sound argument if the premises are true, but unfortunately the premises are not true. The reason the premises are not true is while all people who were pleasing to God kept the Sabbath at that time, what they mean is keep the Sabbath as we understand the Sabbath is to be kept. And one of the things they said was that a man could not be healed on the Sabbath day. Many other things a man couldn't do on a Sabbath day, not found in the Old Testament. So in effect what they have done is to give us an untrue premise, understood as they understood it. And therefore their conclusion is false. But they use this with great power, simple syllogistic argument. This man is not of God because he doesn't keep the Sabbath. But people raised the question, "Well if this man is not of God how can such a person who is therefore a sinner, how can he do miracles?" Because it's obviously true that miracles must be ultimately performed by the power of God. And so evidently this man has some relationship with the Lord that enables him to do the miraculous. So how can he do this if he is a sinner? And so we have a schism.

Now then, they say to the blind man again, "What sayest thou of him that hath opened thy eyes?" And at this point he says, "Well, he is a prophet." Pharisees, of course, are not satisfied with



all of this, and so they say, "We need to talk to his parents." And so the parents answer the Pharisees, and they say, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But by what means he seeth we don't know. We don't know who has opened his eyes and remember, he's of age. Ask him, he shall speak for himself." Now, that sounds very good, but actually the parents are weak and probably untruthful. Because surely they, of all people, know what has happened to their son. They have asked what has happened to him, and he has surely told them that a man named Jesus is the one who has healed him. But they are not going to answer because they are afraid of the Pharisees. That's the next statement. "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." So in effect they passed the Buck.

Will Rogers said, "The United States' history can be divided into two stages. First era, the passing of the buffalo; the second era, the passing of the buck." [Laughter] Well there was an era of the passing of the buck long before then, and here they are passing the buck.

Now, what would you have done? Would you have said something like they said? Would you have said, "No, Jesus is the one who gave him back his sight?" They knew that but they were afraid. They were afraid that expulsion from the synagogue might become theirs; social, economic, religious disgrace. They were not like Moses who was willing to suffer the reproach of Christ, for he esteemed the riches of identification with the Lord Jesus were greater than all the riches of Egypt. No, their reaction was not like Moses. They were fearful. It's like a person today who's afraid he might be thrown out of the Baptist church or thrown out of the Methodist church or thrown out of the Anglican church or thrown out of the Presbyterian church. That's even worse isn't it? Thrown out of Believers Chapel, fearful, so many people are fearful, not realizing that of course one might have to be thrown out in order to find the company of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, the parents have answered, and so again the Pharisees are going to speak with the man. We read in verse 24, "They called the man that was blind. They said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not:

one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." They grant the miracle now, just for the sake of discussion they grant the miracle. But they say, "Ascribe the glory to God, not to the Lord Jesus." Now, you know, the man could have gotten out of all of his difficulty if he would have just said, "Well after all Jesus is God. So I'll just ascribe the glory to God. And I'll stay in the synagogue. And I won't have economic disgrace. I won't have social disgrace. I won't have religious disgrace. I'll be accepted by everybody." Calvin said, "If he would have been allowed to stay in the synagogue, he would have eventually have become estranged from Christ."

Well often that's the worst thing that can happen to an individual to stay in your synagogue. So here, listen to the man. He's not going to yield an inch. That's why he's such a remarkable man, and that's why what happens in this chapter is such a sensational thing. Boldly he puts his, "I don't know who he is," but on the other had over against it, he puts his "I know this, that I was blind and now I see." Science often asks Christians well give us facts and not your opinions. We're willing to give our facts. We give our facts of a changed life. Science beseeches us to deal with facts and not with dreams and imaginations, that's precisely what we Christians do, we give them our facts. We tell them this is what we were; this is what Jesus Christ has done for us. These are irrefutable facts, the change of life produced by the Lord God.

