

# Now I see

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[ 0 : 00 ] John chapter 9. And before we start, let's pray together. Father, we are grateful to have the privilege of singing these songs together.

Thank you for giving us new birth instincts to desire to worship you. And thank you that we can worship you with a variety of styles of music, with a variety of songs and hymns and psalms and spiritual songs.

We're so grateful for that. Thank you for this psalm that we've just had the privilege of singing together and how it reminds us of the need for your spirit to work in our hearts to cause us to be still.

And thank you for this reminder of the psalmist telling his soul to be still. Because the Lord is in control.

And the Lord is sovereignly over all of these things. And even when, as he recounts, the wicked seem to prosper, even this, Father, we turn over to you as the righteous judge.

[ 1 : 34 ] the one who will judge all things right and wrong and the one who has committed all judgment over to the Son.

And so we are grateful, Father and Lord Jesus, for your work that you will one day do to judge and to make all things right.

Help us in the meantime to be patient and kind and gracious and loving and forgiving. Help us to be people committed to your word and people committed to humility and wisdom and grace.

Help us to be people committed to loving those who are hurting and the outcasts and the broken down and the empty. Because we realize that that is who we are in need of your grace.

Help us as we turn our attention now to your word. We'd ask that you would be with us and that, blessed Holy Spirit, you would move among us. It is in Jesus' name that we pray.

[ 2 : 45 ] Amen. Amen. Until that moment when Naaman came up from his seventh dip in the filthy Jordan River, Naaman worships many gods.

He is an idolater and he has lots of gods. There is the gods of the hills. There are the gods of the valleys. And gods, as idolaters understand them, are limited and they're local, right?

So you can manipulate these gods by doing particular activities in various places. If you lose a battle up in the hills, then go down into the valley and try to defeat your enemy there because perhaps their god is the god of the hills and you just need to get down into the valley.

Gods are local and they are limited and so they can be manipulated by where you are or by what you do. Anytime, just this is a freebie, anytime someone is telling you about their god that can be manipulated.

This is a poor god. This is not a god that you should trust. If the god can be manipulated by where you are or by what you do, what is happening here?

[ 4 : 05 ] This is no god that you would want to follow. So when Naaman comes up from this seventh dip in the Jordan, we would not be at all surprised if Naaman were to add the god of Israel to a long list of gods that he would choose to worship or ignore depending on his need, right?

Depending on who he is trying to manipulate that particular day or what he is trying to get from his very small g gods. It would not surprise us if Naaman added the prophet's god to his list of gods.

But instead of adding the god of Israel to his list of gods, in front of his entire entourage, Naaman makes this declaration, this profession of faith, and he seems to make it entirely without shame.

It's on the screen. 2 Kings chapter 5 and verse 15. Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, I know there's no god in the whole world except in Israel.

He has not added Israel's god to his long list of gods. Instead, he's wiped out that whole list of gods that he's been familiar with and accustomed to and manipulated or tried to manipulate his entire life. [ 5 : 34 ] He's wiped out that entire list and he has replaced it with one god, the one true god of Israel. He is the god in the whole earth.

How did this happen? How did this happen? How did Naaman go from being an idolater to now being a worshiper of the one true god of the whole earth?

Well, first, he had a credible witness in the form of his slave girl, right? A credible witness. But also, he was very desperate.

Credible witness, desperation, and most importantly, the Holy Spirit was at work. God was at work drawing Naaman to himself.

And this is a beautiful, wonderful combination. A credible witness, a desperate sinner, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

[ 6 : 37 ] This is a beautiful combination that God is pleased to use to draw sinners to himself. How will they hear? Unless if there is a preacher.

We need a credible witness. How will they know their desperation until they have sensed their great need of Jesus? And I'm so grateful that the Holy Spirit is at work.

This is amazing grace. How did this happen? The short answer is this happened by amazing grace. And it is when he feels his need most deeply that he receives God's grace most sweetly.

Think about that for a minute. Think of the song Amazing Grace. Do you remember that one?

Remember Amazing Grace?

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see. Have you ever thought about the words that we are claiming, that we are professing in this song?

[ 7 : 53 ] A wretch like me. Isn't it true that when you feel the guilt of your sin, when you realize the wretchedness of your sin, that you become that desperate sinner eager for salvation.

But not until you feel your sin, not until you feel your need of this gospel. When you feel your fear of staying lost, that hymn says, I once was lost.

