

The Deception of Blindness

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- [0:00] The scripture reading today comes from John chapter 9. Please follow along on your Bible.! If you're using the church Bible, it's on page 842.
- As he passed by, he saw men blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?
- Jesus answered, Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent.
- So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?
- Some said, It is he. Others said, No, but he is like him. He kept saying, I am the man. So they said to him, Then how were your eyes opened?
- [1:33] He answered, The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and received my sight.
- They said to him, Where is he? He said, I do not know. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.
- Now it was Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, He put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see.
- Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath. But others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?
- And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes? He said, He is a prophet.
- [2:35] The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked him, Is this your son who you say was born blind?
- How then does he now see? His parents answered, We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees, we do not know.
- Nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age. He will speak for himself. His parents said these things because they feared the Jews.
- For the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, He is of age.
- Ask him. So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. He answered, Whether he is a sinner, I do not know.
- [3:41] One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see. They said to him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?
- He answered them, I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?

And they reviled him saying, You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.

The man answered, Why, this is an amazing thing. You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners.

But if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

[4 : 42] If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. They answered him, You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?

And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And having found him, he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? He answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?

Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you. He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things and said to him, Are we also blind?

Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say, we see, your guilt remains. This is the word of God.

[5 : 51] Great. Thanks, Anastasia. Let me pray for us briefly, and then we're going to look in. Father God, we come to your word because we want to hear you speaking to us. We are not interested in the opinions of man.

There's more than enough opinions on our phones and our social media feeds, on the news headlines, Lord. But we want to hear truth. We want to hear what you have to say. And so come and speak to us through your word.

Open the eyes of our hearts to see you and to hear what you want to say. In your name we pray. Amen. If the message of the Bible is to believe, which it should be believed, our most urgent need is to gain a clear picture of Jesus Christ, of who God is.

Because how we see God really shapes every aspect of our lives. The way we view God shapes how we view ourselves, shapes how we view others.

How we handle the storms of life, every relational difficulty, every bad medical report that comes our way, every sleepless night, every dark night of the soul.

[6 : 59] How we handle and steward the difficult things that come our way in life, in many ways depends on how we view God. Whether we are able to see Him accurately, whether we are able to see ourselves accurately.

Friends, what you and I most urgently need this very week, what our children need this week, maybe more than anything else, is a clear and accurate view of who God is, and therefore who we are.

Now, the context of this passage is, if you've been here the last few weeks, Jesus is in conflict with the religious leaders of His day. The last four or five chapters, John calls them the Jewish people, the Jewish leaders.

They are at conflict with Jesus. They don't like what He's saying. They don't like His claims. They call Him a Samaritan. They say He's demon-possessed. They say He's the son of a devil. And they don't like Jesus.

And why is that? Well, now we start to get a picture of why. Why is it that despite all the evidence, all the miracles that Jesus has done, all the teachings that point to Jesus, all their learning and their understanding, why is it that they constantly reject Jesus and push Him away?

