

Last week, we got into John 9. That chapter opened up with the story of a blind man. As soon as everything transpired and God gave him his eyesight back, two questions came up. The question came up from the disciples: "Why was this man born blind? Did he sin or did his parents sin? What was the deal?" After he got his eyesight back, everybody got interested and wanted to know how the blind man could now see.

I showed you that it was very important to get those in your Bible. I laid it out, as I do everything else, that there is a historical application to this. This story is true; he was a real blind man, and everything happened just the way that it happened. Doctrinally, this will always be prophetic as it deals with the Second Coming. This man is a picture of the nation of Israel with their spiritual blindness, rejecting the Messiah. Inspirationally, I showed you how every blind man in the New Testament will be a picture of an unsaved man or an unsaved person. Also, in this story, blind men in the Bible will all be a picture not only of an unsaved man, but in this case, it is a picture of when we go through the tough times of life. Tough times are going to come to all of us. This will be invaluable to you.

I. The Power of Object Lessons

I talked about how in life God will give you great object lessons to learn from. I think that probably one of the things that is missing in most of God's people's lives, and I do not know why—I guess maybe they just have so much else going on—is that they fail to see around us and everything that goes on. Not only today, but if you want to understand today and tomorrow, then go back and look at the object lessons of history, because history, as we well know by now, always will repeat itself.

Psalms 9:17

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

With that in mind, we find that the nations themselves will form great object lessons for us. America is in a sad state. America is in a real mess. I do not have to lay that out; we all live in America, and we know that we are really in trouble. The trouble is only going to get worse; it is not going to get any better. I think the key for us to look at what is going on around us and understand why and where it is going is to look at the great object lessons from other nations in history.

There was a time when the nation of England was the greatest nation on the face of this planet. She ruled the seven seas. The little coined phrase was that the sun never set on British soil, and the reason for that is because she had colonies everywhere. The reason why she had such an impact in the world is because she was taking God's Word, a King James 1611 Authorized Version, around the world. God blessed her. God gave her an incredible navy. God gave her incredible protection. God let her touch and kiss the face of this planet with the Word of God.

Where is she at today? Well, she is probably an eighth-rate nation with all kinds of problems and has lost everything. It all goes back to her dumping the Word of God.

I have told you before about Czechoslovakia. You cannot find it on a map today; it is gone. But there was a time under a man named John Hus that that whole nation was almost won to a saving knowledge of Christ. It was an incredible, incredible place. Today, you cannot even find it anymore. Why? Because of what they did with the Word of God. These are lessons. These are object lessons. These are things that we can learn from other nations and help us understand why we are in the mess that we are in today.

Look at Germany. Germany was the real leader in the Reformation as far as breaking the back of the Roman Catholic Church, from Martin Luther. Two hundred years after the Reformation, they were right back in the same mess. Why? Because of what they did not do with the Word of God.

You can use the same thing for the great lives of men, the lives of great men in church history or in the world. They stand as great object lessons for us. To be able to look at the lessons in life from Martin Luther and Erasmus, it is incredible what you can learn by the object lesson of those people's lives. We talk about George Whitefield and how God used him in the 1700s to bring in, single-handedly with Jonathan Edwards, the Great First Awakening. What an object lesson! What an object lesson those men's lives are to us today.

I think of David Brainerd. What an incredible object lesson. If you are a Christian and you have not read his diary, you are missing something in life. A young man who surrendered to be a missionary to the American Indians. He was the object lesson that the great missionaries later on that went to India and went to Burma read his diary, and God used that object lesson to reach those nations. Incredible, incredible.

I think of George Müller, how he prayed in millions and millions of dollars in his day for his orphanages to win people to Christ, those young kids that he wanted to take in. It should be the same way in your life and my life. People ought to see the hand of God in our lives, the hand of God in our families, the hand of God in what we are trying to do. Light versus darkness. God will use everything in life to show you something if we are paying attention.

II. The Unique Significance of John Chapter 9

I showed you last week that there was a process to examine yourself when you and I go through really tough times. I laid out seven clear aspects to our issues in life: things that we want to look for, things that we want to examine ourselves in, and that we want to really understand what we are going through and why. That was last week, and yet this chapter just keeps getting better and better and better. It is a unique chapter. John 9, as far as I am concerned, will probably be the most unique chapter in the Bible if you understand what He is doing here.

I do not know what you see when you see the Bible. I try to look at the Bible from every angle and try to stop and never blow through anything when I look at it. But I do not know if you have ever noticed that in this particular chapter, the Lord devoted a whole chapter to this man's life and God dealing with him. That may not mean much to you, but it is 41 verses all about dealing

with one man at the first coming of Christ. As I said, that may not mean much to you, but when I read back in Genesis 1, He only did 31 verses on the whole creation. There is something special about John 9.

