

(John) the Gracious Gaze

by Willie Mullan

The sermon explores the doctrine of sickness, discussing various causes of affliction and the role of God in allowing or causing sickness.

Duration: 43:23

Scripture: John 8:58, John 9:1, John 9:3-9, 2 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Corinthians 5:1

Topics: "Graciousness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the story of Jesus healing a blind man. Despite being surrounded by a hostile crowd, Jesus takes the time to notice and have sympathy for the man in deep trouble. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing when someone has experienced a true transformation and wanting to hear their story. The blind man attributes his healing to a man called Jesus, highlighting the person and the work that Jesus did for him. The sermon also touches on the concept of two kingdoms, the kingdom of God's dear son and the kingdom of God.

Transcript

The Gospel by John, Chapter 9, and I want to try to get down through these eleven verses in the next forty-five minutes. It will take me to do it, but nevertheless you'll bear with me this evening. You remember that as we came to the close of John, Chapter 8, and Jesus spoke to the crowd and said in verse 58, Jesus said unto them, verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.

Then took they up stones to cast at him. You see, they understood perfectly what Jesus was saying. When he took these words upon his lips, I am, they knew of course that he was professing to be God, the great I Am.

And they immediately took up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, it was another miracle, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. And the next chapter commences with the conjunction, and as Jesus passed by, he saw man which was blind from his birth. And the first heading I'm using this evening is the Savior's observation.

I think there's a lovely touch here that we must not rush past. You see, although they had taken up stones to stone him, and Jesus at that moment had his own troubles, while there was a hostile crowd around him, yet let us get the hold of this, that although he was passing by out of the crowd that was hostile to him, yet the eyes of the blessed Lord had time to see a man in deep trouble. You see, I think there's a lovely touch,

that as he passed by, even when he's getting away from this hostile crowd, he has the time and the sympathy to gaze at this poor soul in the depths of darkness and hopelessness.

You see, we can see the gracious gaze that rested on this sightless sinner. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, whom did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Now, I pointed out to you that this is a tremendous, really a very difficult question. Because the man was born blind.

And the question is, who did sin this man? Now, if he was born blind, could he possibly sin before he was born? And this is really put forward in the question, the disciples' interrogation. Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Now, before we get into the depths of answering the question, let's get the hold of this. You see, when the Saviour turns his sympathetic eyes upon this poor sightless sinner, the disciples seem to catch the gaze, just then, with his lips.

You see, they're thinking about the problem of human suffering. The Lord Jesus is thinking of helping the person. And you know, don't ever let us forget that little bit just now.

Why, you know, we can try to be the theologian, answering all the problems, but forget the person. Oh, we know so much, and let the people go ahead. Why, they weren't really troubled about the person, it's just the problem that's troubling them.

How did this begin, where did it come from, who did sin? It's not the person they're concerned with, it's the problem. You see, it's so easy to probe the problem, and do nothing about blessing the blessed. And yet this is a very serious problem.

You know, we see so much human suffering all around us, sickness and infirmity and disease of one kind and another, that again and again and again we've got to face it, this problem of human suffering. But when we do, let's never forget the person as we discuss and probe the problem. You know, some people say that every affliction, every little child that's born afflicted, is the result of sin.

Now, I believe that if you look at human suffering, and you trace it away back into the remote past, of course it's connected with sin. If you go back far enough, you'll find Satan, Lucifer, in pride, blasting everything, and sin entering into God's creation. And if you come down a step or two, you will find Adam disobeying God willfully, and sin entering this world.

And, of course, if you trace it back away there, yes, of course, all pain and suffering and tears are connected remotely with sin. But all suffering is not connected immediately with sin. I think we must get that squared out this evening.

Let's have a look at this problem of human suffering. Come with me to the book of Job, just for a moment or two, and we want to get this squared out this evening. And we're at Job, chapter 2. I don't need to go into the story of Job and waste time.

Do you know how God speaks of him in the first chapter? Why, he even said to the devil, Hast thou considered my servant Job? There is none like him upon the earth. Yes, God had great things to say for Job. But the subtle old devil said, well, if he had a bit of trouble, you know, he wouldn't praise you so much.

And God allowed, God allowed, and you must remember that God allowed the devil to take away Job's children. And in one day he lost seven sons and three daughters, and that's a tremendous loss. There is

no man in this meeting this evening ever lost seven sons and three daughters in the one day.

Why, if he lost just once, I tell you, it would break our hearts. But Job lost seven sons and three daughters, and at the end of the day, when the darkness had really deepened, he got down humbly on his knees and he said, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away his blessed people. And you know, the devil didn't know what to do.