- [8 : 10] Well, John wants us to see. Because despite their learning, and all their knowledge, and all their experiences, at a very deep heart level, their hearts are blind to Jesus.
- They can't see who He is. They are blind to Him. And more importantly, they've become blind to who they have become. And because they cannot see Him, they cannot know Him. Because they do not know Him, they cannot receive the life that Jesus wants them to receive.
- And so the main point of today's passage, of this chapter, is this, that Jesus wants to heal us, of the spiritual blindness, that permeates our hearts. And He wants us to see Him.
- He wants us to know Him. He wants us to trust in Him, and believe in Him, that we can experience life. That's what John wants us to see here. And so, if you've got a Bible, keep it open.
- I want you to look at the structure. Often the way, one of the ways to understand the Bible, is to see the structure that the author writes it. And if you look at today's chapter, the first seven verses, verses one to seven, Jesus has an interaction with His disciples, and a blind man, right?
- [9 : 17] His disciples and a blind man. And then the last seven verses, the last paragraph, verses 34 to 41, 35 to 41, Jesus has a similar interaction, with the same formerly blind man, now healed, and with the Pharisees.
- But in between these two interactions, Jesus is conspicuously absent. He's nowhere to be found. And in between these two interactions, where Jesus speaks, are a whole bunch of people, and there is a fog of ignorance, of confusion, of self-righteousness, all the manifestations of spiritual blindness, to which we are so susceptible ourselves.
- And John wants us to see that, the danger of not seeing who Jesus is, and not seeing ourselves. The danger of spiritual blindness. And yet he also wants us to see, he wants us to see, how Jesus comes to us, and moves towards us, that we may find Him, and find life.
- Okay, so in today's passage, there are three things I want us to think about. The blind man who sees, verse 1 to 7, the seeing people who are blind, verse 8 to 41, and the man who loves the blind.
- Okay, so let's dive in. Firstly, the blind man who sees. So our passage starts off, verse 1, Jesus and the disciples, are leaving the temple, and while they're on their way, they come across a blind man.
- [10 : 38] He is begging for money. Verse 8 tells us that he's a beggar. And the disciples are assuming, that the reason this man is blind, is because he has sinned grievously, or someone has sinned grievously.
- Now John tells us that he's blind from birth, and so the assumption is, either his parents sinned, while his mom was pregnant, and therefore curses come upon him, or maybe he sinned somehow, in his mother's womb.
- That was a belief in the ancient days, in the ancient world. And so, they are wondering, who's at fault here? Who's to blame, for this man's suffering? But Jesus won't allow, such a simplistic thinking.
- Because while it's true, that all that is wrong, and broken with our world, does ultimately come, as a result of the sin, that entered the world, our rebellion of humanity, particularly starting with Adam, and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Jesus explains, that not all of our problems, are necessarily, the result of some grievous sin, that we have done, or accomplished.
- Now it may be, that the problems in our life, is because we're rejecting God's will, and his word. Okay, that's always going to lead to problems. When God speaks, and we say, no God, I will do things my way, that's never going to end well.

[11:52] But Jesus shows us here, it's not so simple, as to say, because I'm suffering now, that is something, that I've done wrong, God is now cursing me. Actually, what Jesus says, in this instance, is that God is going to use, this very painful situation, of this man's blindness, to reveal something, about himself, something about Jesus, and his glory.

And so, Jesus reaches down, makes some mud in the ground, applies it to the eyelids, of the man, the blind man, and tells him, to go and wash in a pool, called Siloam. And John tells us, the word Siloam, means sent, or the sent one.

Now why does Jesus do that? Why doesn't he just say, be healed? Well, one of the things, that's interesting, in the previous two chapters, Jesus has referred to himself, six times, as the one who is sent from heaven, sent from the Father, sent from God.

And he says it again here, verse four. He says, we must do the works, of him who sent me. Who is Jesus? He's not just a man, or a rabbi, he is the one that's sent from heaven, sent from God.

And so now, Jesus says, go to the pool of sending, of the sent one, and you will find your healing, your redemption, your cleansing. Jesus wants us to see, that as we do, what the blind man does, as we go to the sent one, we will find our healing, our restoration as well.

[13:09] And so, he goes and he washes, in the pool of the sent one, and he comes back seeing, just as Jesus said. But in John's gospel, as we've heard, the miracle, the sign, is never the big idea.

The sign is always meant to point, to something else. And so, Jesus here, look what happens. He, following the miracle, Jesus fades into the background, and is almost nowhere to be found.

And what happens? Confusion, and chaos reigns. And so here we see, the seeing people are blind. Now, John records four conversations, that take place, between this formerly blind man, who's now healed, and one, the neighbors.

Then they don't know, what's going on, so they take him to the Pharisees, and the Pharisees, and the blind man have a conversation, or the healed man. Then the Pharisees, and his parents have a conversation. They still can't find out, what's going on.