No one likes to be lost. No one likes to feel lost. No one likes to think that no one is coming for them. No one is looking for them. You've been abandoned and you feel isolated and alone.

No one likes that feeling. I once was lost. When you feel this fear of remaining lost, it is then that you can't wait to be found.

blind. And when you can honestly say, by the Holy Spirit's power in you, I was blind, when you feel the darkness of your own blindness to spiritual truth and to spiritual reality, it is then that you will celebrate seeing.

[ 9 : 12 ] Is that true? When you feel your need most deeply, then you will have God's grace most sweetly.

Naaman's story here in 2 Kings chapter 5 parallels another healing, a healing that Jesus did in John chapter 9. And I want to turn your attention to John chapter 9 this morning because I think these two miracles have beautiful parallels and it gives us a second opportunity to talk about amazing grace. And why would we want to talk about anything else? Like Naaman, the man who is healed in John chapter 9, the healing of his body is secondary to the healing of his soul.

That's what I want you to notice. That like Naaman comes up from the water the seventh time and he goes and makes his way to the man from the prophet in Samaria and you sort of expect that he's going to be just overjoyed and super excited about what has happened to his leprosy is all gone and that is not at all what is on his mind.

What is on his mind is professing faith in the one true God of the whole earth. And similarly something happens in John chapter 9. The healing that this man receives from Jesus is secondary secondary to the healing of his soul.

[ 10 : 41 ] The healing of his body is secondary to the healing of his soul. I wonder what you would miss most if you could not see.

Anybody? A little interaction here. What would you miss most if you couldn't see? Driving.

Excellent. That was not on my mind but that is a good one. That is true. You would not be driving if you could not see. Do you have one? It looks like you were smiling. No you didn't have one.

Okay. Huh? Nature. Creation. Yes. Good one. Right? No more sunrise. No more sunset. Kylie. Oh yeah.

You couldn't see your family anymore. You'd have to really listen and hear what people were saying because you couldn't see their face. Josie, now we're rolling. Now you are a girl after my own heart. [11:43] That is what I wrote down and I put it in highlighting. No reading. I think I would miss that very much. You could do audible audiobooks.

It's not the same. It's just not the same. Owen, TV, it's good honesty. You would not be watching TV. Anybody else?

I don't want to leave anybody out. Josie? Yep, you could not see your dog. That one definitely did not cross my mind, but I'm grateful that he crossed your mind.

In John chapter 9, Jesus encounters a man who is born blind. He has never seen anything. He didn't get this blindness because he was in some kind of a sandstorm. I'm reading a little book and I'm reading about a guy and he was doing some drugs and as part of doing these drugs, he collapsed on top of the drugs that he was burning to give him his high and it blew up into his eye and he lost his eyesight for a time.

[12:58] awful. But not this man. He was born blind. He had never seen anything or anyone. No sunrise, no TV, no reading of scrolls for him in the synagogue.

He is a man born blind. And the disciples ask an interesting question. We should not be too hard on them because I think it's a question that we still wrestle with sometimes.

Who sinned? Who sinned? So that this man was born blind. I think we're probably not all that bold to ask it that way but I think this does roll around in the back of our head still.

When something doesn't go our way we wonder what sin did I do that caused this to not work out the way that I thought it was going to work out. That's not good theology.

The disciples ask who sinned? This man or his parents? Do you know who has good theology? Jesus. So when Jesus corrects the disciples with so much grace we can hear Jesus correcting our hearts as well because he corrects with so much grace.

[14:11] Look at John chapter 9 and verse number 3. Neither this man nor his parents sinned. Now just to be clear Jesus is not saying that this man and his parents are not sinners.

They are sinners. He is a sinner. We all are sinners. But Jesus is saying that this man's blindness is not the direct result of either his sin or his parents' sin.

This is good theology. Neither this man nor his parents' sinned. Jesus answered, this, this blindness that he has been born with, came about so that God's works might be displayed in him.

God made this man to be born with broken eyes so that the Lord Jesus could give him new eyes. He is blind then for the glory of God. this is an important correction for the disciples.

[15:24] And it's an important correction for my heart as well. This, this shift in thinking is good for us because I don't tend to think this, whatever this awful thing is, must be for God's glory.

I don't tend to think that way. I need to be reminded of that truth often. instead of thinking this is for God's glory, I tend to think how can I fix this?