This man had defeated him. So God just said to the devil, what do you think of him now? Oh, he says, it's all right, you know, he still has his health. If you touch this health, you know he would curse you.

All right, says God, I'll try you out. And so he allowed the devil to touch Job. And here's what happened in the second chapter, verse six.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in mine hand, but save his life. You see, the devil can't go any further than God will allow. So that he's not almighty, I'm sure you're learning that now.

He can just go so far and no further. God said you can touch his body, you know. But don't you dare take his life.

So Job was going to live. But here's what it says in the next verse, verse seven. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with four boils, from the sole of his foot unto his cross.

Now, I want you to gaze at this poor victim. And I want you to see him covered from the soles of his feet right to the crown of his head with this lonesome, smelling, awful disease. And it was Satanical.

That's where it came from. It came from Satan. Now, turn quickly from there back to 2 Chronicles, and we're at chapter 21.

The second book of Chronicles, chapter 21. Let's read a few verses just to get the truth. Verse four.

Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and slew all his brethren with a sword. And I was also of the princes of history. What an uncontrollable wickedness was he at.

Slew all his brethren with a sword. Verse 12. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Azar king of Judah, but hast walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a-holding, like to the whore-doms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself.

Well, there is incomparable sin there. Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people and thy children and thy wives, and all thy goods. Verse 18.

And after all this, the Lord smote him in his bowels, though a didgly bit, with an incurable disease. Who did it? The Lord did it. That's not Satan that time, you know.

That sickness didn't come from Satan. That came from the Lord. That's what we call judicial.

God was judging this man, and he was meeting him and judging him. And remember when Paul was writing to the Corinthian saints, he said that many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep

because of disorder at the Lord's table. You know, this is what we call judicial.

And that's for the fun, for folk who think that they can heal everything. Do you see this fellow? Well, he was smote with an incurable disease. You can take him to any campaign, and the word of God will still be there.

And you can cure him at any healing meeting in the country. And the word of God says, incurable. God has smitten him.

That's what we call judicial. We're tracing the doctrine of Satan to get the hold of it. Sometimes it's the canonical, Satan that does the smiting, only when God allows him.

Don't be afraid of him. Sometimes it's judicial. Have a look at the book of Proverbs.

Just quickly, chapter 17. Proverbs 17. Now, here's a beautiful verse to put your way down deep in your heart for the time when you may be laid upon the broad of your back.

It's Proverbs 17, and that's verse 22. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Do you see the word like? It's in italics.

And I think the better translation is this. A merry heart doeth good to a medicine. But a broken spirit dryeth the bone.

You see, the writer to the Proverbs was very wise, and he knew this quite well, that mind and spirit and heart and soul played a great part in either putting you down into brokenness or lifting you up when you were in the dead. You know, a great many people are ill just because they think. That's what the doctors call functional.

You know, they go round every week and they sit in the surgery and they fill it out for hours, and you know, there's very little luck with them altogether. So just imagine. Now, we used to have an old fellow who worked with us, and he was a real character, but he had this weakness.

You know, the boys used to do this to him, used to say, Tom, my, but your face is very pale this morning. What's wrong with you? He said, What? He said, You're not well, Tom. Then in two minutes, you know, they'd have his shirt open and they'd be listening to his heart, and one of them would say, Boy, I never heard the thing going like that.

That's like a traction engine. And by the time, the time that these fellows had their fun with Tom, you know, he was ready to leave the spirit down and he was going out of the gate, you know, all down and out, and many a day Tom went home. And you know, there's a whole crowd of you smiling and you're not much better, you know.

Not much better. You know, when you're lying here, your heart bumping on the pillow tonight, or some of you turn around and quit enlightening. You can't stick it.

It's just, my dear friend, we're all just built like that. Sometimes sickness, it's only functional. That's where some of these great healing meetings get the springboard they have, you know.

Because if you've only got an imaginary disease, why, if you can get something that will bring you out of it, then you've got an imaginary healing. And it never was healing. So we've got to face it.

We're chasing the doctrine of sicknesses now. Sometimes it's satanical. Sometimes it's judicial.

Sometimes it's only functional. It's imaginary. Watch again.

Here's another lovely one. We're in the New Testament now. 2 Corinthians, chapter 12.

2 Corinthians, chapter 12, and this is Paul speaking in verse 7. Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations there was given to me a thorn in the flesh the messenger of Satan the buff of me lest I should be exalted above me. For this thing I besought the Lord's vice that it might depart from me and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee. You see, I think we've got to see this, that even some of the greatest, yes, the saintliest servants of the Lord, that are sicknessed.