In Acts 8, where we see the straight story—what a great story it is—of the salvation of the Ethiopian eunuch, which is a picture of our salvation, He only did it in 15 verses. For God to devote, knowing God the way I know Him, for God to devote 41 verses and take up this much space to the event of one sinner who was blind and then gets his eyesight, and all the events that surround that, there must be something very important here for us to unearth. Some special things about this chapter. We are going to dig it out today.

So, while your kids are in Bible Explorers and our Timothy kids are up there getting their Bible down, I would suggest that everyone who has your hard hat in your backpack, you get your hard hat out, get your shovel, and let us do some digging this morning. Let us get into this chapter and see why He took 41 verses to lay this out. I want to take verses 8 through 30 and break them down into five sections so we can better understand what He wants us to learn from all of this.

This is a great way to lay out your Bible, taking a passage and breaking it down into smaller pieces so you are able to digest it. This is what I want to do for you. God does the exact same thing with each book of the Bible. If you go on our website, and so many of you do, and people use these all the time, years ago, on a Sunday morning, I went through every book in the Bible, and I broke it down, those big books, into little pieces. If you wanted to learn a book of the Bible, you just start with that. I give you all the little pieces, and then once you understand the pieces, then you can better put it back together.

As a Christian, I am just a child. I am really not much more than a baby Christian, and I have a childlike faith that I just look at that Bible that is way beyond my ability. So I see that the way God wants me to approach it is like a little child. My sister in Ohio, who is listening this morning, Sharon, you will remember this: when I was little, after you got done beating me up, we sat down for dinner, and remember, Mom used to take—and I was just a little guy, I was still into beanie weenies at that point in life—and Mom would take dinner, and she would cut up the meat into small pieces. She did that because I would choke on it. Being a little guy, I did not have the ability to chew my food—still do not—and I would just get too much in my mouth—still do—and then obviously would choke on it. I remember her doing that.

I remember that, and I think today, when it comes to the Word of God, the Bible, that is exactly what God wants us to do. He wants us to divide it up, break it down, so we do not choke on it. You will notice that when I teach you the Bible, whether it is this morning or Thursday night, and any question, I always do it that way. I get people on the website from time to time who will encourage me to move a little faster and get more questions done. I understand that. But I will never hurry through anything for you because I am doing for you what I had to do for myself. I am no better than you, and you are no better than me. We are all little children, and we need our food broken down for us and then be able to digest it that way. Break it down into smaller pieces. This is what I do. Many of you who are being disciplined or somebody is working with you, that is what they do with you. That is why it takes—we could be through those lessons once a week, but

they do not do that. I think the world record is somebody took a year on lesson one. That is great, probably a little too long. But why do they take time doing those two or three weeks on a lesson so they can break it down? We do not do anybody any favor by rushing you through the Word of God, because the Word of God is something that we need to look at every part of it, every aspect of it, and we need to break it down.

Now, I am going to read John 9:8-30. Last week, we saw that this blind man came to Jesus and he got his eyesight back. We saw that in John 9:1-7. So now we are going to pick it up in verse 8. Read along with me, if you will.

John 9:8-30

The neighbours 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: but he said, I am he.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Let us pray. Father, Thank You today for these good people that are here and the Word of God that lays out before us. We pray, Lord, that You will give us wisdom and insight into everything that we need to see today. Help us to glean why this chapter is so important, why You would take 41 verses when You did not take nearly that many to lay out the creation. What do You want us to see today, Lord? Help us now to put it all together, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

III. The Mandate of a True Witness

Out of this passage today, I think it is clear that the Lord wants us to understand what it really means to be His witness. We have been told and mandated to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

For us, that would be Kansas City, that would be Missouri, that would be America, and then that would be the world. Titus 1:13 tells us that our witness should be true. A witness of God's power in our lives, all based on understanding the suffering of Christ. 1 Peter 5:1, and that is being my witness.

Yet, in spite of these verses, most of God's people, I am sorry to say, have a very shallow witness, or they have none at all. I have found that when God's people do witness, they are always telling people—and you have heard me say this before—they are always telling people what God will do for them. This story, if it does anything, will destroy that myth. This story will completely show us how wrong that idea of a witness really is, because the greatest witness will

not be telling somebody what God will do for them. But you see in this story, the great witness out of this story is what God has done for you.

This will be a great lesson in this story of John 9, and most probably the reason why God took so many verses to lay this thing out, because of what He wanted us to see. I told you last week, I mentioned again, learning through object lessons. Our families, our marriages, our lives, ministry, and kids should be an object lesson to others. It is really hard—I would think it would be hard, it would be hard for me—I would think it would really be hard to try to be a witness and tell somebody what God will do in their life when they look at your life and see that He has not done it. To me, that just cancels the whole thing out.