So the Pharisees come back, to the healed man, and again have a fourth conversation. But in all of these four conversations, in each one, the antipathy, is that the right word?

[14:11] The antagonism is ramping up, and it's getting more, and more hostile, as the self-righteousness, and the religious blindness, comes to the fore. And so firstly, this healed man, has a conversation with his neighbors.

And they say, are you the one, that used to beg around here? You look the same, but your eyes are different. What's going on? And they can't make sense of anything, and so they take him to the Pharisees, the religious leaders.

Now the problem is, Jesus has healed this man, on the Sabbath day. And that breaks all kinds of, rules and regulations, that the religious leaders, have come up with. What you can and can't do, on the Sabbath day.

And so they really upset. Verse 15, the Pharisees again, asked him, how he received his sight. He said to them, put mud on my eyes, and washed, and now I see. Verse 16, some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.

Friends, here in their midst, is not just a man from God, but God himself, in human form. Here is one who cannot just tell them, what God is like.

[15:15] Here is God himself. One who's come to reveal God to them. Here is one who has brought, man and dust, into existence, all those thousands, or millions of years ago, and who has just revealed, the measure of his glory, by performing an act of recreation, through dust, and recreating man, and yet they cannot see it.

Why? Why can't they see it? Because, Jesus doesn't fit, into their religious paradigms. Jesus is outside, of their religious assumptions.

Jesus breaks, their presuppositions, of what a religious, God fearing man, must look like. They say, this man cannot be from God, he does not keep the Sabbath. Friends, I wonder what assumptions, you and I bring into church, this morning.

I wonder what assumptions, or presuppositions we have, and we think, God must be like this, and could never be like that. Friends, have you determined already, what God could be like, how he must act, how he must behave?

Of course, the God of the universe, is not going to fit neatly, into our presuppositions, our paradigms, and assumptions. Of course, he's going to challenge, our way of thinking. What kind of God, would he be like, if he didn't?

[16:32] And friends, for those of us, that are not Christians, for those of us, that are Christians, dare we ask the question, what of our, religious traditions, or our subculture, or our background, or our history, might blind us, to who Jesus is, and how he might want, to reveal himself to us?

The religious leaders, can't see it. Well the religious leaders, then call his parents, verse 19, and they ask him, is this your son, who you say, was born blind, how does he now see? Now his parents, they are trying to tread, on a very thin line here, right?

And so they say, yes we know, this is our son, he was born blind, that's true, but how he sees, we do not know. And then they say, ask him, he is of age, he will speak for himself. And John, very suitably tells us, his parents said these, things, because they feared the Jews, for the Jews, had already said, that if anyone should confess, Jesus Christ, he'll be put out, of the synagogue, he'll be cast out.

Therefore his parents said, he is of age, talk to him, don't involve us, in your religious controversy. Friends, I wonder if you see, what's happening here. Nothing will hinder, spiritual growth, nothing will suck the life, out of a relationship, with God, as much as fear of man.

Fearing man, will destroy, our walk with God. And for fear, of what people think of us, fear of how we might appear, to others, fear of our loss, of standing in society, or with our friends, or with our family, will reduce the uncreated, majestic God, to a convenient project.

[18:11] To something that we manage, in our lives. But friends, the God of the Bible, is not to be managed. He is to be adored. He is to be worshipped. And for these people, who would begin, and end each day, reciting the Shema, Deuteronomy 6, hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

That's how they would begin, and end each day. Here they are, for fear of what people, might think of them, and say, they cower away. Oh, we don't know who Jesus is.

Don't involve us in your thing. Just let us, just keep our peaceful lives, to ourselves. Friends, again, we are forced to the question, in what way, do the opinions of man, control you, or control me?

Where has our fear, of what people think of us, kept us from worship, kept us from knowing God? Friends, is it possible, that our fear, of what people think of us, or people's opinions, has made God small, and the fear of man big, in our hearts, and our lives?

