

John 9:1-7

Every year lots of **surveys** are made for all kinds of different reasons. And since the people are chosen at **random**, perhaps at one time or another **you** have been chosen to participate in one of them. It might have been at a **shopping** mall, or perhaps on the **telephone**. Right **now** we're receiving a lot of surveys regarding the **presidential** candidates. Surveys deal with our **preferences** - preferences in **television** programming, in **restaurants** and fast **food** chains, in **politicians**, and even preferences in the way we **worship**. But the survey which I am interested in **today** asks the question, "What is your **favorite hymn**?" Among the hymns which were **added to** our current hymnal, Christian Worship, a couple of the favorites are "On Eagles' Wings" and "How Great Thou Art." A couple of **other** hymns from our hymnal, also make the top ten listing pretty **regularly** - like the **Reformation** classic, "A Mighty Fortress," and the ever **popular** "What A Friend We Have In Jesus." One of the hymns which **always** seems to make the **top ten** is the hymn which we just sang - "Amazing Grace." I think most of us would **agree** that this hymn beautifully expresses the **grace** - the undeserved **love** - which God pours out on us sinners. Although these words were written back in the **1700's** by the American author, John Newton, they could just as easily have been spoken by the man in our **text**, as he told about **his** life. **I Was Blind, But Now I See.**

Who **was** this man? Where did he **come** from? How **old** was he? These are questions to which we have no answers. All we know about the man was that he was **blind** - from **birth**. Just how Jesus' disciples **knew** this isn't certain either. Maybe they had known the man for a long time, maybe Jesus had **told** them about him, or maybe it was just **common knowledge** in Jerusalem. But can you put yourself in the place of this man? What would it be like **never** to have **seen** the wonders of God's creation - the people, the animals, and the birds - the world itself? What would it be like not to be able to tell the difference between red, blue, and yellow, because we had **never seen** any of those colors? Some of the **elderly** begin to **lose** their sight as the human body continually gets **weaker**. **Others** lose their sight much **earlier** in life through **disease**, or due to some unfortunate **accident**. But the man in our text had been **born** blind. His world had **always** been one of thick, black, darkness.

What was the **cause** of this man's blindness? How could God allow such a thing to happen to **anyone**? The disciples thought they had the answer. Certainly a condition as serious as **blindness** must have been a **punishment** from God for a certain **terrible** sin! Yet, since this man had been **born** blind, they weren't sure that it was a sin the man **himself** had committed. They speculated that perhaps his **parents** had committed some heinous crime, and now this poor man had to suffer

the **consequences**. But Jesus told them that the blindness was **not** caused by a specific sin. Rather, God had a **different** purpose in mind for allowing this man's disability. Jesus said, *"It was not that **this** man sinned, **or** his parents, but that **God's** works might be **revealed** in connection with him."* Through this blind man, **God** would show **His** glory.

But the blindness of **this** man is not our **only** concern, for **we** are **also** blind from birth - **spiritually** blind. King David wrote in Psalm 51, *"Certainly, I was **guilty** when I was **born**. I was **sinful** when my mother **conceived** me."* Yes, we were **all** born in the blindness of **sin** - blindness which causes us to wander **off** from the straight and narrow path which leads to **heaven**, and deeper and deeper into the **wilderness** of **sin**. Such sinful wandering doesn't have a good end. Paul told Timothy in his second letter, *"Evil people and impostors will go from **bad** to **worse**, **deceiving** and **being** **deceived**."* We saw the effects of sin in the lives of **Adam** and **Eve** in the Gospel reading a couple of weeks ago - effects which resulted in "original sin" for every **descendant** of Adam, including **us**.

But let's get back to the blind man in our **text**. Jesus said that the reason for **his** blindness was that the works of **God** might be **revealed** in him. That was accomplished when Jesus **cured** the man of his blindness. Think about the **timing** of this miracle. This man had been blind from the day of his **birth** - perhaps 40, 50, 60, or more years ago. But right on that very **Sabbath** day was the time which God had chosen to **remove** his blindness. Certainly Jesus was aware of the **questions** which would be raised in healing this man on the **Sabbath** day. Why couldn't it **wait**? What was the big **rush**? After all, the man had been blind all his **life**! Certainly one day more or less wouldn't make much difference.