But scientists are just like the rest of us, they often are stubborn and they refuse to respond to the light, because that's the way we are as a result of the fall. The response of the Pharisees in the 26th verse is, "Then said they to him again, What did he do to thee? How opened he thine eyes?" Isn't it interesting, they've already asked that before, two or three times? And now they're asking it again. That's the way people are. That's the way we were. I can remember when I was like that. Whenever spiritual things would come up, and I would get involved in the conversation, I had about half a dozen things that I thought were things that prevented me from responding to the gospel. I was in the insurance business, and I prided myself on thinking fairly logically. And so I had a series of reasons that I would lodge against the Christian faith as it was understood by my mother-in-law and by others. I usually reduced her to tears. I won the arguments, and lost the ultimate battle of course.

But anyway, this is what I would do. I would start with reason number one, why is the Bible the word of God? How can we know the Bible is the word of God? And I would go one, two, three, four, five, six. And if we were in a large group of people, everybody would pounce in and they would answer my question. So I would move on to number two, number three, number four, number five, number six. And when I finished number six I would go back to number one again, number one, two. That's the way we are.

That's the way they are, they're going back to number one again. Now, how did you get your eyesight? And so this fellow, I'm beginning to like him even more. He said, "I told you already." [Laughter] Now mind you, these are the authorities in the land. "I told you already, and you didn't hear me. You didn't listen. Would you like to hear it again? Why do you want to hear it again?" Ah, and then you could see he's got a sense of humor he said, "Don't tell me, you want to become his disciples too." That's what's meant by verse 27 there, "Will you also be his disciples?" He knew that was the last thing that they wanted to be. So he said, "Don't tell me, you really want to become one of us." Well, you can see what happens. They hurl insults at him then. You jackass. You fool. You utter fool. I imagine they said some things that were much worse than that. But anyway they say, "You're his disciple, we're Moses' disciple. We know God spoke by Moses, as for this fellow, we don't know from whence he is."

Now that statement is rather remarkable, because it's both false and ironically true. It's false because they did know from whence our Lord was. You can turn back a few pages in the Gospel of John, and it's well-known that our Lord came from Nazareth. Verse 41 of chapter 7 says, "Others said this is the Messiah." Some said, "Shall the Messiah come out of Galilee?" They knew he was a Galilean. They knew he came from Nazareth, but one thing is ironically true. They don't know his real origin. They do not know that he is really from heaven. As the Lord Jesus said, "You are from beneath, I am from above. I am the Son of God. I have come from God." In that sense they did not yet know him to be the eternal second person of the trinity. "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth to me whose goings

forth have been from of old from everlasting." They do not yet understand the fact that he is the eternal Son.

Now the man replies in verse 30. He says, you know here's a marvelous thing, and I think if he had listened to me speak he would have said, "Here's a marvelous thing, and I'm going to give you a syllogism. You fellows have been giving me a syllogism, and you've been saying that a man who is of God doesn't heal on the Sabbath day. Jesus heals on the Sabbath day; therefore Jesus is not of God. I want to give you a little syllogism. You know here is a marvelous thing, that ye who are the religious authorities in the land, and you know everything there is to know about spiritual things, because you are the authority. And you impose your mind and will upon us, and your interpretation of the word of God, but you don't know from whence this man is. And yet this man has opened my eyes."

Now remember last week I pointed out that that was something that the Old Testament said only God does, open the eyes of the blind. So here is a people that put themselves forth as the authoritative interpreters of God and they don't know anything about this man who does the work of God. He says it is a marvelous thing. It surely is a marvelous thing. He was a man of courage and guts, we would say. Here's a marvelous thing that you know not from whence he is, and yet you have opened my eyes. "Now we know that God heareth not sinners," that's the first premise of his syllogism. God does not hear sinners. "But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." So God does not hear sinners, minor premise. God has heard this man. "He's healed me." Therefore this man is not a sinner. "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." I like this fellow more and more the more I hear him. God doesn't hear sinners. God hears this man. This man is not a sinner. He's really rubbing it in. He's a beggar defeating a Pharisee with the Pharisee's own syllogistic weapons. One of the commentators, a French commentator, said that if he hadn't studied theology, he at least knew his catechism. Well, he knew more than that, because he had the experience of redemption.

