

(John - Part 37): The Simple Faith of the Blind Man

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer explores the profound transformation of the blind man in John 9, illustrating the nature of true faith and the importance of obedience to God's word.

Duration: 43:31

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 9:39-41

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the ninth chapter of John as the text. The sermon concludes with the last three verses of the chapter, where Jesus talks about coming into the world for judgment. The preacher emphasizes the importance of obedience to what one knows and the need to be open to receiving more from the Lord. The sermon also highlights the story of the blind man who was healed by Jesus and how his obedience to the simple instruction led to his sight being restored. The preacher categorizes people into three classes: the blind who know they are blind, the blind who think they see, and those who truly see through Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the need for spiritual awareness and the transformative power of Jesus' light.

Transcript

The ninth chapter of John is the text, and I want to read the last three verses as sort of summing up, at least we'll conclude with them, and if there were to be verses from the chapter picked out as the text, these would be the verses. Jesus said, For judgment I am come unto this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, Are we blind also? Smirk on their face when they said that.

And Jesus said unto them, If ye were indeed truly blind, ye should have no sin. If you didn't know, it wouldn't be held against you. But now you say, We see.

And that condemns you. Your sin remains. Now, I'll try to simply sketch this ninth chapter and draw out some thoughts that there may be in it.

Here was the blind man, and he was made to see. Now, that's the biggest thing in the chapter, that a man who had been blind from his birth, he never saw life. We don't know how old a man he was, and it doesn't

matter.

But he was a blind man, a relatively young man, his parents were still alive. And here seemed to be the progress as I see it, that first of all he was confirmed in his blindness. He had been blind from birth.

Now, I don't preach psychology, I preach the word of God. But inasmuch as psychology is simply the law of the workings of the mind, you can't escape them. Your mind has certain ways of working, just as when you walk down the street, you think that you have a walk all your own.

And any physiologist knows that the length of your leg bones in relation to the rest of your body determine you walk. And that's all, you just have to do it that way, there's no other way you can get around unless you crawl on all fours. And so it is, you go according to the laws of your body when you walk, and you go according to the laws of your mind when you think and live and face the world.

Now, there is such a thing as the psychology of defeatism. And when we have been in a state long enough, we tend to want to live there. The very old dog that's lived in his old doghouse doesn't want to leave it.

You go and crawl back in. And we're like that. We get fixed in a rut.

A blind man gets fixed in a rut. And he may even proudly tell you, I can't see, but boy, my hearing is good. I've got better hearing than the average.

I can tell the make of an automobile, one blind man told me. I can stand on the corner and tell you the make and the year of the automobile with the sound of its motor. I was probably telling the truth.

He had learned to live with his blindness, and he didn't expect anything else. He had gotten into the rut he never expected to see. And that's human and natural.

And here was a man who from his birth had been blind. Now, there was a confirmed blind man. But from somewhere there came to him the mystery of faith.

Now, there's a man preaching over the radio who shall be nameless for the occasion. And I have mentioned before the neat little error that he's preaching. It is that everybody has faith if you only know what to do with it in the word of turning.

He says that everybody has faith. And all you need to do is turn your faith on Jesus, and you've got it. If you're sick, turn your faith on Jesus, and you're well.

If you're a sinner, turn your faith on Jesus, and you're saved. But if you're faith and everybody has it, he probably overlooked that passage itself, says, not all men have faith. The simple fact is, brethren, that the faith we have in one another, and I trust this brother over here.

We've known him now for quite a while, and I trust him. I trust him with a \$10 bill. I trust the fellow.

And I know by human trust that he's all right. I trust people. I get on a bus down here, and I look at the front of it, and it tells me Halstead 63rd.

I get on that bus. I know that they're not going to go to Midlothian. They're going to go to Halstead 63rd.

And you hand a man a \$10 bill, and you trust that that's real money. You trust the government. Confidence and trust, mutual trust, is everywhere in the world.

But that's not the faith that saves, my brethren. That's another kind of faith altogether. It's human faith resting upon experience.

But the faith that saves is the mystery of God imparted to the human soul by the Holy Ghost. And that's the only kind of faith that does save. So the doctrine that if I have the same faith that trusts the streetcar driver, the bus driver, and I turn that on Jesus, I'm converted, is as false as hell.

For it is telling me that by my human faith I can believe. I can do nothing of the sort. Faith is a gift of God and of mystery.