In our story today, people can deny what you say. They will absolutely deny what you tell them that God will do for them, but they cannot deny the change in your life. That is the great moral lesson, the object lesson of this story. The word repentance, we know this from our past study, is never dealing with salvation, but rather a change in the direction of your life. The issue today is people claim to get saved, but there is absolutely no change in the direction of their life. There is no real biblical repentance. You have got to be careful with that, because from this story, I am not judging anything or anybody, but I am telling you from this story, when this guy got saved, it changed everything about him.

Now, you want to add to that the problem today, and I get this: we have the megachurches out there, and the small ones too, who have compromised the Word of God and have a church that supports a really non-directional change of life after you get saved. They do not want to separate you from the world, but rather want to keep you in church and bring the world into you. They will completely ignore the Bible; they will bring in the world's music, the world's psychology, all the things.

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

A couple of weeks ago, you will remember I laid out for you the seven things that you lose in your life when you get the Word of God out of your life. Well, now you can add an eighth one today, because you will lose your witness. The only problem will be a lot of God's people who have the right Bible, a lot of God's people who believe the right Bible, they still do not have the right witness.

IV. The Family as God's Primary Witness

I talked last week about God's plan to reach the world. This is the main thrust of my ministry, which you should know by now if you have been around here any length of time: to reach the world in the Old Testament and the New Testament through families. There is no question about it in the Bible that that was God's plan in the Old Testament, and there is no question that that is God's plan in the New Testament.

Here is where we start with that.

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

We are to win people to the Lord Jesus Christ. But here is where that starts. Wouldn't it be absolutely, incredibly wonderful if there were people that were guaranteed to us by God that we could win them to Christ? Wouldn't that make it a lot simpler? It makes soul winning a breeze. Well, God has provided that, because the only 100% guarantee to win someone to Christ that you and I have will be the ones in your own family: your kids. If you follow what the Word of God says about parenting, you and I as a parent have absolute and total control over what our kids see, what they hear, how they grow up.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. God gives you a complete protocol on training up your children. You do not raise kids; you raise rabbits, chickens, ducks. You train children. You either train up a child in the way he should go, or you do not train up a child in the way he goes. It is just that simple.

I have had several parents over the last couple of months, and I have tried to lay out to you how that generation after generation, we should be building our children so that after you and I are gone off the scene, the ministry of the Word of God goes on. The unbroken chain of moms and dads training up their children and leaving a legacy that is a heritage for the Lord, so that four, five, six generations down the line, we are long gone, but they are still carrying on what we started.

I have said this before, and one of my burdens here with all of you young men and young ladies, singles who soon will be married, sooner or later, my goal—and many of you came out of, and I know some of you had good Christian moms and dads, we have some of them here today—but I know some of you did not. You are pretty much an orphan when it came to spiritual things, and God brought you here. One of the things that I want to do, I endeavor to do, I try to do, is to begin that cadence, begin that movement in your life that from this point on, you build the generations that God wants you to have: generation after generations of moms and dads, grandpas, grandmas, kids, forming a ministry team.

I have had over the last couple of months some of you parents come and talk to me because your kids now, girls and guys, you are getting to that age where they are noticing that there is a difference between guys and gals. Now they want to date. Now there are guys that think they are attractive, and there are guys that she thinks he is attractive. Now they want to get into a dating relationship. That scares moms and dads who are good Christian parents, because the last thing you want to do is give your daughter to the wrong guy or your son to the wrong girl.

In the Bible, the great love story is Boaz and Ruth. Every parent wants their daughter to find a Boaz, and every parent wants their boy to find a Ruth. But you are scared to death that instead of your daughter finding a Boaz, she may find a lazy "Az," a worthless "Az." Listen carefully, a dumb "Az." I get that. But there is a way around that.

You know what I tell them? I tell them this: "Well, so-and-so is going to come ask for permission to date my daughter." I said, "Okay, what are you nervous about? What are you scared about?" "I

do not know, I just—it is a scary thing." "Hey, it is a scary thing. Crossing the street is a scary thing. Driving down to Arthur Bryant's at nine o'clock at night to get a sandwich is a scary thing."

Here is what you do: you bring the guy in. You let him say to you, "I really would like your permission to date your daughter." Shoot him on the spot. End it. Right there. No. What you say is, "You know what? I really appreciate that. But let me have you understand something. My family is a ministry team. You need to look at my daughter or my son in the right light here. This is not something where you are going to waltz into our world and captivate her and sweep her off her feet, or him off his feet, and then cascade Niagara Falls. This is not what this is about. We have dedicated our family to the Lord, and we are going to build generations of moms and dads and kids and grandkids that are going to hold the torch high for the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to understand, I did not bring my daughter this far. I did not bring her to this point where I am going to turn her over to somebody that is going to break that chain that we have invested our life in with her. So you need to understand, I like you. You are really a nice guy, and you probably really love the Lord. But I want you to understand going in: this is not about you dating my daughter or my son. This is about, are you willing to fit into our ministry team? Because you are not breaking it."