Well, you can see what the Pharisees do about that. In the 34th verse we read that "They answered and said unto him, 'Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?'" That's the most of heinous of all sins, to teach ones teachers, any teacher knows that. Any student who tries to teach his teacher is in hot water immediately, isn't that right? Have you ever tried to teach your teacher? It's very difficult to teach your teacher. Try it on me sometimes. [Laughter] That's the most heinous sin of all to try to teach your teacher. And so they say, "You were altogether born in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And so they threw him out.

Well you might think that that's bad. Their reaction, of course, proved that he was right, because by their fruits you know them. And the fact that they threw him out that the Lord Jesus is an evidence that they're not in right relationship with the Lord. I say, you might think that's bad to be thrown out of the synagogue. Just think of it, he's been defrocked in a sense. Sometimes you read in the newspaper about a certain man, "He's been defrocked by his church." It's not always bad. Some churches a man ought to be defrocked in if he's a Christian. That's the best thing that could happen to him.

There was a fellow by the name of John Bunyan who found it very difficult to live with the authorities, but everybody remembers Bunyan and his *Pilgrim's Progress*, and nobody knows anything about the authorities who threw him in jail. There is another man by the name of William Kerry who got into difficulty with the authorities, and everybody remembers William Kerry as one of the great missionary leaders, in fact, probably the leader of the modern missionary movement. But nobody remembers the people with whom he got into difficulty. The greatest thing in the world that could have happened to the blind man was to be thrown out of the synagogue. He didn't realize that, but that was the greatest thing that could have happened to him, because by becoming persona non grata with the synagogue, he became persona grata with Jesus Christ. And when they tossed him out of the synagogue the Lord Jesus was there to catch him in his own arms. So to be thrown out of an unbelieving apostate synagogue is often was is necessary to enter into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me read you a text of Scripture in Hebrews chapter 13 in verse 13, the writer of this epistle says, "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." What was the camp? The camp was Israel. The camp was the people of God. But the Lord Jesus by being crucified outside of the city reflected in his crucifixion the fact that the camp had apostatized from the Lord himself. So to go forth to the Lord is to go forth outside the camp, for Jesus is outside the camp. The Lord Jesus is outside the fellowship of much religious authority today. In order to have fellowship with him, one must leave the religious authority. And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews understands that. He says, "Let's go forth unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach." So the greatest thing in the world that could have happened to this man happened to him. He was thrown out of the synagogue. The greatest thing that could have happened to Martin Luther was to be thrown out of the church.

Now then, having been thrown out you might think, "Oh, poor fellow." But we read on in verse 35, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him," you see, our Lord was looking for him. "When he had found him," the light has shown and created division, but the good shepherd who was interested in his body was also interested in his soul. And so he found him, and he said to the blind man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of Man?" He said, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him." And Jesus said, "You've seen him, and he is the one who's talking with you now." And we read he said, "Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him." So the physical illumination that he obtained when Jesus healed him of his blindness becomes spiritual illumination now, and his heart is enlightened to see the Lord Jesus as the Lord. And he is at his feet worshipping and believing in him.

There's a marvelous text in 2 Timothy chapter 1 in verse 12 where the apostle says, "For this cause we suffer these things." I'd better look at it. "Nevertheless I'm not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day." "I know whom I have believed." Many years ago, Rabi Duncan, who was Professor of Hebrew at New College of the University of Edinburgh, called Rabi by them for rabbi,

for he was the Professor of Hebrew, a well-known, highly-regarded man. He was lecturing in his class and they, somehow or another, were discussing this particular text. And one of the students cited the text, "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded." And Mr. Duncan stopped him and said, "Repeat that text." He said, "I know in whom I have," "My dear sir," interrupted Rabi Duncan, "you must never let even a preposition come between you and your Savior." It's "I know whom I have believed."

