

From Dust to Dawn - John 9:1-7

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[0:00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast. I will walk by faith and not by sight.

Well, good morning everybody. Welcome to Calvary Chapel Charlotte. Oh, what a beautiful morning. Not quite as humid. Praise God. You can turn to John chapter 9.

That's where we'll be this morning as we continue line by line, verse by verse, through the gospel of John up to chapter 9. We're actually ahead of schedule. We've been doing, it's just turned out that way.

We've done about a chapter a month and we're in the eighth month starting the ninth chapter. So, you know, it's just, man, as the Lord leads us through the text, right?

Man, John 8 was so good. It took a while to get through. It was so good. It felt like a book contained to itself. It felt like its own thing. And what a blessing it was to go through it.

[1:39] You know, we've seen, as we've been going through scripture, we saw in John 7 where Jesus declares he's the living water, that if any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink, for out of his innermost being will flow forth, gush forth torrents of living water.

And then we saw a picture of that. And we got into the beginning of the beginning of John 8. We saw this woman caught in adultery. And we saw this picture of Jesus as the source of satisfaction and salvation.

John put in front of us with this woman where she had not found what she was looking for. And she turned to Jesus and said, well, no man condemns me, Lord, but what about you?

And he said, go and sin no more. And Jesus proved himself the source of satisfaction and salvation. And John 8 in verse 12, we saw as the beginning kind of that section of looking at Jesus as the light of the world, where he finished up interacting with the Pharisees over the woman caught in adultery.

And then he makes that statement, I am the light of the world. He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. And we're going to see now, as he's gone through all of chapter 8, kind of showing that.

[2:46] We looked at that. He's the true light, which gives the true witness of the true way and the true work and the true father and the true life and the true legacy of God for the true followers who live in true freedom.

And as we get into now the beginning of John chapter 9, we're going to see an example of that. We're going to see with this, that Jesus is the light of the world. He's the source of light and life. And he's going to now, John's going to put in front of us, the Holy Spirit's going to put in front of us this beautiful picture of that, where Jesus is going to interact with this man who has no source of light and no source of spiritual life.

I see a lot of themes today. We're going to continue the theme of light, of light and dark. In other words, the contrast between the two being spiritual life, spiritual light in Christ and that which is not, and everything else then would be dark.

Grace, as God's grace continues to be put in front of us. Suffering. We see suffering, washing, sight. We're going to see dust, dust of the earth.

The Bible has a lot to say about dust. It's very interesting. We're going to see how Jesus takes us from dust to dawn. God can do more with dust than we could ever imagine, can't he?

[4:03] God can do an awful lot with dust. Ecclesiastes 3:20 says, All go unto one place. All are of the dust and all turn to dust again. Dust, dirt, the substance this earth is made of.

You know, meteorites and space rocks that come crashing to the earth, they're made up of the same four basic elements. The DNA is made of, that dust is made of.

It's like the whole universe somehow got contaminated with this stuff. God made it all out of the same substance. God can do more with dust than we could ever imagine. I was looking for some quotes on dust.

There's not a lot of them out there outside the Bible. I thought this one was interesting. Dust settles. I don't. Guys, if you don't know what that is, ask your wives.

They'll tell you. Ladies, here's one for you. You come from dust and you'll return to dust. That's why I don't dust. It could be someone I know. So, not a lot of good quotes out there on dust outside the Bible.

[5:05] Genesis 2.7, maybe the best quote. The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

God can do a lot with dust. Isaiah 40.12. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out the heavens with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountain in scales, and the hills in a balance, describing God's complete understanding of his creation.

Who can comprehend the dust of the earth? That includes us, guys, because we're from dust. Who can comprehend the heart of man? God can. Only God can. And so Jesus here, as we jump into verse one, remember, he has been in the temple after the Feast of Tabernacles.

It's ended. The great day of the feast is over, which was when he said, if any man thirst, let him come unto me. And they had those four giant pillars that were lit all throughout the feast days, and they've now been put out.

And Jesus says, I am the light of the world, as he's using these pictures. We know he was teaching in the, what's called the treasury, or the court of the women, which most likely he was in this large open area.

[6:20] There was these porticoes that he was probably underneath one of these areas, perhaps teaching there. That's when they bring the woman caught in adultery, throw him at his feet. And then he continues on after that to teach, and to teach the people, and interact with the Pharisees primarily, regarding all of their, I would say questions, but their doubt about him.

It's amazing how Jesus used someone else's doubt to teach the people all around him truth. The Pharisees are standing there in unbelief, and Jesus is like, all right, we can do this. And think of the people standing there, and the richness of what they received.

And it says at the end of verse, or chapter eight, I'm sorry, they're questioning that Jesus, could he have known Abraham? He says, truly, truly, I say unto you before, Abraham was, I am, or I am God. He is the I am. And then they took up stones to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. It says he passed by.