Do you remember, Gaius, that John penned one of the letters to 2 John? Do you remember that John prayed for him that he might prosper and be in health even as his soul prospered? See, this man's soul was prospering, but he was in a body that wasn't just too well. You see, some of the greatest saints of God, Apostle Gaius, was nigh unto death for the work of Christ. You're not telling me he was a sinner, are you? Not at all.

He is the great apostle. Yes, and he prospered greatly. And when the Lord spoke to Peter in John 21, we'll come to it one night if the Lord will.

He said, Peter, you know, you'll die for the glory of God. Said, you can't, you know. You can die for the glory of God.

You see, sometimes sickness is from sickness. It's satanical. Sometimes it's judicial.

Sometimes it's only functional. Sometimes it's essential. My God touched poor Justin Peoples when he was useful to God.

And you know, I've known men and they've thought, this thing that's wrong with me, if I could only get rid of it. If I could only get away from it. If I could only be healed.

If I could only be cured. My dear friend, this thing that they were talking about so much was the greatest blessing in their lives. And so it proves in the life of the great apostle.

My God let this come to him just to keep him from being off his balance because of the great revelations he had. And you know, all the godly men have had some limit or other. Jacob only became Israel when he began to horse upon his thigh.

It was only then he really began to walk with God. So I want you to get the hold of this. We're trying to get in the doctrine of sickness this evening.

And we're looking at the judicial and the satanical and the functional and the essential. Now here's one here. 2 Corinthians chapter 4. 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and the way down the chapter there of verse 16.

For which cause? We think not. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. Do you see the first verse of chapter 5? For we know that if our earth to the house, this tabernacle, were dissolved.

You see every day we live. This outward man is perishing. This house we live in is dissolving.

And if you don't think I'm right in this, you know, well some of you haven't as many teeth as you used to have. And certainly if you were looking down from here you would know some of them haven't as much hair as they used to have. Oh yes, and I can't half see now.

Sometimes I can't find the place just because I can't see. You see, our earthly house is dissolving. The outward man all the time is perishing.

My, we're dying every day. You know I just, and I use the word here, natural. So that you see this weakness and sickness and affliction that can be satanical, judicial, functional, essential, natural.

But I want you to think about the one we have tonight. Have a look again at John chapter 9 and I want you to notice the answer now. The Savior's explanation.

Versely Jesus answered, and here's his answer. Neither hath this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. You know, sometimes affliction, sometimes it's mystical.

My dear friends, it's only God who sees the purpose, and it's a hidden purpose. What made these disciples ask a question like this, who did sin? I'll tell you what made them. You see, there were schools of thought in the day in which they lived, and there were three separate schools of thought about sickness and infirmity.

One school of thought, and it came down from Babylon. It was really pagan, it was an idolatrous thing. It proclaimed that when a child was born blind, shall we say for example, that there was the reincarnation of somebody's soul in that body.

Somebody that had lived before, and who were guilty, sinless. The soul has come down to this body, and there are no afflictions. But that was a Babylonian thing, and certainly the disciples of Christ had never embraced that.

You see, this is taught in the New Testament, because when Christ asked the disciples, whom say men that I am, will the Gnostic crown above from a trident's head, that he's John the Baptist, that he's Jeremiah, that he's Elijah, that he's one of the prophets. And they were back at this, this old Babylonian, pagan, idolatrous theory, that the soul of the Baptist had come to entwine the body of Jesus. It was Gnostics that answered like that.

But you know, a great many in Israel believe this theory, that the parents of every afflicted child have sinned in some way, that affliction had come upon their offspring. And of course there was a crowd, number three, and they believed just because of the story of Jacob, who had grasped the heel of his brother, even in the womb, that the child could sin before it was born. Now let's get the hold of this.

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost before he was born. But let me tell you, that's an exception to the rule. An exception.

And Jacob certainly grasped the heel of his brother before he was born, but it's an exception to the rule. It's not the doctrine of sickness. You never base doctrine on an exceptional, isolated case.

You base doctrine on all the teaching of the book. And that's what I've been getting you. I've been grasping it up for you.

You're getting the doctrine now. So my dear friend, when somebody is afflicted, don't you jump to conclusions. Or their parents have said, you know, there's always this other wonderful side.

Down at Armagh. And I have surpassed those terribly afflicted souls that have closed in, in what is called the hollow down there. Men and women who've never had reasons.

There they are. You can hear them shouting and screaming and see them running and rushing. I always go by very gently, you know.

Because I know this. That inside the enclosure, every solitary soul is bound for heaven. My Satan will never put his hands upon them and eat them.

They are not held responsible. They never have reasons. The only thing that condemns them is sin.

And Christ does put a Calvary in every soul in the enclosure, on their way to heaven. You know, sometimes when the affliction comes, that God might manifest his works. You know, Dr. Barnhouse told us a wonderful story once, when he was here.