And if God doesn't give it, I don't have it. It comes by the enabling of the Spirit when I have repented. And it comes no other way.

Here came to this man the mystery of faith. I don't understand it. I don't claim to understand it.

Take Esau and Jacob, for instance. Esau was a better man, I claim, than Jacob was. It never said that Esau was crooked.

It said Jacob was crooked. But it never said Esau was. And it was not Esau that was doing the finagling and the trickery.

It was Jacob that was doing the trickery. And it was not Esau, the wrong Jacob. It was Jacob that wronged Esau.

And every time, it was always Jacob that was doing the wrong thing. And Esau, poor, patient Esau, smelling of the field. But faith, the mystery and wonder of faith, came to the heart of that bad Jacob.

And it never came to the heart of Esau at all. Esau lived and died a part of the very clay. And God Almighty ironically named him Esau.

Edom, the red clay. Clay he was. From the clay he came, and back to the clay he went.

And he never had inspiration, nor lift, nor longing. Jacob, crooked as he was, Jacob had something in him that wanted God. He had something in him that wanted God.

The mystery of faith had come to the heart of Jacob. Don't ask me to explain it. I can only state it.

And here was this blind man, and the mystery of faith had come to him. And Jesus, our Lord, appeared and said, Go wash. Now, that clay was nothing.

You could put clay on your eyes until the world stands, and you'll still be blind. And washing was nothing. People had bathed in the pool of Siloam and never seen.

It was not the clay, it was not the water, it was the simple test of obedience. He said, Go and wash that off now, and see what happens. And the young man went and washed and came seeing.

It was obedience. It was the test of obedience, that was all. In other words, Now do you trust me enough to do what I tell you to do? And when he saw that he did, why, the word went out and the man saw.

He went and he saw. Now, the lesson I gather from this, there are so many, but the lesson I gather from these lessons are many. One is that this man knew very little about Jesus Christ, but he acted on the little he knew and was delivered.

The idea that you have to know a whole lot in order to meet Jesus Christ in saving grace is not so. It's good to know the truth. But I had a brother-in-law, I think I've given this illustration before, he was rather a worthless sort of chap.

My sister married him in a low moment, and he was a bad fellow. One night he went with a friend to the train, and they were both drinking. His friend was rather just about under the table with his, and he put him on the train and started walking home up Market Street in Akron, Ohio.

And as he walked along, he said he got to worrying about his friend. He said, Well, he's drunk, and he's drunk himself. He said, He's drunk.

He said if the train would wreck or he'd die, he said he'd perish. He said, I ought to pray for him. So here was this fellow with fumes coming out of his mouth filled with liquor.

He went home, and he went to his bedroom. He got down on his knees and began to pray for his friend who was drunk, afraid he'd get killed on the train and lost. And he said a voice said to him, How about you? And he said he got his eyes off his friend and began to pray for himself.

Now he was from a certain section of the country. I find people are very sensitive, I won't tell you where. But he was from a certain section of the country where they prayed themselves on how much Holy Scripture they could memorize and know.

And he knew a lot of it. He could quote Scripture. But he said as he knelt there and prayed, God knocked everything out of his head.

He said he only remembered one verse. Oh, Lord, with man this is impossible, but with God nothing is impossible. So he said he turned his eyes on Jesus Christ and said, Oh, Lord, I am awful, but nothing is impossible with you.

He said he was converted. He said the cross appeared before his eyes and he was saved. Now, God actually had to rid him of a lot of his knowledge.

He had to knock it out of his head because he was trusting in it and was proud of it. But here was a man who didn't have very much life. So far as we know, he'd never seen Jesus before or never been where Jesus was.

But he acted on the little light that he had and the Lord led him all away. Now, if you will act on the light you have, how wrong we are when we think that if our spiritual lives are a little bit low, we ought to buy a book or take a course. Buy a book or take a course.

Go to NIAC or buy a book. And off we go to the bookstore. What have you got on the deeper life? What have you got? What can I get on the deeper life? Brother, well, you don't need a book on the deeper life.

You need to obey God and the deeper life will come to you and on one-tenth of the information you have. How many people there are in this country that are sitting up nice, taking a course, and when it's all over, there won't be any better off nowhere before. Be obedient to what you know and the Lord will give you

more.

Trample what you know under your feet and there will be blindness to your heart. But this man didn't know much, but what he did know, he acted upon. Now, he had no idea.