When Dr. Alexander, who was one of the outstanding professors at Princeton Theological Seminary, was dying, a friend was standing by his bedside seeking to fortify his faith, reciting some passages of Scripture. And presently he too cited, "I know in whom I have believed." And Dr. Alexander raised his hand and said, "No, no, it's not in whom," but I know whom. I cannot even have the little word in between me and Jesus Christ." "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day."

John Oxenham expressed it with an accent and emphasis well worthy of the theme. "Now, not what, but whom I do believe. That in my darkest hour of need hath comfort that no mortal creed to mortal man may give." So the Lord Jesus now, here are the Pharisees, they're at his throat, and here is this man, the blind man, at his feet. And our Lord, reflecting upon the situation, the Pharisees at his throat, this blind man at his feet worshipping him, from out of his human experience our Lord as the Messiah of Israel sees the twofold purpose of his coming. Remember back in the first chapter of the gospel it is stated, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He came to own things and his own people did not receive him. The Pharisees are at his throat. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power, authority to become the children of God." And the blind man at his feet illustrates the second. So the blind man illustrates those who respond, the Pharisee does not.

And our Lord concludes then with the words in 39 through verse 41, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see," like the blind, "and that they which see," like the Pharisees but do not respond, "might be made blind." And some of the Pharisees who were

with him heard these words and they said, "Are we blind also?" "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." But in your case you're not really blind. You understand a great deal, but you're not responding to that which you know. You say, "We see." You are the religious authorities. You are claiming to know, "therefore your sin abides upon you."

Now in the Bible we read about unforgivable sin, the unpardonable sin. Well, if there is any unpardonable sin now, that is the unpardonable sin, to not respond to the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, it's a magnificent picture then of the Lord Jesus as the light of the world and of the judgment that he brings. It's a crushing, overwhelming retort that he offers to the Pharisee who says, "Are we blind too?" You cannot escape the impact of this. Either we must confess our blindness, our total blindness and then seek understanding, or else we must accept the light that we have and respond to it and walk by it. What many of us try to do is the impossible thing, and that is to have half-light and to live by half-light. That is, the light of an understanding of the facts about God and even the facts about the gospel, but no real response to the Lord of the gospel. In that case, it's hopeless. Your sin remains.

Well, I said this was the picture of a man who makes progress from unbelief to belief. In verse 11 he called the Lord Jesus a man. In verse 17 he spoke of the Lord Jesus as a prophet. And now in verse 38 he speaks of him as Lord. That's a magnificent pilgrim's progress isn't it? From blindness and poverty to worshipping at the Savior's feet as one enlightened and enriched for all eternity. I'm afraid that many of us are responding just like the Pharisees. We have a great deal of understanding of the things of the Lord, but we have not responded to the things that we understand. A bigot such as they were, and we can be bigots too, is like the pupil of the eye, the more light you pour on it, the more it contracts. Better to be totally blind and know it than to seek for sight and imagine we see and remain blind.

I don't know your spiritual condition, of course. My only concern for you is that you really respond to the light that is given in the word of God concerning Jesus Christ. There is no progress in the love of Christ. He passed by that blind man. He saw him. He found that blind man after he



was cast out of the synagogue. He opened his eyes. He brought him to the place where he had no sin. That's the same love that sought Adam in the Garden of Eden after the fall. It's the same Savior who seeks to save those that are lost and who through the preaching of the gospel seeks to provide an opportunity for men to respond to that message. I say, I don't know your condition I know only that Christ saves through the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. And I appeal to you as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus to come to him. Don't trust in half-light. Receive the light that the light of the world is able to give, by confessing your need, your sin, your guilt, your condemnation, and resting upon him for time and for eternity. May God help you to trust in Christ.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the testimony of the blind man, what a magnificent work of grace was done in his heart. O God, do that same work in our hearts. May we be brought to rest in simple reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ who shed his blood for sinners. And O God, create within us the gratitude of thanksgiving for the work of redemption. If there are some in this audience who have never believed in Christ, may at this very moment in their hearts they be saying to Thee, Lord I am a sinner. Christ died for sinners, you have said in the word. I receive...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**