And how sad that the light of the world, how sad that the one who's living water, they allowed him just to pass by, just to let him go. And then we pick up here in the beginning of chapter nine.

[7:32] And it says, and as Jesus passed by, heading where? Out of the temple. He saw a man which was blind from his birth. Jesus passed by.

He passed by who? Well, he passed by those who thought they were without sin. He stops and sees the man who's born blind, but he had passed by who? The Pharisees. They're the ones who think they don't have sin.

Those are the ones he passed by. Remember in John eight, verse seven, when they continue to pressure him about this woman caught in adultery, and Jesus is bent down, writing in the dirt, completely turning away the shame of this woman, minimizing her shame, doing everything he can. And they pressure him. So he stands up and says, he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone. And so here we see again, they're picking up stones to stone him. Him having just said, if you're without sin, cast the first stone.

So they're in effect saying, we don't have sin, Jesus. You do, and we're going to stone you. So Jesus is passing by those. They didn't think they had sin. The Pharisees said, that's not us.

[8:36] They had no need of Jesus's services, did they? Because Jesus said, they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

I believe it's at the end of verse of chapter nine. We'll get there eventually. Jesus says to the Pharisees, if you were blind, you should have no sin.

But now you say, we see, therefore your sin remains. He said, you don't need me. You don't need me to open your eyes because you say your eyes are already open, but your eyes are actually closed the fact of your need for me.

So the Pharisees had no need of Jesus's services. So he turns to one who did. Jesus for all intents and purposes is running for his life, but not really because it's Jesus and no man takes his life from him, but they're going to kill him.

And so he just passes on out. And as he's running for his life or walking away, he stops. He stops to notice a man who has no ability to notice him. He stops to see a man who has no ability to see him. [9 : 39] And where is this? Well, we know from the end of chapter eight, it told us that he went out through the midst and he went out of the temple. And then it says, as he passed by. So was he in the temple or out of the temple?

And my guess was, if you remember, when we looked at that 3D rendering, how you would go up to the temple mount, you would come in one of these gates, you would ascend the stairs and you'd be up on the temple mount.

But those with infirmities were considered unfit. We're not generally allowed onto the temple mount. We're going to see the disciples. They're going to ask Jesus about this man if his infirmity is due to his sin.

So he's a sinner. The Pharisees, they go to the temple mount because they don't have sin. But this man's a sinner. And if you were blind and since birth and you need to make a living and you needed to beg, where would you do it?

Would you do it on a country road or would you do it at an intersection? Probably at an intersection. So Jesus stops and notices this man. And you picture this man to the side of this gate, maybe begging him.

[10 : 40] Jesus, all the people coming and going. And Jesus just stops and sees him. How many times had this blind man been passed by before this? How many people were just as blind to him as he was to them?

He had just become a fixture, something that's there. He was unseen, perhaps. In a place of worship. It's the temple. It's the place of worship.

And perhaps this man, unseen, just passed by. Unseen by those who came to worship. But not unseen by the one who was worthy of worship, was he?

He saw him. Jesus stops. A man who could not see Jesus, but Jesus could see him. This man had no idea how near he was to Jesus and now how near he was to seeing an end to his infirmity. No idea what Jesus was going to do. Blind from birth, it says. This man was blind from his birth. Physically born. Physically born with the inability to see Jesus in the flesh, wasn't he?

[11 : 46] But unless he was born again of the Spirit, he would never have spiritualized to see Jesus in his kingdom, would he? According to John 3, 3, Jesus says, Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

What does it matter if he has physical eyes to see? What does it matter if Jesus healed his physical eyes? What does it matter if he has the best eyesight in the world? Listen, guys, I've had good eyesight.

I've been blessed my whole life with good eyesight. I still have good distance, but I can't see anything up close anymore. I'm like this close to having to wear glasses up here. I'm holding off as long as I can. I can see the iPad, but the Bible's a little hard sometimes.

Things that I could re-hear now have to be here. It's like, what happened? I think it's an attack. It must be an attack of age. What does it matter?

What does it matter how physically apt we are if we don't have these spiritual eyes to see? You see, men born of dust must also be born of spirit if they wish to live beyond dust.

[12 : 49] The life that we have here, it eventually goes to dust. Everything goes to dust. This idea that men born of dust can have a life beyond dust.

We see that even in the Old Testament, even in some of the earliest writings of the Old Testament. In Job chapter 19, if you want, you can turn there with me, or I'll just put it on the screen and we can look at it.

But it's interesting to look at. Job 19, verses 25 through 27. Job says, for I know that my Redeemer lives and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, he says, hey, this is going to go back to dust. Yet in my flesh I shall see God whom I shall see for myself.

My eyes shall behold him and not another. Job has this assurance that this body of dust will be raised to see. What's really awesome about this scripture, in verse 25, the translation to English, maybe, I mean, it fits.

