

I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE

John 9:8-41

Key Verse: 9:25

"He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'"

In the last passage we learned that Jesus is the light of the world. When we dwell in the light of Jesus, there is no fatalistic element in our lives. Rather, when we dwell in the light of Jesus we become strong in his grace and love, and we can display his glory, whatever we do. We can display his glory when we do our heavy homework. We can display his glory even on the weekend. All others may go to enjoy physical pleasures, but we can teach the Bible to spiritually blind young men and young girls so that they may have the promise of eternal life in their hearts and see the [kingdom of God](#). We also learned that we are created by God to display God's glory whatever situation we may be in. We believe that this is the true purpose of life. We believe that to display the glory of God is the true meaning of our existence. Otherwise, our lives are too weary and tired and meaningless. Praise God that he made us to display the glory of God during our earthly pilgrimage. Today we learn how difficult it is not to forget the grace of God. We also learn how precious it is to remember God's grace to the end. May God bless us to learn from the man born blind how to remember the grace of God to the end.

First, "I was blind but now I see!" (8-17) By the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the blind man's eyes were restored to see the beautiful world. How happy the man might have been when his eyes were opened. How happy to see the [beautiful flowers](#) in the spring, and soon after, abundant foliage in the park! He must have sung Amazing Grace: "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." While he was singing, the love of God was so high and wide to him and the grace of Jesus was so real to him and he cried for a while, remembering God's grace and anticipating a bright future. At the moment, a beautiful person was passing by. It was a beautiful girl. He saw a beautiful girl for the first time. At the moment he saw her passing by, he could hardly breathe. After a while, he believed that Jesus is God, for all the people of his time believed that only God can open a blind man's eyes. He could have assurance that Jesus is God, and he could not forget the grace of Jesus who wiped the tears from his eyes and opened his eyes. He could not forget the grace of Jesus who gave him new life by opening his eyes.

When his neighbors saw him, some said, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" (8) Others said, "No, he only looks like him" (9). The neighbor people should have been very joyful that one of their pitiful fellow's eyes were opened. They should have had a party to express their joy and thanks to God for opening the blind man's eyes. They should have appreciated the grace of Jesus who renounced his power and glory and honor and came to this world and opened the blind man's eyes. But they were not happy. Some were angry. Some were very unhappy upon seeing that the blind man's eyes were opened. I don't know why they were unhappy. They should have been happy to see that the blind

man's eyes were opened, and realized God's love and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But they were unhappy. Usually, those who do not know Jesus, the light of the world, are unhappy when they should be really happy. Those who do not know Jesus Christ have sadistic joy. There was a boy in a grade school. He had 30 classmates. He was 29th according to his grades. But he was very proud and happy that there was one inferior to him, and he beat him up almost every day, saying, "I am better than you. You are inferior to me. I am 29th. But you are the last one in our class." There was a man who received an honorary doctoral degree in literature because of his achievements in campus evangelism and because he wrote more than 50 books and booklets. Many of his relatives and friends came to attend the ceremony. His older brother also came. He cried from the beginning to the end, until the ceremony was over. Later, the man who received the honorary doctoral degree asked his older brother, "Why did you cry?" assuming that he cried with joy because his younger brother who grew up in a very unfortunate situation was receiving an honorary doctoral degree. However, this was not the reason. He said, "Well, I was a high school boy and you were a factory boy. Now I am nobody and you are somebody. I cried because of my own sorrow, not because I was happy to see your doctoral convocation." His younger brother who received the honorary doctoral degree was very sorry to hear that. Several hundred people came to the ceremony. They looked a little happy outwardly, but most of them were unhappy out of their envy. He also saw that his wife was crying from the beginning of the ceremony to the end. So he asked, "Why did you cry?" She said, "I was really happy." Likewise, the townspeople should have been happy that the blind man's eyes were opened. But they were unhappy because they were fallen men who were living with sadistic joy, not heavenly joy.

The man who was once blind sensed that they were not happy. But it didn't matter. He insisted, "I was blind but now I see!" (9b) He had been a blind beggar and an outcast. Now he needed to be recognized as a member of the community. So he should be silent, whatever they said. But now he was clear about the grace of God that opened his blind eyes and gave him new life. He cried out all the more and began to testify to the wonderful grace of Jesus. Read verse 11. "He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.'" The townspeople thought he was presumptuous and arrogant when he testified to the grace of Jesus. So they clutched him by the arm and brought him to the Pharisees (13). The Pharisees were even more unhappy. The day Jesus had healed the man was a Sabbath. Therefore, the Pharisees saw Jesus as a breaker of the Sabbath law, and they began to interrogate the man who had been blind, asking how he had received his sight. "'He put some mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed and now I see'" (14,15). At that time, the Pharisees were known as authorities and men of honor in their communities. But the man once blind was not shaky before the Pharisees.