You know, how can I change this situation? How can we resolve this issue? How can we solve this problem? How can we make this suffering come to an end?

and I get so focused on that, on ending the suffering, whatever it is, that I lose sight of the most important thing, that God is doing stuff in my suffering.

I say God is doing stuff not because it's unimportant, I just say stuff because I often don't know what it is, you know? I don't know what God is doing, I don't know how God is working, I don't know who God may be drawing to himself through some particular suffering or hardship or adversity or calamity, I don't know.

[16:47] And when I'm too focused on bringing the suffering to a swift end, and that's a noble thing, but when I'm too focused on bringing the suffering to an end, to even pause, to consider what is God doing in this suffering?

How is God at work in this moment? how could this suffering somehow be for the glory of God?

When I'm too quick to bring it to an end, I miss what God is doing, how God is working both within me and how God is working in those around me.

Now, when this blind man hears Jesus say this, that neither him nor his parents sinned, but that he was born blind so that God's works could be displayed in him, there's a response that could have swelled up inside of this blind man, and it's the kind of response that we hear a lot on today in our culture, right?

He could have said, God, you think I'm blind? That's so judgmental. How could you think that about me?

How could you say that about me? How could you be so cruel and heartless? And we default and we just swing this pendulum back and forth and back and forth.

[18:16] God help us. He could have responded this way, insulted that Jesus would say this about his blindness and tell the truth about his blindness.

But instead, he feels his need most deeply. He knows he is hopelessly blind.

He knows he's hopelessly blind. Did you notice this? He doesn't even ask Jesus to heal him. No one had ever healed anybody who was born blind.

He knows he's hopeless. Verse six. After Jesus said these things, he spit on the ground and he made some mud from the saliva and he spread the mud on his eyes.

This sounds very peculiar to us, maybe very gross to us, unorthodox medical treatment to be sure.

[19:26] Why did Jesus do this? I don't know. I don't know that we have a great reason for why Jesus did this, but it was important for a reason that we don't know. Maybe because it reinforced just how blind he was washed by putting something else over his eyes.

Maybe it gave him something to wash off when he went to the pool of Siloam. We don't really know why Jesus did this. If you know why or if you have a thought, I would love to hear it.

Jesus spits on the ground, makes some mud from the saliva and spreads the mud on his eyes and then Jesus says, verse seven, go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which means scent.

So he left, washed, and came back seeing. I find this so remarkable in John's gospel here, this last sentence. It doesn't even seem to phase John. He went, he washed, and he came back seeing.

No surprise. No surprise. Jesus gave the blind man new eyes.

[20:35] His eyes were broken from birth. They did not need to be healed. They needed to be made new. His eyes were not injured.

They were not damaged. They needed to be reborn. It reminds me of Naaman having his skin restored to that of a small boy.

The neighbors notice what is going on. They bring this man to the Pharisees, and the Pharisees have two dilemmas. It does seem like the Pharisees are often caught in these dilemmas, doesn't it? Like it's by God's design or something, that they would be caught in these prickly situations. Here are their dilemmas. It's very clear that Jesus has done a miracle, because everybody knows that this man was born blind, and everybody knows that those who are born blind cannot be healed. Dilemma number one. Jesus has clearly done a miracle. Dilemma number two. Since Jesus performed his miracle on the Sabbath, he must be some kind of a sinner, and therefore incapable of doing the miracle that he has clearly done.

[21:52] They are stuck between a rock and a hard place. I don't know if I should confess this. When I read, especially in John's Gospels, especially in chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, here in chapter 9, and the Pharisees get stuck between a rock and a hard place, I just love it.

I eat those moments up watching Jesus graciously, humbly, so wisely show them the futility of their false religion.

So they are stuck. Verse 13. They brought the man who used to be blind. I love this. It's like John doesn't know what to call this guy, so he just calls him the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees.

The day that Jesus made the mud and opened the eyes was a Sabbath, and this is a problem because you could not make mud on the Sabbath. That would be work. Then the Pharisees asked him again how he received his sight.

He put mud on my eyes. He told them, I washed and I can see. Some of the Pharisees said, here's the dilemma, this man is not from God because he doesn't keep the Sabbath.

[23:06] But others were saying, how can a sinful man perform such signs and there's a division among them. They are stuck between a rock and a hard place. One group is choosing to say, well, he clearly did a miracle, so he must be from God.