[13 : 55] Is the Redeemer going to stand at the latter days upon the earth? He is. Jesus will return and Zachariah tells us that he will stand upon the Mount of Olives and it will split north and south and the water that will flow from under the temple, the threshold of the temple, will go down and cleanse the Dead Sea bringing life and then cleanse the world and then Jesus will establish the kingdom, the kingdom Adam lost and Jesus will establish and he will establish what should have been the reign of righteousness.

Sin will be there, yes, but ruling and righteousness. So Jesus will stand at the latter day upon the earth. But I think the literal translation in the Hebrew gives us a different sense that I think fits the text a little better because earth can be translated dust.

Verse 25, For I know my Redeemer, the living and the last, for the dust he does raise. Job had that assurance and it fits because he says, Next, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, my eyes shall behold and not another, because my Redeemer, the living and the last, he raises the dust.

God can do so much more with dust than we could ever imagine. Daniel tells us in Daniel 12, verse 2, Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel's being given a picture of the great white throne judgment at the end of the age, the end of time of this present heaven and earth. Some will arise from the dust to everlasting life, some to shame and contempt.

[15 : 30] Men born of dust must also be born of the spirit if they wish to see life beyond dust. Which is more important, church, physical seeing, physical eyes or spiritual eyes?

Which is more important in our present condition? Which is more important for the man born blind? That Jesus heal him? That Jesus save him? And the disciples, they must have seen Jesus looking. You know, they're like looking over their shoulders. Are they going to follow us? Are they going to stone us? Man, Jesus puts us in some difficult situations. But he also gets us out of them. And they notice Jesus stops and looks at this man.

And so in a moment of what they must have thought was very spiritual insight, they said, well, master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Like, guys, he's not deaf. He's just blind. I hope they're standing a little ways away from him when they're saying this. How many times has he heard this before? It's your fault. It's your fault.

[16 : 33] You're in this situation. You know, you wouldn't be blind if you didn't sin in your mother's womb was the belief. That somehow he had a precognizant sin or maybe your mother sinned and it's being passed on to you.

How many times has he heard this is your fault? If you had enough faith, who sinned? That was the thought process at this time among the Jews. Why was it that?

Because they had made righteousness. Righteousness became something that was closely linked with how you were doing physically, financially, how things were going in your life.

Clearly, if God has favor upon you, well, then you're going to have a life that's favored. Sin is the cause of our brokenness. Absolutely. But brokenness is not ever the punishment for sin.

We are a broken people. We are filled with infirmities and frailties. Yes, is sin the cause? Absolutely. We are under the curse.

[17 : 39] We are fallen. But brokenness is not the punishment for sin. And again, we're going to quote this all the way to the end of John, John 3, 17.

For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world. But the world through him might be saved. We could say God sent not his son into the world to punish them for their brokenness.

But that through them they might be whole. But through him they might be whole. It's easier though. It's easier to blame someone for their brokenness than to help them in their brokenness.

So much easier to blame them for brokenness than actually like get in there and help them with that brokenness. Why? Why do we pull back from that? Well first, because if I'm going to help someone in their brokenness, I'm going to have to accept my own brokenness.

In Matthew 7, Jesus says, why do you behold the mote, the little sliver in your brother's eye, but consider not the beam that's in your own. All right? Dude, I told you to wear the safety glasses when you're running the chainsaw.

[18:44] Now look, you're going to lose your eye. You know what? That's what's going to happen. It's your fault. Well, could you help me get this out? Can you get some water? Right? And one guy's off running the water to get the water and like, how can I help?

And the other one's standing there going, now if you had done this and you shouldn't have done this and which one's helpful in that situation? You see, it's easier to blame because I have to accept my own brokenness.

Oh, I'm judging you for the mote in your eye and here I've got this beam in mine. And I also have to accept my obligation to brokenness. Galatians 6, 2, bear you one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Whoa, I thought we're not under a law. We are under a law. It's the law of the spirit which is the law of love. Oh, no man anything but to love one another for he that loves has fulfilled the law. Well, how am I going to bear this person's burden?

What do I do with it? You bear it to Christ. You bring it to Jesus. Well, it's their fault that they're in that situation. It's their fault they can't get to Jesus.

[19:44] Well, then help them. You see, it's easier to blame than to bear. Well, perhaps, like the disciples are saying here, maybe it was this guy's parents.

Maybe this man was predestined to blindness by his parents' choices. We should never attempt to see circumstances outside of what we see in God's word.

Never attempt to look at circumstances outside of what God's word clearly says. Well, maybe, maybe he was just predestinated to this.

Maybe God planned this. You know, maybe some people, God just said, I'm going to save you. You, I'm not. I'm going to heal you and you, I'm not. Is that how God works? Romans 8, verse 28, verses 28 through 30.

Paul writes, and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Praise God. To them who are called according to his purpose. We skip down to the end of verse 30.