If you'd have come running up to him and started asking him trick questions, he couldn't have told you a thing. He said, I'm a blind man. I've been told by a voice that somehow I trust.

To go wash in the pool of Siloam and I can find my way around. And he went feeling his way. The pool of Siloam plunged in, came back, seeing for the first time in his life.

He obeyed the simple light he had and the result was he saw. Now, there's a lesson for anybody. And now, I want you to note the storm that followed his healing.

Now, it's a very strange thing, isn't it? That this man had been blind all his life. The neighbors had come in to see the lady's new baby and he was blind. And as he grew up, he was blind.

And as he played with the others that was found, he couldn't play as well. He was blind. And when he grew to young manhood, people pitied him as the blind boy, the blind young man.

Nobody did anything about it. It didn't cause any stir. Nobody got mad.

Nobody got glad. Nobody got excited. Nobody got rocked.

Nobody worried much as long as he was blind. But as soon as he got delivered, all hell broke loose. You know that? Just as soon as he got delivered, all hell broke loose.

Why, here was the blind man and Jesus and the neighbors and the parents and the Pharisees. And here was arguing and questioning and abusing and moralizing and opposing. Here was sarcasm and abuse.

All because a poor fellow who had been born blind got healed. You'd have thought they'd have all sung the doxology and called a town meeting and publicly thanked God Almighty that one of their neighbors who had never seen was now seeing. Human nature isn't like that.

They could look without a feeling of pity maybe upon him while he was blind. But as soon as he got delivered, because he hadn't been delivered according to their church doctrine or their church formula, he was delivered. But he wasn't delivered because he didn't call a meeting of their board and get permission.

And the result was they were mad. A lot of people in a lot of church people, they let God do anything as long as you get the board's permission. They want to call a board together.

And the ladies aid and say, you think this is proper according to Article 13 and Section 2? You suppose this can be? That God could heal a blind man not according to their church discipline he couldn't, but according to the loving heart of God who could and did. Now, here were these Pharisees. I suppose the worst people in the Bible were not the Sodomites.

The worst people in the Bible were not the antediluvians. The worst people in the Bible were the Pharisees. I say this after some 35 years of studying my Bible, I believe I'm prepared to say it.

But the Pharisees were the most ungodlike people that there was that we find any place in the Bible. They healed nobody, but they were ready to oppose and abuse as soon as the Lord did. They helped nobody,

but they were willing to curse Jesus for helping people.

They cared nothing and they only hated those who did care. And they were the most religious people in all Asia Minor. I want to say this to you, sir, that if I had to take my choice between being an atheist and being a 20th century Pharisee, I'd rather be an atheist.

I'd rather be a man who honestly is convinced if such a man exists that there is no God and live as if there was no God and live according to my own beliefs than to be a Pharisee ostensibly believing there is a God and acting as if there wasn't one. The Pharisees were men who were so religious that everybody knew how religious they were, but they were religious with a bad temper. They were religious with an evil disposition.

They were religious but full of jealousy. They were religious but full of pride. They were religious but full of envy.

I would rather be a cur dog in the alley and die like that dog and be carried out with the garbage and be forgotten while the ages roll than to be a man made in the image of God and let myself get into a state like the Pharisees, a state where they were so religious that they were the religious leaders of their times and so infinitely bad that they crucified the Savior. Don't you imagine you're safe from that, my friends. You're not.

There's altogether a possibility that thing would creep up on you. Nobody believes you can get cancer, but some do get cancer. Nobody believes they're going to get knocked down by an automobile, but some do get knocked down by automobiles.

Nobody thinks they're going to die of heart attacks, but some do. Nobody's willing to believe that he could ever turn out to be a twentieth-century Pharisee. But here they were, bad-tempered.

Anybody that's a Christian and has a bad temper ought to go to God Almighty and have him deal with that temper if it takes him the next twenty years. Anybody that's a Christian and has a bad disposition ought to go to God about that bad disposition. I have said before that Christianity held with a bad disposition is more harmful than Communism or Liberalism in the Church of Christ.

Well, the Pharisees were bad people, and yet they were so good that Christ couldn't find any fault with their moral lives. But they were bad, rancid, evil, rancid inside and evil in the heart. Now, notice the change in this blind man.

He was healed now, and he could see, and he walked around seeing. Before, he'd stared straight ahead, but now he was noticing things. He'd see a baby toddling down the street, he'd look at the baby and smile, and he'd hear a familiar voice, and then he'd search the face and say, He'd see a rooster out there in the alley, and everything was new to him.