And what is so blatantly obvious, in this chapter, is often not so obvious, to us. They're not outright, denying Jesus, they haven't abandoned, their faith, but they're just, sitting on the fence, they're not taking a stand, they are trying to preserve, their standing in society.

- [19:36] Well, look at the final, conversation that happens, in verse 24 to 34. Having not really, gotten anywhere, the Pharisees now, call the blind man, back to themselves, or the healed man, sorry, he's not blind anymore, and they come, for some more questioning.
- Except they've already, made up their minds, about Jesus. Look at verse 24. They say to him, give glory to God, we know this man, is a sinner. So they're questioning, but they don't really, want to hear the answer, do they?
- They're not really interested, in discovering, who Jesus is. They've already, written him off. Here are the most, well educated people, in the whole of the ancient, world. Some of them, would have known, the entire Old Testament, off by heart.
- And yet, they cannot recognize, the one they've been, searching for all their lives. Even when he's standing, right in front of them. And yet friends, here is a once beggar, probably uneducated, wouldn't have gone to school, poor, pitiful, blind, no station, in society, no social standing.
- And yet, he sees, what they cannot see. Look at verse 30. The man answered them, why? This is an amazing thing. You do not know, where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. Verse 32, never since the world began, have we heard of anyone, opening the eyes of a man, born blind.
- [20:52] If this man, were not from God, he could do nothing. Here is an uneducated, poor beggar. And he knows something, that all the sophisticated, studying of the Pharisees, has not shown them.
- And so, how do they respond? Are they convinced? Are they open? Are they repentant? Verse 34, they answered him, you were born in utter sin, and would you dare teach us? And they cast him out.
- They expelled him from the synagogue. They kicked him out of their community. Get out of here. Friends, do you see what John wants us to see here?
- John is showing us, that the real blind people, are not the beggars, on the side of the road, that have no eyesight. Actually, the blind people here, sure, the man on the side of the road, is physically blind.
- And that was very difficult, and we should have great compassion on him. But, Jesus wants us to see, that there is a far more serious problem, that is plaguing the people of his day. That plagues humanity, that plagues all of us.
- [21:55] Irrespective of our education, our careers, our position in society, our ethnicity, our bank status. Friends, irrespective of that, the most dangerous thing here, is the blindness, that pervades our hearts.
- Martin Lloyd-Jones used to say, the ultimate test, of our spirituality, is the measure, of our amazement, at the grace of God. Our measure, of the amazement. And that's the one thing, that these people cannot see.
- Of course, the one thing, spiritually blind people, cannot see, is the grace of God. And the Bible's diagnosis, is that, the condition of our inner world, our heart posture, is infinitely more important, and infinitely more determinative, on the trajectory of our lives, than, than almost anything else.
- Than any of the hardships we face, with a physical blindness, or, or any other challenge. The most determinative thing, on our lives is, what is the condition of our hearts?
- Are we amazed, at the grace of God? Friends, physical blindness, is deeply challenging, for those who suffer from it. We shouldn't downplay it. But, spiritual blindness, is utterly disastrous.
- [23:06] Because, to be spiritually blind, is not merely, to misunderstand, who Jesus is. It's to be cut off, from his grace. Cut off from the life, that he wants to give us. And that's why, in Ephesians 1, the apostle Paul, he prays this wonderful prayer, for the church.

But he doesn't pray, that they're going to grow big. He doesn't pray, for their financial resources. He doesn't pray, for political peace, or comfortable life. He prays, this is my prayer, that the eyes of your heart, may be opened.

That you may know, the immeasurable greatness of God, and the hope, to which he's called us. Friends, I think that prayer, is the prayer that I've prayed, for my children, probably more than anything else, in their lifetime.

And notice here, that it's not a matter of ignorance, or just lack of understanding. Because the formerly blind man, who's now been healed, clearly he doesn't understand everything. He's got some questions.

Look at verse 25. He says, whether he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know, that though he was blind, now I see. And he comes to Jesus, in verse 35, and he says, Jesus says to him, do you believe in the son of man?