And the other group is saying he couldn't possibly have done the miracle that he clearly did because he did it on the Sabbath and that would be sinning. So he can't be from God. What a pickle.

How can a sinful man perform such signs and there is a division among them. And again, they asked the blind man, what do you say about him since he opened your eyes? And the blind man

said, he's a prophet.

The Jews, which is the way that John often refers to the religious leaders, did not believe this about him, that he was blind and received sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had received his sight.

they asked them, is this your son, the one that you say, was born blind? How then does he now see? This is so remarkable to me.

[ 24 : 13 ] Isn't this just terrible witness to the flesh of mankind? Just our despicableness in our hearts. It is so clear that a miracle has happened here, but these religious people refuse to acknowledge it and instead of celebrating with his parents that the man who was born blind is now seeing, they are ridiculing and shaming.

Is this your son, the one that you say was born blind? How then does he now see? Verse 20, his parents speak. We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, his parents answered, but we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know who opened his eyes.

Ask him, he's of age, he will speak for himself. His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed if anyone confessed him, Jesus, as the Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue.

This is why his parents said, he is of age, go ask him. So a second time, the Pharisees, the religious leaders, summoned the man who had been blind and told him, give glory to God, we know that this man is a sinner.

So they have landed in this place, they have chosen the second path, he's a sinner, he's a sinner, you need to give glory to God for the miracle that God has done for you because we know this guy didn't do it because he's a sinner.

[ 25 : 43 ] I love his response in verse 25. He answered, whether or not he's a sinner, I don't know. I don't know. One thing I do know, I was blind and now I can see.

It reminds me of the song Amazing Grace. Then they asked him, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? I already told you he said and you didn't listen.

Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become his disciples too, do you? Love this.

They ridiculed him. You're that man's disciple, but we are Moses' disciple.

disciple. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but this man, we don't know where he's from.

Verse 30, this is an amazing thing, the man told them.

You don't know where he is from and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to him.

[ 26 : 46 ] Throughout history, no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything.

This would be a perfect time for these religious leaders, these supposedly very spiritual people, to feel their need most deeply.

and if they did, they would also receive God's grace most sweetly. This would be a perfect time for them to feel their need, but they do not feel their need for Jesus.

And they cannot tolerate this man's testimony. And they hate Jesus. And they don't ever want to see this guy again.

Can you imagine showing up to worship in the synagogue with this bright-eyed, happy guy who has been born blind, dead, never seen anything, and now he's got the brightest eyes anyone has ever seen, and he shows up in the synagogue testifying of Jesus' power to heal him?

[ 28 : 03 ] The religious leaders could not tolerate that. And so they excommunicate him. But Jesus finds him.

Jesus finds him in verse 35. Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, and when he found him, he asked, do you believe in the son of man?

This is it. moment. This is the moment. This is the name and moment, if I can call it that. The healing that has happened in him, the new eyes that he has received, are just an illustration of what has happened already in his soul.

Do you believe in the son of man? Verse 36, I love this. Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?

He asked. It's like he's just looking for something to believe in. Jesus answered, can you imagine this moment standing face to face with this man who's been born blind?

[ 29 : 33 ] Here's him and Jesus and they are looking at each other and Jesus says these beautiful words, you have seen him. you have seen him.

In fact, he is the one speaking with you. Verse 38, I believe, Lord, he said and he worshipped him. What is this? This is new birth instincts like Naaman. this is the only true God and I am going to now worship the only true God in a way that honors him.

Here is this man, new birth instincts, new eyes that give picture for us of what has happened in his soul, that a new birth has taken place and he says, I believe.

This is his expression of faith. This is the new birth, the first cry of the newborn heart, some expression of faith.

[ 30 : 46 ] I believe, Lord, he said and he worshipped him. Verse 39, Jesus said, I came into this world for judgment in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind.

Think about this word judgment for just a moment. It has this idea of separating or sorting out of the pieces.

Sorting out all of the edge pieces or maybe sorting out all of the pieces that have a similar color to them so that you can put them where they belong and work on a particular portion.

Sorting laundry because you don't want to do the darks with the lights or the delicates with the sheets and the towels and so on. Right? Jesus says, I came into this world for judgment, to separate, to sort, to categorize.

In what way? Well, some will feel deeply their guilt and they will receive the grace of mercy and forgiveness.

