

I was blind but now I see

- Joh 9:1-41 -

**** Opening Remarks**

****Scripture Reading: Joh 9:1-41**

1. As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth

1) State of man without God (blind from birth)

(1) becoming flesh: not able to hear and see God <v. 1b, 8>, therefore harassed and helpless <Mat 9:36>

(2) bound by sin 《Eph 2: 1—3》 and unable to free himself

(3) facing judgment after death /Satan 《Rom 3: 23》 and unable to save himself

destiny of the Pharisees: <vv 39-41> , <Mat 6: 23》 If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

2) Salvation and redemption is the sole work of God. (saved by grace alone <Eph 2: 8—9>)

(1) great prophet <14:6》

(2) great priest 《Rom 8: 1—2》

(3) great king 《1Jo 3: 8》

***Only Jesus Christ**

******difference between religion and gospel

*******God's way: he does it all, the seeking out, the doing, the guiding and the accomplishing

3) Evidence of being blessed, called and loved (undeniable)

(1) blessed in complete submission— born again《v. 7》: he was walking through the hustle and busel of city streets toward Siloam with mud on his eyelids with no promise of sight restoration by Jesus. Ref 《Mat 9: 27—31, 12: 22, 15: 30, 20: 29—34, 21: 14; Mar 8: 22—26, 10: 46—52》: Jesus' healings— of many kinds of people and in many different places. Common to all those healings: Jesus promised to heal them.

(2) experience of hunger and thirst for more testing— sanctification 《vv. 11, 17, 33, 35, 38>

(3) used by God as a witness— fruits

4) To the blessed, the called, the beloved, they will experience that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him” and see the results in 1Th 5: 16—18.

(1) eye diseases upon disciples' loss of “**only Jesus Christ and only the Cross**”: looking for answers outside Jesus Christ (who sinned, this man or his parents <v.2>)

(2) eye diseases upon believers' loss of “**only Jesus Christ and only the Cross**”: children, family, work, relationships, marriage, health ...

***he who has been rejected by this world (his parents, neighbors, friends, relatives and church) turns out to be the lost sheep God is seeking— the main character of this chapter (not his parents, neighbors, religious**

believers who hold on to the dead letter of the written code)

****testimonies of our church's brothers and sisters re their calling and sanctification (crises—>opportunities; solution in the problem; dry land in the Red Sea; streams in the desert; path in the wilderness ...)《Joh 16:33》**

5) Test and approve my vision today: is it worthy of the calling I have received 《Eph 4: 1》

(1) What kind of eye diseases I have: plank in my eye (but see only the dust in my brother's eye), color blindness, cataracts, myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism, strabismus, glaucoma, presbyopia, eye with no pupil, and pupil with no eyes ...; vis-à-vis children, family, work, relationships, marriage, health, property, church, fellowship, meetings, pastors, brothers and sisters ...

There are different kinds of people and different kinds of eye diseases, but the problem remains the same, i.e., they cannot see or see clearly God/Jesus Christ.

(2) How does the Lord heal me today

(3) How do I work with him for my healing

2. I was blind but now I see

1) born again/characteristics of those who see again

(1) God's predestination and selection before the creation of the world 《Eph 1: 4—5》

(2) “eight kinds of blessed people” 《Mat 5: 3—11》

(3) good soil of the heart 《Mat 13: 3—8》:

a. some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up: the Pharisees

b. some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly: his neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging

c. other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants: his parents

d. Still other seed fell on good soil: it took root, sprang and produced a crop

(4) longing for God's word, commune with God, and spend his life praising God/walk in the light and not in darkness 《vv.8—12...》

2) Satan has asked to sift you as wheat <Luk 22:31>

(1) Satan prowls around like a roaring lion looking for the opportunity to attack you <1Pet 5:8>; he deceives, cheats, and accuses me day and night <Rev 12:10>

(2) Satan attacks us so that we will waver regarding the confirmed evidence of our salvation and our identity as children of God (calling his parents in as witnesses 《vv.18-23》)

(3) Satan changes God's word into the old way of the written code to bind us (religion 《vv.16,24-25,28-29》: tempting Jesus 《太 4:3-11》)

3) God's great blessings in sanctification

(1) blessing of preaching the gospel in season and out of season 《2Ti 4:2》: Within God's given context, “the

man who used to sit and beg” becomes famous overnight; he’s changed! Many of our brothers and sisters in this church has the same experienced. 在神所安排的环境中，

(2) God wants to train me through this so that I may know more of Jesus Christ’s **surpassing greatness**:

The process of the “**beggar’s growth** (the degree of knowing Jesus Christ— willing to accept the **Lord’s** calling to become his disciple):

- a. “the man they call Jesus” 《v.11》: before neighbors and acquaintances
- b. “he is a prophet” 《v.17》: before the anti-Christ
- c. “from God” 《v.33》: in face of persecution
- d. “the Son of Man” 《v.35》: face to face with God
- e. “Lord” 《v.38》: decision /confession of faith

What the brothers and sisters of this church have experienced: Mrs. Lei, Charlie, Rick, Xiaoxia, Susan and others

(3) Test and approve , obey and follow <Rom 12 : 1—2>: God’s **grace. With confirmed evidence** (of God’s **presence, help and blessing**), we can guard our hearts and mind, seek to discover God’s **good will in everything and obey, and face tomorrow with full confidence so that in this process we “may declare the praises of him who called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light”**.

4) Test and approve whether I am able to see now the blessings in everything that God has prepared for me: in my circumstances, my family, my spousal relationship, my church, and its members … (what we tested and approved during our bible studies last Friday)

3. “Lord, I believe”, and he worshipped him.

1) To worship God in truth and spirit

the building of personal altar: the faith rooted and of a solid base (God’s word, Jesus Christ, and the H.S.), looking for evidence of Emmanuel (that the Pharisees are not able to see)

worship, church and body of Christ: the focus and the center of our lives, fields of living; the work of Jesus Christ today. Of course the blind man has time alone with God, for he would not have experienced the growth described in Outline #2 (2) and (3). However, he does not lock himself in a (sometime still dark) room, praising loudly the light he has received; rather, he is compelled to go around, “declaring the praises of him who called him out of darkness into his wonderful light”. Otherwise, there would have been no need for us to waste time on John 9’s description focused on a blind man alone.

2) To pray in order to receive power

test and approve, follow and obey, ask and receive, intercede and receive blessings, trust and triumph, hope and rejoice (testimonies of Deacon Xiaoxia and Deacon Susan)

3) To pray in order to glorify God, gather his people, and establish his kingdom (Lord’s prayer)

God, may we lose no one who has come to this altar by your spirit! May not a single one of the prayers you want us to pray fail to be answered!

(There are plenty of specific examples.)

**** Concluding Remarks**

**** Prayer Topics of the Week ****

1. As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth: confirm once again that my salvation and regeneration are the work of God.

2. I was blind but now I see: Can I test and approve God's blessings in all of my conditions and circumstances (my family, my relationships with my spouse, church and its members) ? What are the blind spots in my life and living that need readjusting so that I can focus on Jesus Christ?

3. "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped him: Can I find specific examples of proof for living a daily life of more than that of a conquerors by prayers? What about the results we have for intercession (for our church, its members, the training of workers, the building up of disciples, the spreading of gospel and church planting) ?