He was getting acquainted with the world in which he had lived by looking at it. And the people said, Is not this the man who sat in bed? Well, no, others said, It can't be. It's a remarkable case of a look-alike, but it can't be.

You see, he's just like him. But he argued, I'm he, he said, I'm he. Now, here's a situation I want you to notice.

When a man has been renewed by the wonder of the new birth, he's really been converted, he's the same fellow, and yet he isn't the same fellow. That's odd. You'll recognize him if you see him on the street, because he probably has on the same suit, and he's the same height, and the new birth doesn't change your height, and if you're fat, the new birth doesn't take off any weight, and if you're skinny, it doesn't put it on, and if you're red-headed, it doesn't change the color of your hair.

You're still you, but oh, what a different you you are. They know who you are, all right. Still got the same social security number, same phone number, still married to the same wife, still, you're the same fellow, and the tax collector knows where you are, and in one way, you're still you, but in another way, you're somebody altogether different.

One said, is this the same fellow? Another said, no, he's just a fellow that looks like him. No, he said, I'm the fellow, and he argued, he said, I'm the man. He was, I'm the same man, and yet he wasn't the same man quite at all, because that old man had been a blind man.

I mean, the man before, he was still young in years. He had been blind, now he could see. The difference between sightlessness and seeing is the difference between two men, and yet it can happen to the same man.

So it is with a sinner. He comes to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he repents of his sins and trusts Christ as his Savior, and something happens within him, wonderful and beyond words, and he's the same fellow, and yet he's marvelously a different person. He's changed.

I don't mind telling you that I haven't much confidence in these religious professions that don't result in change. I think they ought to result in change. If a person is a Christian, now if a man is a drunkard and a gambler and a wife-beater and a baby-deserter, and he's a dope addict and a murderer, and he gets converted, there will be a change, of course.

And we expect that. Those are dramatic, colorful changes. But I think there ought to be change in anybody, anybody, even if he had never been in jail, even if he had deserted his wife and his children, even if he isn't a dope addict.

The mystery of eternal life reaching the soul of a man ought to change that man, change his whole outlook, change everything. He sees where before he was blind, and yet in a wonderful way he's the same man that he was before. Now, there's one of the paradoxes of the Christian life.

A converted man is the same man, yet he's a different man. And the neighbors say, isn't that the fellow we used to know and hanging around the bar down here? Others say, well, he looks like him. But what's he doing with the Bible under his arm? Oh, he said, not the same fellow.

He just looks like him. You know, I'm the man. I'm the man.

I'm not the man I used to be, yet I'm the man I used to be. Now, you toss it around yourself. Do anything with that you want to.

But I say that if you're a really born and new Christian and have been renewed by the mystery of the Holy Ghost within you through faith in the blood of Christ, then you are the same man, but you're a different man. You're in many ways the same man. God starts with the same stock, but oh, what a change! The old things have passed away and all things have become new.

So, there was the situation. And I noticed, as I've studied this the last few days, I've noticed that the more they argued and abused and questioned and moralized and opposed and doubted, the stronger his faith got all the way through. And finally, he arrived at a place where he could say, the unanswerable argument, one thing I know.

Once I was blind and now I see. Now, what can you do with a man like that, I want to ask you, brother? You can show that the Bible isn't the word of God, and he smiles and says, that's what you think. I was blind and through this Bible I see.

And you can call in all the unbelievers and the literary, the higher critics from Germany, and all the wise professors who show this is full of folklore and can't be trusted, and when it's all over, the man who's been healed says, I was blind and now I see. You can't fool me. I can't answer your arguments, but I know.

As a very young Christian, I don't recommend this for others, but I did it and got away with it by the grace of God. He knew I hadn't much sense, so he let me do it. But when I was a young fellow and was actually preaching and had my churches, for years I read more atheistic, communistic evolution than I did religious books.

For a long, many years, I didn't have any religious books, much except my Bible. But I knew God, I'd met the Lord. And I'd read the old Schofield Bible, I'd worn a couple of them out.

And I could even quote the notes, you know. So I got my theology there, and I knew God all right. The Lord had come to me and I had met him, and I'd had an encounter, and I knew what I knew.

But I wasn't satisfied just to be a dumb fundamentalist. I wanted to be a bright fundamentalist and learn something and get something in my head and still be a fundamentalist. So I read the atheism.