[20:48] He says, and whom he called, he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified. That sounds great. I want that. That all things work together for them, good to them that love God.

I love God. To them who are called according to his purpose. Am I called according to his purpose? How do I know? Because we're told here that those who are called, he justifies. Those who are justified, he glorifies.

Boy, I want to be part of that. Well, thankfully, the scripture tells us here. Paul tells us in the middle of this how that happens. He says, you see that all things will work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow. Foreknow what? He foreknew that you would be a lover of God. God knew ahead of time that I looked down through history and said, oh, he'll be a lover of God and she'll be a lover of God.

I know that they will be lovers of God. Therefore, I have predetermined for them a destiny. That's all predestination is. A predetermined destiny. God is a predetermined destiny for every lover of God.

[21:52] To do what? Be conformed to the image of his son. Oh, I can see that. I can see that. Joe and Laura and Sue and Cynthia and Methuselah, I can see that you are going to be lovers of God.

I'm going to predetermine for you a destiny. I'm going to conform you to the image of my son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, then them he also called.

According to what? According to his purposes to justify and to glorify them. Man, we will be justified and glorified based on what? That we are lovers of God.

So we don't look at circumstances and see them based in anything other than God's word. We anchor ourselves in God's word or we can end up looking at someone and going, it's your fault. You shouldn't have done that. Or perhaps, well, you know what? And maybe it's God's will. And I know, I know what we mean when we say that. But hey, you know what? What we're trying to say is, I don't know why God's allowing this.

[22:53] But he loves you and he's gracious and he will work all things together for you, for your good through this as a lover of God. But I think sometimes we are quick to pass off someone's burden, someone's hurt, someone's infirmity and someone's need is something that's just not mine to deal with.

Jesus answered. Jesus' word, the word of God always gives the correct perspective. Neither has this man sinned nor his parents.

Doesn't mean they never sinned. He's saying, but their sin was not the cause of this. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him. And Ezekiel, at that time in Ezekiel's days he's prophesying to Israel.

The belief was also that sin could be passed on through inheritance. Through your heredity. I'm never going to be able to say that word correctly. And so, the Lord through Ezekiel, he says, the saying at the time was, does not the son bear the iniquity of the father?

Like, oh, you know, I can see what's happening in your life. Does not the son bear the iniquity of the father, like father like son, you know, essentially. In Ezekiel, the Lord is instructed to, by Ezekiel, the Lord is instructing Ezekiel to say to the people, when the son has done that which is lawful and right, and has kept all my statutes and has done them, he shall surely live.

[24:23] Pair that with Romans, guys. That he desired for us to be conformed to the image of a son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. As a son, if you do that which is right and lawful and keep his statutes, you shall surely live.

What is it to do that which is right and lawful and keep his statutes? What is the work of God that you might believe, that you might believe, be a lover of God? The soul that sins it shall die.

The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.

The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. And if we kept reading, we'd get to that wonderful verse where he says that he's not willing that he should perish.

He was not willing for the wicked that they should perish but that they should turn. Be careful, be very careful not to attribute wrong to those who are suffering wrong.

It's our human nature. Human nature is to attribute wrong to those who suffer wrong. Why?

Because we know who we are. We know we're fallen.

[25:28] We know we're broken. We know we have sin. We know the consequences of our sin and we think, well, therefore, all the wrong in my life, so we apply that to someone else. What does God see?

Jesus says, this man's brokenness is an opportunity for grace. That the works of God should be manifest. The brokenness of man, it makes the works of God apparent.

My brokenness and your brokenness gives God an opportunity to show his work and what is his work? Grace. It's grace. What are we broken by? We're broken by sin, by sorrow, and by sickness. And what is God's work of grace? Grace. God's work of grace is to bring sight to the blind, light to the dark, life to the dead, and wholeness to the broken.

That's his work. Physically? Not always. Not always. His work of grace may be to bring sight to the spiritually blind, spiritual light to the spiritually dark, spiritual life to the spiritually dead, and spiritual wholeness to the broken.

[26:34] Not always physically. Romans 8.18, Paul writes, for I reckon, Southern saying there, it's in financial terms, it means, I consider it so.

Kind of like when Jesus says, it is finished. I reckon, I consider this so, that the sufferings of this present time, they're not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

And when we go back, if we go back to Romans 8, when does glorification happen? It's the last step in that process. The sufferings of this present time, it's not worthy to be compared.

When we, who are lovers of God, who God foreknew and has given us a predetermined destiny to be his sons, to be his heirs, to be justified, to be glorified, in that day, when we stand there, we're not going to go, boy, I wish I didn't suffer back in that vapor of a lifespan.

And it bore all this fruit in my life that God was able to work. 2 Corinthians chapter 12, if you want to turn there, you can. It's too much to put on the screen, I'm just going to read it.