[ 32 : 10 ] Some will admit, like the old hymn says, I once was lost. Some will admit that they are lost and they will receive the grace of being found.

Some will admit, I am blind and they will receive the grace of spiritual sight. Some will feel their need most deeply and receive God's grace most sweetly.

But some will not. verse 40. Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and asked him, we aren't blind too, are we?

They just heard Jesus say that I have come to sort and to categorize to judge to separate those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind and they say to him you're not putting us in that category are you?

You're not saying about us what I think you're saying about us are you? You're not saying that we are the blind ones are you? Verse 41 if you were blind Jesus told them you wouldn't have sin he's not saying that they wouldn't have sin he's saying that he would have forgiven their sin if you were blind Jesus told them you wouldn't have sin but now that you say we see your sin remains because you refuse to say I once was blind Jesus says you are still in your sin you have not received God's grace indeed

[ 34 : 34 ] Jesus came into the world for judgment for sorting for separating for categorizing those who will feel their need most deeply and then receive God's grace most sweetly and those who will say I have no need of God's grace I can see just fine thank you I am not lost and I don't need to be found Paul writes this in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 and verse number 4 in their case in the case of those who are perishing those who are not feeling the depth of their need in their case in the case of those who are perishing the

God of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ see sinners are blind until the Holy Spirit opens up their eyes but they are not passively blind the God of this world our adversary the devil is actively blinding the eyes of those who are perishing so that they don't feel their deep need oh how this ought to motivate us to prayer oh how this ought to motivate us to be evangelists testifiers proclaimers declarers of this beautiful gospel sinners are blind until the Holy Spirit opens their eyes and so maybe today the Holy Spirit will open your eyes he will make you feel your need most deeply and you will sense your guilt perhaps for the first time perhaps as an overwhelming sense of your great need for a savior perhaps you will sense for the first time that you are lost and that you need to be found and that there is one who came to seek and to save those who are lost and that's our savior Jesus perhaps you would realize today I have been so blind and the God of this world has blinded my eyes but now I see I see Jesus I see with spiritual eyes this gospel clearly I sense my need of grace I am blind but now I see believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved followers of Jesus it's my privilege to remind you this morning that the grace that saves us doesn't abandon us at the moment of our salvation but continues to be sufficient for all of our weakness all of our failure all of our sin you can ask yourself

this same question where do I feel my need most deeply where do I feel my need most deeply where am I willing to acknowledge my greatest weakness so that I may experience the grace of God's sufficient power in my life please don't say I see like the Pharisees please don't say I am found like the Pharisees I don't have any need of this grace I can do this on my own instead say I believe like the man born blind this is how we continue to receive God's sufficient grace by acknowledging the depth of our ongoing need for it say I believe I was created for your glory I believe I was born I have been saved to be a testimony of your mercy and your patience and your love I believe that you are changing me little by little you are making me more like Jesus I believe that no suffering I go through is wasted that you are working all things for my good even when it just feels like stuff to me because I can't categorize it and I can't see it and I can't!

[ 39 : 44 ] make sense of it even when I don't understand how you are working I believe that you are working all things for my good I believe that you give me sufficient grace for every moment of weakness failure and sin oh how good and how great and how wonderful is this amazing grace that we have received because of the life death resurrection ascension intercession and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our lives let's pray oh good father we are so grateful to be your people and grateful for your kindness to us thank you for this story of the man born blind and thank you for these little parallels that we can draw some connection back to the story of

Naaman and see this healing of the soul that so far transcends the healing the newness of what took place in his body thank you for causing this man to be born blind so that the glorious works of Jesus could be displayed in him thank you Lord Jesus for giving him new eyes thank you for your sweet kindness to correct our theology when we begin to settle into some mindset of prosperity gospel thank you for correcting!

our theology and reminding us that even in our suffering you are working and even in our weakness and our failure and our sin you are still working thank you for your sufficient amazing grace help us to be the kinds of people who are humbly!

and boldly willing to follow Jesus all the way to the very end please encourage us as we are reminded that life is hard please comfort and give us hope as we are reminded that your grace is sufficient please give us courage and strength to persevere so that like Paul we might say bring it on bring on all of the weakness and the failure show me my weakness so that I may know your strength and so we boast in our weakness because we know that you are strong thank you for this time thank you for the opportunity to celebrate communion to be around the Lord's Supper together as your people as your children it is in Jesus name that we pray amen