[24:10] And the healed man says, so who is he? So he doesn't have, all his questions answered. He's still figuring things out. He's got some doubts, he's got some questions. But the one thing he does have, is a humility, and a willingness, to explore, an open heart, to say, God reveal yourself to me.

And that's what Jesus clearly tells us. Look at verse 39. Jesus says, for judgment I came into the world, that those who do not see, may see, and those who say that they see, may become blind.

Friends, Jesus tells us here, that there is a judgment, that is coming, and the verdict, does not depend on those, that are religious, and those that are not religious. The verdict, is not those who come to church, and those who don't come to church.

The verdict, is not those, that are necessarily moral, or immoral. The verdict falls, between those, who clearly see themselves, as being in need of grace, and those who don't.

Those who think, that they've got it all together. And Jesus says, that those who are sure, that they have it all figured out, prove just how blind, they are. Many years ago, there was a Scottish preacher, by the name of Alexander White, a hundred years ago, or so.

[25:24] And one day he, there he is, and one day he's in a study, and a friend of his, comes into a study, and says, you know, Dr. White, there's a visiting preacher, in Edinburgh, they were in Edinburgh, and this visiting preacher, is going around, telling everybody, how bad the churches are, and how terrible, all the pastors are.

Okay? By the way, only insecure preachers, done that, and I have done that, in my life before. God have mercy on me. Okay? So a visiting preacher, comes and telling, everyone, how bad all the pastors are.

And he says, he, this visiting preacher, even questioned, whether Dr. Wilson, is a Christian at all. And this guy, Alexander White, jumped out of his seat, and said, how dare he, question whether Dr. Wilson, is even a Christian.

And then his friend says, it gets worse. He even questioned, whether you are a Christian. And when Alexander heard that, he sat down in his chair, he put his hands in his face, his face in his hands, and he said, please, please leave me, dear friend.

I must examine my heart, to see if this is so. Isn't that amazing? Here's a man that's being slandered, he's being gossiped about, people are telling, saying bad things about him, questioning his motives, questioning his heart, and rather than getting defensive, and say, how dare they say that about me?

[26:47] His first response is, let me go in prayer, and see, this may be true. And let me examine, whether this is so. Friends, look at verse 40, in our passage today.

Some of the Pharisees, near him, heard Jesus say these things, and they said to him, are we also blind? Jesus said to him, if you were blind, that means, if you knew yourself to be blind, you would have no guilt.

But now that you say, we see, your guilt remains. Jesus is saying, if you had the humility, to examine your heart, and to say, is this true of us?

You would be on the trajectory, towards freedom, towards life. But the fact that you insist, we know what's going on, we've got it all under control, we are fine, actually proves, that you're in danger.

Friends, truly there is none, that are so blind, as those that insist, that they see. Now, this leads us to, let me share, three brief implications, for this, for this week.

[27 : 50] Three things to think about. First is this, in the face of criticism, choose examination. Friends, this week, the chances are, all of us, are going to be faced, with some kind of criticism.

Maybe you're at the office, this week, and your manager calls you in. Or a colleague, says something about you. Or somebody on social media, posts something about you. Or your spouse, very gently, suggests of a way, that maybe you can improve, things around the house.

Or, whatever it is, all of us this week, are going to be confronted, with something, that we don't find, like, that we don't find, easy to receive. Friends, when that happens, we can either choose, defensiveness.

It's not true. Never. I would never be like that. We can go on the counter-attack. We can blame. We can play the victim. Or, like Alexander White, we can put our head in our hands, and say, Lord, is there any truth in this?

Let me see, what you want me to see. The words of the psalmist, search me, O God, and try me. See if there's any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way, of everlasting life. Friends, in the face of criticism, choose examination, not defense.

[29 : 00] Here's the second thing. It means confession, is a regular part, of the Christian life. Confession, is the Christian's habit, of sitting under the heavenly physician's, operating table, and allowing him to remove, the cataracts, that form over the eyes of our hearts.