But it **would** make a difference. Jesus knew there was an **urgency** here. He said, *"I must **do** the works of him who sent me while it is **day**. **Night** is coming, when no one **can** work."* Those of you who work **evenings** are probably raising your **eyebrows** a bit. What do you **mean** no one can work at night? The fact of the matter is that more and more companies have their people work **around the clock** - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - to get the **most** out of their capital investments, and just to try and stay a step **ahead** of their **competition**. So, what **did** Jesus mean when He said, *"Night is coming when no one **can** work"*? The **day** of which Jesus is speaking, is the day of **His** earthly **life** - and the **night**, is the night of **death**. The work of restoring this blind man's sight, to the glory of God the Father, had to be completed **soon**, because Jesus' **life** was quickly drawing to a **close**. There was a lot of religious **tension** in the air, and feelings were rising to a **feverish** pitch. The Jews had **already** tried to **stone** Jesus.

Jesus **did** the work of His Father, as the **opportunities** came up. He didn't leave it for **tomorrow**, or try to get someone **else** to do it **for** Him. As His **disciples**, we will strive to **follow** His example. Notice that the chosen 12 of Jesus were occupied with **analyzing** the situation. They asked the questions, "*How did this man get to be born blind? Who **sinned**, this **man** or his **parents**?*" While we must recognize that asking questions and analyzing situations **can** be very **valuable**, we must **not** let these analyses draw out for too **long**. Jesus was a man of **action**, and we **too** must get on with **doing** the deeds which the LORD has placed before us. After all, time is running **short**. We never **know** how soon **death** will come upon us, and at that point, our opportunity to **help** do the work of the LORD will be **over**.

Jesus didn't delay. He **immediately** went about accomplishing His miraculous **cure**. After mixing some spittle with some dust, He took the mud and smeared it on the eyes of the blind man. Did Jesus know something about the healing qualities of **mud** which even the **doctors** didn't know? Or perhaps would the man be cured because Jesus had **applied** the mud in a certain **way**? I don't think so. When the Prophet **Elisha** told the Syrian general, Naaman, that his **leprosy** would be cured if he would wash seven times in the Jordan River, he wasn't implying that the **water** in the Jordan was more **healthful** than the clean, clear spring-water of **Syria**. Nor was he advocating that exactly seven **applications** of this water was what gave it its healing powers. Elisha knew that the healing would be completed by the power of the **LORD**. And **we** know that the blind man in our text was **cured**, only through the power of **Jesus**. No elaborate ceremony was necessary. This was simply the manner which Jesus had **chosen** to use to **heal** him.

At any rate, when the mud had been applied to the man's eyes Jesus said, "*Go, wash in the pool of **Siloam**.*" John here supplies some information on the **side**, which is quite **significant**. He tells us that the word **Siloam** means "**sent**." The reason that place had **received** this name is that many years **earlier** in Israel's history, these waters had been **outside** of Jerusalem's walls. But, King **Hezekiah** had ordered a secret **tunnel** to be dug, in order to **send** these waters **into** the city. That way there would be a **continuous** water supply, even when Jerusalem was under attack. This ancient water tunnel still exists **today**.

But on a more important note, Jesus was now **sending** the blind man to have his **blindness** cured, at the **waters** which were **sent**. In a very similar way, He sends **us** to have our **spiritual** blindness cured, by the One who was **sent** from **heaven** to save sinners. Jesus directs us to **Himself**. There we can find the cure for **all** our problems, and it's important for us to remember that Jesus is not **just** for **adults**. God

wants us to send our **children** to Jesus too - through **all** of the Christian educational agencies which we have **available** to us. There they will receive the **instruction** in God's Word which will provide them with **strength** for their faith, and **guidance** for their lives, as they battle the **powerful** and **crafty** enemies of our Lord Jesus.

Even though that battle is frequently **difficult**, we need not despair, because help is **always** readily available. Jesus said, "*As long as I am in the world, I am the **Light of the World.***" How long would **that** be? Jesus has given us **that** answer too. He said, "*Surely I am with you **always**, until the **end** of the age.*" Jesus is **always** with us, offering that **Amazing Grace** - that perfect love which none of us deserve. As He gave light to the **body** of the blind man in our **text**, Jesus has also given light to our **souls**. He has removed from our eyes the scales of **sin**, by sacrificing His own life for us on the cross. Therefore, as **redeemed** sinners, people who have been **released** from the power of sin and Satan, people who see **clearly** the way of salvation, we too can sing the words of that hymn which is a **favorite** to so many. "*Amazing grace! How **sweet** the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was **lost**, but now am **found**; was **blind**, but now I see.*" Amen.