Clear back to Lucretius, clear back to the nature of things, as he called his famous book on Prove There Was No God. And I got my head. I used to read quite on the warfare of the Bible with science, and I couldn't answer it.

I didn't know enough, and I didn't think anybody else knew enough to answer him. And when it was all over, I remember, I used to get down on my knees and I'd say to God, now God, he has me and I can't answer him, but oh, I'm so glad I know thee, and so glad I've been converted, and so glad I know Jesus Christ, and so glad I believe in the Bible. And I don't know why, and he's got arguments there against this book that I can't answer, but I believe the book.

And I'd rise with a feeling in my heart of joy, because I don't try that, because it may throw you. I don't know. But it didn't throw me because I'd met God.

And the result of that is, now I don't worry about atheists and unbelievers and liberals and modernists and all the rest. They don't bother me, because I know they don't know enough and can't know enough seriously to disturb the foundations of my faith. A lot of Christians, Emerson said, send your boy to college, because that's the only way you'll have of knowing he doesn't need to go.

And he said, as long as you haven't been to college, you'll walk by every college and look in and say to yourself, oh, what I could have been if I'd only gone there. So he said, go ahead and get that out of your system. Go to college, and then you won't have that regret.

And there are some Christians that are worried about their souls, and they look with great respect upon the learned unbeliever. And they say, oh, what a learned man he is. His head must be awfully full inside.

And I'm just a poor, dumb, fundamentalist believer, and I'll sneak down a side alley with my Bible and give out a tract on the way. And I'll never face that fellow. Brother, I'll face any one of them, any one of them.

Because I have met someone, and he and I have had an encounter. And I'm not one of his perfect ones, and I suppose he's a little ashamed of me sometimes. But nevertheless, I know him, and he knows that I know him.

And I'll face any one of them. They don't bother me. Well, amen.

And here was this fellow who knew who he was, and said, I was blind, but now I see. Now, that's the final test, personal experience. After all, that's the final test.

So Jesus was a common name, and he said, the man called Jesus did it. Then after they'd argued awhile, and he'd had time to think and listen to them and look at them and look at their nasty faces while they opposed and cursed out the Son of God, he said, I believe he's a prophet. And he got to verse 17.

Then the fire flew some more, and hell raged, and then he came to verse 30, and he said, he's a true worshipper, he's of God. Nobody could do this if he wasn't of God. And he came to verse 38, he threw himself down and said, Lord, I believe on the Son of God.

Do you want progress he made there? He made progress under fire. Now, some of my friends, they can't make any progress under fire. They have to be put in what my old German grandmother called a band box.

I never saw one, but she had a soft place she called a band box. Put in a band box? You'd say, oh, I'm sorry he married her. She's such a soft lady of a thing, you'll have to carry her around in a band box.

Whatever a band box is, some Christians have to live in it, or else they're not. Just let them meet opposition anywhere. They come whimpering, licking their wounds to the pastor and say, I'm being persecuted.

Well, God bless you, brother, you're honored. So were they persecuted before you. So was Jesus persecuted before you.

It would be like a soldier running to his commanding officer and saying, Sergeant, Sergeant, they're shooting at me. Of course they're shooting at you. That's what they got you out there for, targets.

And this fellow grew under persecution. I don't have too much faith in the Christian that has to have everything set for him. I remember one brother, he always was preaching and praying about atmosphere.

He'd say, Lord, give us an atmosphere. Give us a good atmosphere. We had a wonderful atmosphere.

He was an atmospheric Christian. He couldn't stay blessed unless the atmosphere was right. I told you about H.G. Wells that said that Buddhism was a good religion, but it was no good except in warm climates.

And you have to fix it up for some people. I say, get converted and jump in, and God will take care of you. As a kid, we learned to swim in a hard way.

Now they give you a pair of water wings and a handsome instructor with a big chest, and they'll watch you, and they'll take your pulse. But we kids on the farm, we learned to swim the hard way. They'd just grab a fellow.

Four fellows were the teaching staff. Two would take the feet and two would take the arms, and they'd count, one, two, one, two. And they'd let him go, and like Jonah, he lit in the middle of the old swimming hole.

And if he made it back to shore, he'd graduate. That's the way we learned to swim, brother. And that's the way they did in the Bible.

They believed on Jesus Christ in the Bible and started out! But now everything has to be done for them. Everybody has to do it. They have to have their thinking done for them, they have to have their praying done for them, they can find a fellow that prays all night, they chase him all around over the North American continent and brush up against him in the hopes that some of the glory will brush off.