[27:41] Paul gives us some insight into this idea of suffering and glory working together. 2 Corinthians 12, beginning in verse 7, Paul is writing about a situation in where he was suffering.

He didn't know why. And so he goes to the Lord and at some point the Lord tells him this. He says he prays three times that this suffering might be removed and at some point the Lord explains all of what's going on here.

He says, lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations that has given me a thorn in the flesh. Excuse me. Not only suffering, he says, but the messenger of Satan to buffet me.

Lest I should be exalted above measure. God, why is this happening in my life? Why is this going on? And Paul realizes, oh, it's so that I might know that the excellency is of God and not of me. That your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

And the Lord knew Paul, his tendency would be in his flesh to think, man, things are going really well. Truly, truly, God is using me and it must be because of some excellency in me.

[28:53] It must be something I've done. Nope. Instead, Paul's going, Lord, you can't be using me still because something's going on in my life and I can't get it out of my life. I want it to be gone and I can't get rid of it.

For this thing, I besought the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And it wasn't like, dear Lord, make it go away. Dear Lord, make it go away. Dear Lord, well, it didn't go anywhere. No. You know, Paul was like praying and fasting and Lord, what is going on?

And the Lord said unto me, Paul, it doesn't say that in the text, but Paul, my son, lover of God, my grace is sufficient for you.

What is the work that God does? What is the work that God manifests through the brokenness of man? Grace. My grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect, perfect, whole, complete, that which does not lack in weakness.

Most gladly, therefore, Paul says, I'll rather glory in my infirmities. Who does not want God's strength completed in their life? Who does not want the fullness of God's strength in their life? Well, I don't really want that if it means I have to have some suffering.

[30:02] I don't really want that if it means that I have to engage the enemy because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. I don't know if I want that.

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

You're not going to find rest anywhere else, outside of God's power, outside of God's grace.

You're not going to find it. There is no natural state we can be in where we can remove suffering that can replace the power of God in our life, which is what? His grace.

Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches and necessities and persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake. Paul says, I realize what this is all for now.

[31:03] I realize what this does in my life. I realize this is all for Jesus' sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul puts it then in the first person. It's no longer just Christ's strength. He says, I realize I am strong. That God's strength in me allows me to be something I could never be.

You see, God's grace turns pain into progress and suffering into sanctification. There is no pain that will not find its remedy in Christ, even if that remedy is not fully experienced until glorification, until after the dust settles, or maybe until after the dust rises.

Right? Jesus says, I must work the works of him that sent me. While it is day, the night comes when no man can work. As long as I am, there's another, I am the light of the world.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Again, he's standing here near this man born blind, talking to his disciples about this. I picture that they're probably not right next to him.

[32:19] I imagine all the people going out, they're standing looking at him and they're talking and he's saying to his disciples, guys, I gotta work the works of day. There's a work I have to do. Jesus, they wanna kill us, okay? Maybe they're coming behind us and you're stopping to pay attention to a man that nobody cares about.

Nobody sees him, Jesus. None of us have seen him. For years he's been here, he's fine. It's probably his fault that he's in this condition. And Jesus stops and he says, no, I see him because this is part of the work I've been sent to do.

What works? Who sent him? What works? I think we could answer that because we've been going through John. But John the Baptist asks the same question when he was in prison. In Luke chapter 7, John asks by sending his disciples to Jesus, are you he that should come or do we look for another?

And in the same hour, Jesus cured many of their infirmities and plagues and evil spirits. And unto many that were blind he gave sight and then said Jesus unto them, go your way and tell John what you've seen and heard.

The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear. The dead are raised. To the poor the gospel is preached. Isaiah 42, 6-7 I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and will hold thine hand and will keep thee and I will give thee for covenant of the people for a light of the Gentiles to open the blind eyes to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

[33:50] Who is this? Who sent him? And what works? The works of God's anointed. You see, Jesus can do more with dust than we could ever imagine.

And Jesus says these works that he must do to open the blind eyes to bring out the prisoners he says, I have to do this while I have time. Now Jesus, don't you have all the time?

Isn't it all yours? Jesus who created time has constrained himself to time and he's not going to waste any of it, does he? We might look at that with our natural understanding and go, well, you had 30 years on this earth, 30 some years.

You only had three years of ministry? Seems like a waste of time. It wasn't a waste of time. Jesus' time of preparation for his ministry was just as needful a time as it was to operate in the fullness of that ministry.

This man sat here for years since he was born. He's been blind. What a waste. It wasn't a waste. It was not a waste. He was being prepared for something amazing. Jesus physically present in the world, spiritual day.

[35:08] Jesus physically absent, spiritual night. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. I must work the works of him that sent me while it's day. The night comes when no man can work. There's no man who can operate in the night, but God can.

When Jesus leaves this world, who will be left to be the light? I wonder. Who's the light of the world now that Jesus has physically left this world?