How did they respond about Jesus to the man who was once blind? Some said, "He is not from God, because he did this on a Sabbath day." Others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided (16). There were two kinds of people. The first was determined enemies of God who wanted to nullify the work of God through Jesus. The second kind was ordinary people who wondered, "How can a sinner do such

miraculous signs?" The enemies of God pressed the man born blind hard, saying, "What do you have to say about him, huh? You man! It was your eyes he opened." The Pharisees threatened this poor fellow who had just found the joy of life in Jesus. But he was not intimidated by them at all. He replied, "He is a prophet"...a man from God (17b). At that time, anyone who acknowledged Jesus was cast out of the Jewish community and had no place to go. So the former blind man would again become a wandering beggar. But he didn't cheat his conscience; he clearly testified that Jesus is a prophet, a man from God. At that time, a prophet was known as a man from God with a specific and special message for God's people Israel. A prophet was known as God's messenger. A prophet was known as an angel of God. So people honored the prophets as they honored Elijah and John the Baptist. Here we learn that the man once blind had received God's grace. He could enjoy a new life in Jesus. He could have a hope of marrying a beautiful bride. But it was not easy for him to maintain God's grace. He was despised, interrogated and unbearably persecuted. Here we learn that holding on to God's amazing grace is not easy at all for anyone. But this man who was once blind teaches us that we must hold on to the grace of God.

Second, "One thing I do know" (18-34). Next the Pharisees sent for his parents. When they appeared before the Pharisees, his parents were very much afraid that they would be excommunicated. "Is this your son," they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" (19) "'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know that he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself'" (21). They were afraid of the Jews; already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That's why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him" (22-23).

The Jews even threatened his parents in order to make them deny that their son was born blind. But they failed. A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. This time they threatened him theologically. "Well, you boy, give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner" (24). It was a terrible threat. They asked him to deny that he was once blind but now could see. They asked him to deny that Jesus had healed his blindness by saying, "Give glory to God." In reality, the Pharisees were chosen servants of God. When we watch the movie "Fiddler on the Roof," we see that the chosen people suffered a lot to display the glory of God throughout history, despite their mistakes and failures. The father, Reptavia, was a milkman. He raised many milk cows and provided milk from the cows and was going around to all the houses of his community in Russia. But his horse got a leg injury. So he had to pull the heavy milk cart himself. After hard work, still he was happy. Then he was notified by the Russian police that his people had to evacuate their town. He said, "O God, thank you for choosing us and choosing me. But sometimes could you choose someone else? Well, anyway, thank you for choosing us." The chosen people had the fear of God. The chosen people didn't mind suffering, because they were chosen people. Wherever they went, they had to wear the star of David and were segregated, alienated and persecuted. Still, they kept their faith, and they were shepherds to their fellow community people. But throughout history, these chosen people, especially those who gained political power and authority, turned their backs on God. Then

they became like the devil.

The Pharisees summoned the man who had been blind a second time and pressed him to admit that Jesus was a sinner, saying, "Give glory to God" (24). This kind of investigation is not normal. This kind of investigation cannot be done among men in history. This kind of investigation is the expression of the cruelty of the devil. They said, "Give glory to God." It meant, "You had better tell a lie and say that Jesus is a sinner because he broke the Sabbath law." What was his reply? Look at verse 25. "He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'" When we prayerfully read verse 25, we learn that the man once blind said, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" Of course, he knew many things: the misery of being a blind man, the misery of begging, the misery of living in darkness. But he didn't remember all these things. He remembered the one grace of Jesus bestowed to him. He is indeed a great man. He was a blind man. But now he could see. So he could have many anticipations, expectations, burning hopes and future plans. At the same time, it could have been bitter to remember that he was a blind man. But he didn't remember any of these things. One thing he remembered was that Jesus opened his eyes out of his great shepherd heart. He was full of God's grace. He could not deny God's grace in any circumstance.

We must learn from him how to remember God's grace and keep it in our hearts. Christians are those who remember one grace of God, how he changed us from blind men in the darkness of the world to those who see Jesus and his goodness. St. Paul was an ambitious young man. In order to rise to power, he volunteered to be a ringleader in persecuting and destroying the early Christians. He was like an angry tiger. But the Risen Christ visited him on his way to Damascus. The Risen Christ said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He fell down from his chariot and became blind. God told Ananias to take care of him, saying: "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name" (Ac 9:15,16). The Risen Christ unconditionally forgave all his sins and chose him as his instrument to be a light to the Gentiles. Paul remembered God's grace that saved him from being a persecutor and murderer of the early Christians and made him his apostle and a light to the Gentiles. When we read Paul's Epistles, we see that he never forgot God's grace even one day. He was sure that he received grace and apostleship at the same time to proclaim the gospel of Jesus to the whole world. Romans 1:5 says, "Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith." When we read his Epistles, we find that as a greeting he said, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." He prayed that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the flock of God's sheep under his care. His supreme desire and master passion was to remember the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In remembering God's grace, he never forgot that he was a terrible sinner but God saved him to be a child of light. 1 Timothy 1:15 says, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst." When we study 1 Corinthians 15, we learn that in order to encourage the Corinthian Christians, Paul gave his life testimony. 1 Corinthians 15:9 says, "For I am the least of the

apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am...." He always thought that he was untimely born. In other words, he was like a one-pound premature baby boy born to this world. But by the grace of God he became a normal man, and, in addition, he became an apostle to the Gentiles. Paul knew one thing: that he was a wretched sinner who became the apostle to the Gentiles by the grace of God. This was his source of strength. This grace motivated him to conquer the whole world. Finally he became a prisoner in a Roman prison in order to conquer the Roman Empire, and then the whole world through the military roads of the Roman Empire.

St. John was one of Jesus' disciples together with his brother James. He was cool and quiet. But his heart was burning with political ambition. He thought Jesus was going up to Jerusalem to establish an earthly messianic kingdom. On the way, they dropped by one of the Samaritan territories. The Samaritans refused to let them stay there overnight. Then he asked Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?" (Lk 9:54) John was an evil man because of his political-mindedness. But through Jesus' death and resurrection, he inherited the love of Christ who died for the sins of the world. He quoted many beautiful verses about the love of God. John 1:29b says, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 13:34 says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." 1 John 3:16 says, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." In his last days, John was imprisoned in a cave on the island of Patmos. There, he remembered Jesus' grace that he died for our sins. He praised the grace of Jesus: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Rev 5:12)

We cannot miss St. Peter. St. Peter was called by Jesus at the lakeshore (Mk 1:16,17). But he betrayed Jesus at his crucifixion (Mk 14:66-72). Risen Jesus visited him at the same seashore and cooked and fed him a delicious breakfast when he was hungry. Jesus knew that Peter loved him so much, but that Peter failed because he loved him with human loyalty. Jesus wanted to teach him divine love. So he asked the same question three times in John 21:15-17. It says, "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.' The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep.'" From that time on, Peter acknowledged the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He went to Rome to command the early Christians to become soldiers of Christ in conquering the whole world with the gospel of Jesus. Finally he was arrested and was supposed to be crucified on a cross. It is tradition that he said to the executioner: "Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. I am not worthy to

be crucified like our Lord Jesus Christ. So crucify me upside down." At the time of crucifixion, Peter was not afraid but remembered the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified for our sins and who forgave his three denials. Peter was a real Christian who knew the grace of forgiveness before he became an outstanding hero of faith. We also must remember the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts and be happy to die, even crucified upside down. Those who do not remember the grace of Jesus are full of hate and the love of the world. They are miserable even in their dreams. But those who remember the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ are happy to do anything, even to be crucified upside down. We learn from the man born blind to remember the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as the unique thing to engrave on our hearts. Can you say, "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" in your greeting to others? Can you say, "I am full of Jesus' grace in my heart"?

Third, Jesus visited the man (35-41). Look at verse 35. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out of their community, that he was abandoned, and that he was helpless again. Jesus found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (35) Now he was abandoned and cast out of his community; his situation was worse than before because he lost his job of begging. Even so, Jesus did not sympathize with his human condition. Jesus only wanted to plant in him faith in the Son. So he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" In Jesus' question to him, we learn that faith is the victory. Faith does not seem to give him even a piece of bread. But in the end, faith in the Son would bestow on him eternal life and the crown of life in Jesus' kingdom. Faith is the source of power to overcome the world. This is the mysterious gospel. A blind man who was once begging on the street can be an heir of God and a co-worker with Jesus Christ and with God (Ro 8:17). Faith in the Son is everything. We must help God's flock with faith, not with human favor only. What was his response? Look at verse 38. "Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him." It is an amazing confession of faith. By remembering God's grace, he overcame the world and entered the realm of the spiritual world, and he could believe God's grace through his Son Jesus. He could see the kingdom of God. He was privileged to enter the kingdom of God. Next, he worshiped Jesus. In the modern world, there are many people who worship money and corrupted human beings for the sake of sinful pleasure. Those who worship something else are idol worshipers, the children of the devil. But he worshiped God. Worshiping is the expression of the extremity of one's love and adoration. When we remember the grace of God in our hearts, we can love God and his Son Jesus Christ. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." When we love God, we are happy. But if we love the things of the world, we become nervous and unhappy.

Today we learned that we must remember the grace of God in our hearts. There are so many things in the world. These days 100 years of civilization can be achieved in 10 years. There are so many things we want to love. So we become scatterbrains and cannot do anything properly. We don't know where we are standing. We don't know what we are doing. But when we remember God's grace, "I once was blind but now I see," God gives us heavenly joy. God enables us to worship God only. Then we can love God first, our brethren next, and all people of the world. May God richly bless you to remember one grace of God in your

heart and be called the children of God.