Do your own praying, brother. Do your own worrying. Do your own trusting.

Get on your own knees. God gave them for you to get on and read your own Bible. And you get your own bloody nose and suffer your own persecutions.

Let the Lord lead you through and you'll come out all right. There's so much softness in this day. They're even having church at 7 o'clock now, in order they can get out at 8 so they can run home and look at the shows on television.

And this all is for the children's sake. They can bring their children to Lyres. Not for the children at all, it's for that bunch of carnal old bums that ought to be willing to pray all night, Sunday night.

But they're old carnal old church member bums. And they sit on the board and decide the holy work of God, but they won't stay until 9 o'clock because they've got a good show on between 8 and 9 and they want to run home. I'm not knocking radio and television.

I don't own a television set, but I know a lot of good godly people that do. So I'm not knocking. I'm only saying, as soon as that thing starts to dominate you, you're lit! Keep it out of your system.

Keep it out of your habits. Keep it out of your heart. So with everything else.

We make it easy. We come crawling out, taking the curlers out of our hair, way late and getting to Sunday school after the class has started. Well, I had a bad night of it last night.

Where were you? The coffee clots until 1.30 in the morning. Come on up to it now! Drinking coffee and gabbing until 1.30 in the morning. You couldn't get out to Sunday school.

And you're a Christian. You're a cat without claws or teeth, purring on the doorstep of the kingdom of God. This fellow, he grew under persecution.

He went from a man called Jesus, as they kicked him around from one place to another and threatened him and burned him with sarcasm. He grew in grace and in theology. And he started out, verse 11, a man called Jesus and ended up in verse 38 saying, Lord, I believe on the Son of God.

Now, those parents. I want you to notice the parents. The Jews came to the parents and said, Is this your son? And they said, Yes, he's our son.

He was born blind. He now sees. Don't ask us to explain it.

We can't explain it. Ask him, they said. You know why they were afraid to come out on their son's side? Because they were afraid they'd get thrown out of the synagogue.

Because the Jews had met hastily and passed a resolution to the effect that if anybody said Jesus was the Christ, they'd throw him out of the synagogue. And they couldn't afford to get thrown out of the synagogue, so they couldn't even come out on the side of their son. Under pressure, they said, We admit he's our son, we admit he was blind, and we admit he's healed.

Don't ask us any more. The old denominational rut. They were going to stay by their group and by their church, and they were going to be in the synagogue even if it meant turning coward and running like a whipped dog.

They wouldn't come out, oh, wouldn't it have been noble if they had gone over and stood by their son's side and said, Thank God in heaven, the God and Father of Abraham, thank God, the God of Isaac and Jacob. And David and Isaiah and Daniel, our God, the God of Israel, he's healed our boy. One on one side and one on the other.

They faced those snarling, bearded Pharisees and said, Like it or not, we stand with this boy. God's delivered him, and whether you throw us out or not, we three will walk the streets and pray if we can't come into your synagogue. That would have meant something to those Pharisees.

They would have thrown them back on their haunches, but not those parents. They said, Don't get us involved in this. All we know about him is that he's our boy and was blind and now he's healed.

And they were afraid of getting thrown out. Oh, there are so many born-again Christians. I know they are born anew, all right, they are saved people.

They are giving of their time and money to support old, dead synagogues. They haven't had a live thing there for generations. You know, down in Orlando, Florida, and St. Petersburg, Florida, they have a good-natured feud on.

I remember sitting at a meal one time in the Christian Businessmen's Committee and heard two men, one from Orlando and one from St. Petersburg, arguing. And they were good-natured about it, they were Christian brethren. And one said, What route do you take from Orlando to St. Petersburg? And the other fellow said, There is no route from Orlando to St. Petersburg, nobody.

And the other fellow tossed one back at him, and then one fellow came out with what I thought was the neatest. He said, Did you know they've taken the obstetrical ward out of all hospitals in St. Petersburg? Because everybody there is old. There's nobody there that's young enough to have a child so they don't need the obstetrical ward.

I thought that was rather a stretch, maybe a bit. But there are churches like that. There's no nursery.

There's no reason for any nurseries. Nobody's been born around there for generations. They just meet and eat.

But nobody's ever been born around there. They've just taken out the baby ward because they don't expect anybody to meet God in those churches. And yet there are people supporting those old, sterile, dried-up synagogues.