Matthew 5, 14. You and me. We're the light of the world. Whoa! No man can claim that. Can you claim that on your own? I'm the light of the world? There's plenty of people that have done it. There's plenty of people who said, oh, I'm the next spiritual thing. I'm the next guru. I'm the next whatever. No man has light. No man on his own is a source of light, a spiritual light in life.

In Jesus' absence, we've been given the privilege of continuing the works of the Father during the spiritually dark night. And what are those works? Grace and light.

[36:13] Romans 13, 11 through 12. And that knowing the time, understanding the time we live in, times and seasons we are in, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.

For now is our deliverance nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.

Another place in the scripture tells us we are children of light. We are children of the day. And yet we are in a season of darkness. We are the ones with light. It is not light around us.

It's very dark. Wake up. Don't be sleeping during this time. There's a job to do. Our deliverance is nearer than when we believed. Paul and all the writers of the New Testament expected the imminent return of Christ and it motivated them.

The night is far spent. The day is at hand. There's not a lot of time left. Let us put on the armor of light. Let us be armed and armored with the word of light.

[37:19] 2 Peter 1.19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy. More than our experiences, more than miracles, we have God's word. We are armored and armed with the word.

Whereunto you do well that you take heed in your hearts as unto a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise. How are we lights in this world?

How do we go forth and be a light now that Jesus is no longer here as the physical presence of the light of the world? We are as his body, his spiritual body. How do we do that? We take the word of light.

We shine it in a dark place and we do that when and for how long? We do that until the day dawn and the day star arise. The day star.

The day star was the star or the morning star that comes before the dawn. It's actually the planet Venus but they would call it the day star, the morning star and it gets darkest before dawn and the day star then rises and it comes first and you know the dawn is near.

[38:22] The night will not last forever. A new day will dawn. Jesus will once again return physically to this earth and once again it will be spiritually bright with his presence. That day is coming.

However, before that day dawns, the day star arises. Revelation 22, 16. I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.

I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star. You see, when the day star arises in the sky, appears in the sky, then so do we.

1 Thessalonians 4. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep, which are asleep in the dust.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first and they shall meet this morning star and then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[39:32] Revelation 2, 25. But that which you have already, hold fast till I come. And he that overcomes and keeps my works unto the end, 1 John tells us this is what overcomes the world, even our faith.

He that overcomes keeps my works unto the end. What works are we doing here in this world to the end? Grace with God's word of light and life. I will give him the morning star.

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. This is God's word to the church. Before the day dawn, it will be very dark. Brief season of darkness where God will restore and redeem the nation of Israel where he will judge this world.

Less than two terms of a president, guys. About seven years. But before that, the day star arises and so do we. As long as Jesus is in the world, he is the light of the world.

We now are tasked with that. We now are the ones who take forth the word of light into this dark season of night. But we do that with the hope that the day star will arise and so will we.

[40:43] And when he had thus spoken, been kind of nice just to end there almost, or just then he healed him. And when he had spoken, who was he speaking to? The disciples. I don't know.

Let's just hypothesize for a second. Maybe he heard him, maybe he didn't. I like to think the blind man didn't hear him at all. He was just sitting there. And the next thing you know, he feels... When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

Ew. Jesus. This happens two other times where Jesus uses spittle. Mark 7.33 and Mark 8.23. Time when a man is born deaf and dumb.

He does it. And another time when a man is blind. Now, through the commentaries, it was... There was a kind of a tradition at this time that the spit of, like, certain people, the well, you know, righteous people or whatever supposedly thought could be beneficial.

I don't know. It seems kind of foolish. I don't know why he did it. But this is where I'm going with it. There's a lot of things that Jesus does and God does that seems foolish to me.

[41:58] But he's doing them so they're not foolish. It means my perspective needs changing. 1 Corinthians 1.21. For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God.

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. I've met them. I've had them talk to me. I've had them try and convince me to do other things other than preach.

Well, what we need is, we need groups. We need discussion groups and we need activities and we need, foolishness is preaching. I mean, foolishness is, the preaching is foolishness. Don't do that.

They've done studies that show 90% of the people forget 90% of what they heard 90% of the time. Right? I'm not counting on you to have the capacity to remember everything that's said.

This is spiritual work. This is a work of God in our hearts. But when the word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, it cuts deep, I don't, I can't quantify or qualify that. I can't leave and be like, well, you know what?

[42:55] I think God did this, this, and this in my life. I generally don't know what he's doing exactly until much later that I look back and I realize, God, you did that so quietly and so graciously.

Jesus, this is what I know. Jesus can do more with dust than we could ever imagine. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions for us. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him, pities them that fear him.

For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. Has he not done so much more with dust than you could ever imagine? Has he not done so much more with you than you could have ever imagined?

He's removed your sin as far as the east is from the west. His mercy, which is so great towards you, could you have ever imagined he'd be your father? You are dust. And so am I.