All that comes down to the influence that you have had in your child up to this point. If you have done what you should have done and need to have done, and most of you probably have done that, it is a thing where they—I call this the Isaac protocol. Isaac and Abraham had such a good relationship that Isaac, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, was willing to lay in that order, do whatever his dad said, believe whatever his dad said, because he trusted his dad more than anything else and anybody else on this planet. That is where you need to be. Do not ever give that up. Do not ever let somebody else take that. Do not let a coach, do not let a teacher, do not let a gym teacher, do not let anybody have more influence over your child than you have. Because when that day comes, they will already understand that they are not looking for a prospective boyfriend or a girlfriend; they are looking for a prospective person that will fit into the ministry team.

Parents, I have seen this all my life: you can fake it when the kids are three, four, five, and six, because the disobedience and all that stuff, most people will at least cut you a little slack and they will say, "Well, they are just kids." But you cannot fake it when they are 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. Now you see what you really have. When your child is part of your ministry team, they will look at that person in depth more than just the outward appearance, because they will have ingrained in them that families are ministry teams. What you have started, or some of you have started, and some of you are coming through with some of your moms and dads that are here today, and many of you are some of your moms and dads that are not here today, you are already part of that. What you want to do is continue that on.

The tragedy that I have seen in ministry with men who were—that I was convinced and everybody thought were really good pastors, or really good preachers, or maybe were deacons, or they were Sunday school teachers—I always looked at that, and I am just being honest with you today. I have been in this business a while. I have learned some great object lessons, good

and bad. I am telling you right now, it does no good for me or anybody else to stand in a pulpit and tell you and try to tell you how to raise your family if you have not raised yours right yourself. It just does not work. Maybe God's people are so whatever that they just do not get that. But I have seen pastors that were good preachers and were supposedly good pastors, but their kids were just an absolute disaster. I am telling you right now, I have seen men who were great men in the Bible, and they were. They were great preachers. But I have seen how their children have turned out, and the fact that two or three generations from that pastor's death and going off the scene, nobody in that family will remember who he was, what he did, and how God used him. It gets lost.

I had a friend of mine that was an evangelist. I have not seen him for 30 some years, but this guy had an absolute burden for souls that you would never believe. I was with him in Romania after the wall came down and communism had been dispelled, and we went there with teams and held great revivals. He was the preacher. I have never seen a man who had more of a passion for souls than he did. He would preach up there, and I am not kidding you, literally hundreds of people would come forward. At some point after that, his boy, who would not go to church and was so despondent about everything, committed suicide. Now, I feel terrible about that, and this is certainly not a criticism in any way, shape, or form. But I asked myself, where did the idea come from that winning the world to Christ was more important than your family?

I knew another missionary, that him and his wife were great people, and they spent all their life on the mission field, and they put their kids in private schools, had not seen them for 10-15 years while they were doing the work, and then wondered why their kids wanted nothing to do with God, the Bible, and the church. I am asking, where did the idea start? Where did it come from? Who infused that into Christianity, that reaching the world was great, but losing your family was an "oops"? My point is this: you have no witness except what God has done in your life, in your family. The object lessons that you have have to be the object lessons to others who do not have it. What good is it for me to tell anybody what God will do for them if He is not doing it in my life?

V. Five Aspects of a Real Witness from John 9

This chapter is an incredible chapter. You can already tell you do not like it because you are so quiet this morning. The broken cycle of family ministries, building strong families, it starts with you singles. I know I never changed the world; I am not interested. I tried it a long time ago and found out I was greatly outnumbered. So I decided to start with you guys, you singles, you young couples that have just gotten married, or you have been married for a while, but you really found the Lord and you are falling in love. No matter where you are at with your kids, there is always something you can do, and most of you are doing it: redeeming that time, doing everything you know how to do. But it is you singles, it is you young couples, that my goal is to begin to build you now, so that when you find that special person, they become part of your family's ministry team. It is not just, "This is my son-in-law, this is my daughter-in-law." It is the fact that together, your family is the object lesson to other families.

This story today, I want to break it down into five easy pieces, five aspects of what He is trying to show us here today that a real witness should be. I think this is the reason why He has taken 41 verses to lay all this story out, because He goes into great detail to try to show us what a real witness through a man's life should be, that was blind, unsaved, and now he sees, he is saved. Watch what follows.

- 1.) Salvation: Seeing Jesus First (John 9:1-7)
- 2.) A Changed Life: The Visible Difference (John 9:8-12)
- 3.) The World's Opposition: Denying the Miracle (John 9:13-18)
- 4.) Your Personal Witness: No Substitutes (John 9:18-23)
- 5.) The Undeniable Witness: "I Was Blind, Now I See" (John 9:24-30)