Life is too short for me to spend my time supporting that which doesn't stand for the Lord and the things of the Lord and the scriptures and a holy life. I can't do it. You may, and I'm not a come-outer up to now.

So help me, I've never invited anybody to this church from any other church. I've been accused of it, but I've never done it. Never.

Of course, if some thin sheep with his wool all tattered and ragged and his ribs showing through the wool comes longingly and looks this way and wants a mouthful of grass, I won't chase him out. He can come if he wants to, but I won't invite him in and I won't say, leave your church. But I will say, I wouldn't support a dead synagogue.

A synagogue ruled by sarcastic, bitter, bad-tempered, bad-dispositioned Pharisees, worse than atheism! But they'd rather stay by their synagogue than stand by their son. Poor parents, I hope they got it right later on, but they certainly weren't headed that way the last we saw them here in the 9th chapter of John. People stay by their old dead synagogue for fear, inertia, misplaced loyalty.

I own no loyalty that doesn't own my Lord. I own none. You can't say, do this because you're an American.

I'm an American, as I said this morning, but I'm a Christian first. And anything else I am, I am second. I owe my first allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Any other allegiances, and there are many, that I may have, they're all second or third or fourth. Never first. Jesus Christ is first.

So don't misplace your loyalty, sir. Give your loyalty to Jesus where it belongs. Now the text, as we close with, should be through in three minutes.

Three classes in the world, according to Jesus. The blind who know they are blind, he says, they are they that see not. The blind who know they are blind.

Of course, he turned that from physical blindness to spiritual blindness, as he always did. He spiritualized everything, because he knew that everything was essentially spiritual. And all problems are spiritual at heart, he knew it.

So he turned it to spiritual blindness. And he said, the blind who know they are blind are the ones that I came to deliver. I am come that they might see.

If we know we're blind, inwardly dark and blind, we only have to cry to the light of the world. And Jesus Christ comes, and the light shines, and we're delivered. Then there's another class, the blind who think they see.

Jesus said, ironically, ye who see, they didn't see, they only thought they saw. And yet they did see, because they had moral accountability. And he said, if you really couldn't see, be different.

But you can see, and yet you're cross-eyed and you don't see right. Such are made permanently blind. In this day of softness, relaxation, positive thinking, and winning friends and influencing people, and watering

down and dehydrating the gospel, and painting the cross, sweeping the thorns all out of the holy way, this day of soft Christianity, we forgot something.

It is that the word of God both kills and makes alive. We have forgotten that the same message that will save one may damn another. For the word of God is the saber of life unto life, and death unto death.

Two men hear it, and one will be saved, and the other will perish. The coming of Christ will mean that one will be taken, and the other will be left. The coming of the message of Christ means one will believe and one will reject.

And the one who believes will see, and the one who rejects will be blinded permanently. As long as there is hope and desire and longing, it's not too late. Thank God it's not too late.

You say, Mr. Tozer, I've not been a bum nor a drunkard, and I've never been in jail, but if you knew what a nasty fellow I've been inside, how angry I get, what a bad disposition, how jealous I've been, how I've hated people, how bitter my spirit has been, how resentful. You only knew what a devil I've been inside of me. You'd never hold out any hope for me.

Oh, yes, sir, I would. I hold out hope for any man who will admit he's blind. In your blindness, you have given way to temper.

You have had a bad disposition. You have been jealous. You might have been stingy and squeezed a nickel till the buffalo bawled in pain.

You may be as stingy as the devil. You may have been so nasty that only the mercy of God kept your wife from leaving you 20 years ago. You may have been all that.

That's blindness, blindness, blindness. If you say, I'm not blind, you condemn yourself to everlasting night. But if you say, yes, yes, yes, I'm too bad ever to believe, ever to have hope.

God couldn't be honest and holy and help a man like me. Oh, but that's just what he could do. That's just what the cross was for, brother.

It was that proud men should perish and humble men who believed in Christ should live. Hell is for the proud and the self-righteous, but there is a fountain filled with blood for the meek and the humble and those who will come as they are without one plea and believe in Jesus Christ. There's a third class that I mentioned only in passing, and that's the class of those who were once blind, but now they can see.

They were once blind. The light of the world is Jesus. He's the light of the world.

And if you let him shine in on your heart, if you believe in him to this night, he'll turn your darkness to light, take away your blind eyes and give you a gift of seeing.

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