I think there were only about six or seven of us there. And he said, you know, I was going to have a mission at a certain place. And I went to meet the committee and spoke to them all.

And then a young minister stood up and said, Doctor, don't count on me being here all the time. You know, I just can't be here all the time. I said, for what? He said, well, you know, we're going to have a mission.

I'd like to be at home a night or two. Oh, that's all right, brother. He said, we'll understand that.

We'll be praying for it. And then he said, during the mission, this fellow disappeared. And then at the end of the mission, I saw him reappear.

And he said, I could see that there was something wrong. And that night I brought him into the letter room and said, well, what's happened? He said, you know, we've got a little baby boy and it's got no sense. Now, this was a boy.

And Dr. Barnhouse unveiled something that has been a great blessing to many. He said, brother, I want you to look at this lightly. There are two kingdoms down here, the kingdom of God's dear son and the kingdom of God.

And I've noticed through life that there are parallels in these kingdoms. He said, you know, I can go to a university and I can get a professor at a certain age, who is married with a certain number of children, a certain number of degrees, and he hates the very name of God. I can go to another university and I can get a man with the same degrees, the same age, with marriage, the same number of children, and he blesses the God of heaven.

He said, I walked into a hospital one day, I found a fellow paralyzed up to here. He could only move his head just a little, but he was blessing God. He said, I only moved down two beds, I found a fellow the same age, in the same way, but he was cursing God.

He said, I began to see that there are parallels in these kingdoms. And I want to tell you, young man, that God has trusted you with something. And in the kingdom of God's dear son, it's your privilege to glorify God, even in the shadows.

You know, there's a parallel of you in the devil's kingdom just now. I wonder how you're getting on in the kingdom of God. I wonder can God look down and say, look, there's mine.

And he can challenge the devil and say, there's yours. Is there a mother here who's got a wee baby, and it's a cross for you, dear. Are you in the kingdom of God? There's a mother at you in the kingdom of God'sness.

Will you let the created intelligence around you see what the grace of God can do? Always remember. I think that will do for the gospel. Let's go on.

Verse 4, Jesus said, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day and night cometh, when no man can work. You see, the Lord Jesus is back at this idea. You fellows are occupied with a problem.

I'm occupied with a performance. I don't like to get taken up with doctrine too much until we can bounce it out, until we can do this and that and the other. Never mind about too much.

I know people who are sound in doctrine and sound at preaching. I know who. I could get you dozens of them.

Oh my, they could scoop a tea for you. But I don't care who goes to hell. Don't get occupied with a problem and miss the person.

Jesus said, I came to work because the night will come when no man can work. Let's go on. Verse 6, When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and reminded the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation sent.

He went his way therefore and washed, and came to see. You know, I think there's a tremendous loss in him stooping down and making clay. I think there's a tremendous loss in the clay being lifted up before his eyes, sightless as they were.

I think there's a tremendous loss in his being sent to the pool to wash. I believe it's just, again, another beautiful, wonderful illustration of Christ's own coming down, speaking upon him the form of a servant, yes, clay, and being lifted up before the eyes of the perishing, and the word of God directing poor lost pillars to the only place where they could be washed. I think there's a lot there.

I'm hurrying on to get this to him. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he. Others said, He is like him.

He said, I am he. Then comes the question. How were thy eyes opened? I think this is one of the greatest answers in the book.

You know, when people see a man change, a drunkard made sober, a harlot made pure, when they see a man really change, they're always wanting to hear the story. By here comes the story in a language I think that's beautiful. He says, A man that is called Jesus.

He begins to talk about the person. He says, It was a person who made this wonderful change in me. It was a person.

And then he says, A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes. He begins to talk about the person's work for him. And said unto me, Go to the pool of Thylos.

And he talks about the person's work. Friend, I'd love to tell you this. 27 years ago as a child, I got a wonderful change.

I got a new life. I got new powers. I became a new Christian.

And it was all done by a person. Jesus. And his work on Calvary.

And his word to my soul. What a beautiful change. Dear unsaved friend this evening, let me leave one word with you.

The night cometh when this work will be unbearable to you. And it's coming soon. I trust that you've learned the doctrine of sickness this evening.

That you've seen the wonder-working power of Jesus. And that you, unsaved, will come before the night. Come, let's bow together.

Lord, we bow in thy presence. We thank thee for the scriptures, the scriptures of truth. We thank thee for the power of Christ.

We thank thee for the mysteries of God. We thank thee for all the plan and purpose the Father hath for everyone whom he has chosen. And we pray, Lord, that tonight we might glory and glory and glory in the wonderful Savior who died on the cross and has given us assurance through his precious word.

We part off in thy fear and with thy favor through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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