[43:55] And he's our father. For we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

Don't try and turn it into something else. Don't try and put a nice glaze on it and make it seem like it's something other than what it is. We're just a bunch of crackpots.

As Lord over dust, what is Jesus doing here? As Lord over dust, he's working a new creation. The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. He is Lord over the dust and he is doing a new creation.

And he says to the man, go and wash in the pool of Salome. And the text tells us, thankfully, what does it mean? Which is by interpretation sent. And he went his way, therefore, and washed and came seeing.

Has he met Jesus before? He'd not met Jesus. Did he know who was doing this in that moment? We're going to find out no because they're eventually going to ask him, who did this to you? I don't know. But he that made me see told me, go wash, and I came seeing.

[45:00] He that commanded me to go. He didn't know who he was. He's now filthy. And yet, neither this man's infirmity or his sin kept Jesus from seeing him, from coming to him, from speaking to him, from touching him, from sending him.

What was this man's part? You see, Jesus could do all those things. Jesus could see him and he could come to him and he can speak to him and he can touch him and he can send him and say, go, go.

And this man's part was to do what? He had to obey. He had to obey. What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Believe on him who he sent.

You see, the word had spoken, the word had touched, the word had sent, but it was completely ineffective without faith. When the word comes to our heart, like the peril of the sower, what is the soil it finds?

If it finds a hard heart, it hits and it's completely ineffective without faith. Then the enemy takes it away. What kind of response am I going to have to the word?

[46:09] You know, Jesus, this seems in a sense like Jesus has taken the time and it's a lot of trouble like out of his busy schedule or that he's done this for this man. Imagine if the man just was like, God, what are you doing?

No, this is crazy. What has Jesus done for us? He didn't just stop and anoint us with clay. He's anointed us with his blood. He went to the cross for you and I.

He's given us of his spirit. He's spoken, he's touched, he's sent, but without faith it is impossible to please him. Faith is a substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith, essentially, is the response of obedience to the love of God. What is faith in my life? It's a response of obedience to God's love. God's love, what is the response?

If I don't respond in obedience, I can't call it faith. Oh, I have faith. I have faith. Are you following the Lord? Are you doing what he says? Are you trusting him? Well, but I believe I have faith.

[47:13] This man was born blind and he lived blind. And while he was blind, still, he believed and obeyed. He's not yet been healed. He believed while blind.

He obeyed while blind. He walked by faith with spiritual eyes covered with the filth of this world. And he's not yet been healed. At this point, who is more blind?

The Pharisees or this man? He was walking blind and yet, who is he following? I am the light of the world. He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

He was obeying the word, following the word, without having yet received the healing. Who's more blind? The Pharisees or this man who's trying to find someone to get him to the pool of Siloam covered in mud and spit?

Yeah. How willing are we to enter into someone's infirmity with them? Ooh. I bet they did that. I bet that that's their fault.

[48:16] They're like that. They're a mess because they're a mess because Jesus just touched their life. And they need someone to help them. Personally, how long am I willing to walk by faith in my infirmity?

This man had to walk by faith in his infirmity. How long am I going to walk by faith in my infirmity? Lord, I expected the healing by now. Being confident of this very thing that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

And that wording is not such that it's like he'll keep performing it until that day. It is, he will perform it at the day of Jesus Christ. It will be finished. He will complete it. Jesus, the sent one, has sent this blind and filthy man to a place of washing, of healing, and of seeing as he sent him to the pool. Look what God's word has given this man. Look what faith in the word as he's armed and armored himself with the word has given him a walk. It's going to give him a washing, a healing, a seeing, and next week we'll find out a witness.

All of that as he walked blindly. Your faith is blind. No, I'm blind, but I see by faith. My faith is not blind. Hebrews 2, verses 9 through 11 says, But we see Jesus, who is made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.

[49:46] The servant's not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they'll persecute you also. If Jesus was willing to go to suffering for the purpose and cause of glory and honor, am I willing to endure the suffering for the glory that shall be revealed?

That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

guys, if we're following the captain, if we also are one of the sons and a brother of Christ, we should expect to go the same way.

We should expect the suffering. For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all one for which cause he's not ashamed to call them brethren.

You see, Jesus is neither ashamed of our infirmities and nor is he overcome by them. He's not ashamed of them. He doesn't look at you or me and go, hmm. Remember at the pool of Bethesda, the man that was lame.

[51:00] After Jesus healed him, he said to him, go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you. Recognizing that his sin did lead to his issue, but not blaming him and condemning him, saying, well, I'm sorry, it's your fault.

You've removed yourself from grace now. We're never too far. Jesus is not ashamed of our infirmities, self-imposed or afflicted by others or the fact that I'm just broken.

He's not overcome by them either. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

I don't know what your infirmity is, but I know you have one. You wouldn't be here otherwise. You'd be out at the church of the Pharisees. I don't have infirmities. I don't have sin. I'm fine. We're here because we know that we have a need because of our brokenness.