I don't know if that analogy, is too wordy. I'm sorry. Confession is, is us coming before God, and saying, God, it is true that I'm probably blind. Help me to see. Confession is coming before God, and allowing him to remove, the scales from our eyes, that we can see him, and see ourselves clearly.

You know those great words, 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. Remember that hymn? That's true of those, that come to saving faith, but it's also true of those, that are Christians.

It's not just that, once I was blind, and now I see. Friends, continuously, week in and week out, the sinful nature of my heart, makes me blind to God, and blind to myself. And day by day, week by week, I need to come before God, and say, God, I am blind, help me to see.

Let confession be a, continuous discipline in our life. And here's the third application. Parents, what do you long for your children? What do you pray for your children? If God could do anything for your children, and he can, what would you like him to do?

[30 : 20] Get good grades, to get into the best school, to get into the best university? Ready? Here's a prayer to pray. Father God, open the eyes of their hearts. Help our kids to see you, and to know you, and to know their need for grace, that they may run to you, and cry out for mercy one day.

Because how we view God, will shape every aspect of our life, not least of which, is how we view ourselves. And so let's come to the final thing, of our passage today. Look at verse 34, the man who loves the blind.

The problem with spiritual blindness, is that we are blind to our own blindness. That's the problem of sin, is that it's so deceptive. And we are blind to our own blindness, and we think that we can see. That's the problem with the Pharisees here.

And so in verse 34, the Pharisees answer the healed man. They say, you were born in utter sin, and would you dare teach us? And they cast him out. Just by the way, that's what religion, apart from grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, will do.

Religion will make us judgmental, arrogant, and self-righteous. You were born in sin. How dare you teach us? And they cast him out. Verse 35, Jesus heard, that they'd cast him out, and he went and found him.

[31 : 37] And he said, do you believe in the Son of Man? He answered, who is he, sir, that I may believe? Jesus said, you have seen him, he is speaking to you. And the man said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Friends, the religious elite cast him out. Jesus, hearing that they had kicked him out, went and found him. And having found him, what did Jesus say to him? Did he reprimand him?

Did he point his finger at him? He scold him? Did he tell him to sort his life out and get his act together? No, Jesus helps him see who he really is. Jesus had healed his physical blindness, but now he wants to heal his spiritual blindness.

Jesus wants to help him see who it is that's standing in front of him. Jesus went and found him where no one else, including his parents, wanted to be with him. Jesus went and found him and brought him back into community, not just into the church community, but into his family.

Friends, have you ever felt rejected, cast out, not good enough? Have you ever felt the church scold you, reprimand you, tell you that you need to get your act together?

[32 : 42] Father, friends, here is Jesus and he comes to us and he asks the same question, will you believe in me? And maybe our answer is a little bit, God, I don't even know what to believe anymore.

I felt so hurt, felt so rejected. Jesus comes to us and he wants us to see him because he wants us to be saved and he wants us to be healed. Friends, do you know who Jesus is? Do you see him?

Do you see yourself and your need for grace? And Jesus comes to those who no one else wants to go to and he reaches out because he loves those that are far from him.

He loves those that are hurting. He loves those that have been rejected. He loves those that are blind. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

Once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see. Friends, will you believe? Will you come to him? Will you worship him? Or will you insist that you see with perfect vision?

[33 : 41] Why don't you come to the one that has come for you? Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we confess and God, we confess that God, we are blind.

We do not see you for who you are. But God, even more than that, we confess we need you. We need you. God, I pray for every one of us in the room, starting with me.

Open the eyes of our hearts to see you again. Open our eyes to see you and to see ourselves and to see our need for grace. Help us to see, Jesus, that you love us so much that you came for us.

You were sent of heaven to come and find us and to bring us back to your family. So open our eyes that we may be saved, that we may be free. Help us, we pray, in your wonderful and gracious name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.