But he was in all points tempted or tested or tried just as we were yet without sin. And he didn't turn around and go, well, I didn't sin. Too bad for you. He turned around and said, guys, I know exactly what you're going through and I have the remedy.

[52:10] I overcame it. Your sin and your infirmity, I'm not ashamed of it. I entered into it and I overcame it. Let us, therefore, come boldly under the throne of grace, the work of God that Jesus is here to do, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

That's what we're going to do. You know, we joke and say that we don't do altar calls. We do throne calls. We come to the throne of grace. And it says that Jesus, with the blood of the everlasting covenant, he went into heaven and cleansed the tabernacle there.

Why did it need cleansing? Because that was where the seat of the fall started. It's where Satan rebelled. And there Jesus is. And as we come to the table, as we come to communion, we're coming to the throne of grace.

Perhaps this morning, you have no idea how near Jesus is to you. Maybe you don't realize that there's an end to your infirmity.

Or maybe you don't realize the grace and the strength that God wants to show through your infirmity. God has done more with dust than we could have ever imagined.

[53:27] And he still has so much more to do and to raise. Isaiah 26, 19, thy dead men shall live. Together with my body shall they arise, awake and seeing you that dwell in dust.

For your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Every man after his own order, Christ the first fruits. Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Whatever your infirmity this morning, it cannot stop Jesus from coming to you. It cannot stop Jesus from coming. It cannot stop you from going to Jesus. And it cannot stop you from walking in the light of the living word of God.

The night will soon end, and so will our infirmities. Praise God. I'll be able to see things close up again. And for some of you who I know are suffering so much worse.

[54:39] Spiritual, emotional, relationship, physical infirmities. God, would you touch me? Would you touch me? Come boldly. Come boldly to the throne of grace.

The night will soon end, and so will our infirmities. The day star is on the horizon. Jesus says in John 15, that greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. And then he says, you are my friends. You are the ones I've laid down my life for. If you do whatsoever, I command you. What's he commanded you? You see, faith is the response of obedience to God's love.

So we're his friends. If we do what he's commanded us, what has he commanded us? To come, to wash, and to see. We're going to come blind, but be sent seeing. Come filthy, but be sent clean. Come broken, and be sent whole by the work of God and his grace. Maybe God wants to touch that infirmity. Maybe you don't know, but today you'll see the end of that infirmity.

[55:46] Or maybe like Paul, you'll see something even greater. You'll see the power of God rest upon your life through the grace of God. I do know this. God will touch your life if you come boldly to the throne of grace.

So I'm just going to stand off to the side. You just want prayer for something, or you just say, hey, just pray that God would touch me. Just pray that I would see what God is doing. Just pray that I'd receive his grace.

Maybe you're not putting that trip on someone else and saying, it's all their fault. Maybe you're looking inward and going, I deserve everything that I've done. Everything that's happening to me, I deserve it. You did deserve it.

But Jesus took that right there at that throne. Your sins and infirmities cannot keep Jesus from seeing you, from coming to you, from speaking to you, from touching you, from sending you, and from healing you.

Lord, we've partaken already, Lord, of the fruit of the spirit, which is love. We've seen the love of God on the pages of your word as we have been armed and armored with this word of light.

[56:58] Lord, we want to run into the darkness. We want to see the people that nobody else sees because you see them. We want to shine the light of the life of the love of God upon them.

Lord, we want to see your power rest upon them. Lord, we want to see those that are infirm be made whole. Yes, it'd be wonderful if you want to touch and bring physical healing.

But Lord, we want to see them be made whole spiritually. We want to see men of dust, born of dust, be born of the spirit. Lord, we want to see those with infirmity see that your grace is sufficient, that the power of Christ may rest upon them.

Speak to us, Lord. Touch us, wash us, heal us in the infirmities that we fully and freely confess before you. Father, thank you for seeing.

Thank you for seeing exactly what we needed when we weren't even looking for it. Thank you for seeing us lost in our sin when we didn't even have eyes to see. Thank you for initiating grace in our lives, initiating the love of God in my life.

[58:14] And Lord, I like to think that you were holding my hand as you led me to that pool to wash. My part was so small, Lord, just to respond to your love.

And I gained so much. Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters this morning, Lord, I pray your grace would be upon their lives, that your spirit would be working through their lives, that they would have boldness to come and receive all that they have as the rightful sons of God.

a hope, an inheritance, a heritage. And one day, Lord, one day when you will raise the dust, we will stand with you and we will see that Jesus, our Jesus, has took upon him the form of a man to be like us.

Thank you for the blood. Thank you for washing us clean. Thank you for the power of God that's at work in our lives, that rests upon our lives, despite our infirmities. And thank you for your word. Love you and worship you.

In Jesus' name. Amen.