

John 9

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[0 : 0 0] many of you most of you i think actually will have been at the tent uh over the last week or so but if you haven't i could tell you that uh one of the things that happens each night when we meet in the tent is that someone tells their story of how they came to know jesus i think the terminology is to call it a real life story is it um sometimes we refer to this as a testimony and having sat in the tent and listened to uh five or six now the one thing that's very clear is that no two testimonies no two real life stories of faith are ever the same i can think about louis who shared his testimony just a few minutes ago louis aged eight who was brought up to know about the lord and to know about how to become a christian uh very quietly i suppose came to the jesus that that he was led to and then we have gordon who was here with us last sunday and gordon's upbringing was quite different he didn't know about jesus he wasn't taught about jesus and quite suddenly i think it was at age 18 and open he he came to know the jesus that he'd never really properly heard of so there's two quite different stories of two people at different stages from different backgrounds different upbringings who came to know the same lord and savior and with john's gospel open uh we can think back just a few chapters and we can observe that there are similar variations in the stories that are told think about john chapter three nicodemus very religious very upright at night he comes to jesus as jesus is drawing then we can think about john chapter four uh the woman at the well who was not religious at all and who was in a state of real immorality at that point in our life and yet jesus came to her and met her at that well two quite different stories of people who came to faith in christ and in john 9 what we have here is we have another real life story we have another testimony of a man who meets with jesus this is the testimony of a man who was born uh blind both physically and spiritually but who came to see through jesus why is john telling us these stories why are we listening to these stories in the tent night by night why did louis share his story a few minutes ago it's for the same reason that the spirit inspired john john tells us all these things chapter 20 verse 31 we know of by heart by night all this is written so that you will believe that jesus is the christ the son of god and that by believing you will have life in his name and one of the ways that we can be encouraged to believe is by hearing about how other people came to believe and to be saved if you're the christian this morning one of the ways that you can encourage other people to believe is by telling your story in conversation when you're given opportunity sharing your testament telling your story first peter 3 15 says always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope

that you have but do this with gentleness and respect when did you last tell someone to the christian here's a practical probing question when did you last tell somebody the story of the hope you have in jesus of what he has done in your life and what he is continuing to do in your life we're going to hear the story of this blind man four points to kind of guide us through this i'll spend more time on the first couple the first thing we see in this story is a meeting with jesus the second thing the second point is a trusting of jesus the third point is a professing of faith in jesus and finally worshiping jesus so first of all we have this man's meeting with jesus verse 1 as he jesus that is went along he saw a man blind from birth and what i want us to see here is that this meeting was initiated by jesus as jesus went along jesus saw the man and jesus initiated this meeting he reached out to this man and jesus always is the one who initiates the meetings that we have with him we might think this morning well where do we meet with jesus well first and foremost we meet with jesus in the word in the bible as we read it as we hear it preached we're we're reading the verses and sometimes there's verses they're jumping off the page and they're speaking right into our life and our hearts and that's when jesus is meeting with us there's times that we can be sitting in sermons in different places and it's as if the minister has been given a kind of a full report on your life over the last week and then he speaks into everything that's been going through your mind and you think how did he know he didn't know but god knows and when that's happening jesus is meeting with us sometimes we meet with jesus in hard times to our prayer for tomorrow and by that there'll be some in that pain and in that grief we'll know the reality of the comfort and the strength of jesus sometimes we meet with jesus in good times and as we know such rich blessing we just know that it's coming from the hand of christ meeting with us sometimes it's as we walk to the top of a mountain and we stand and we're in awe of all that we see deep within us we know there is a creator behind us christ is meeting with us but jesus is always the one who sees us and who reaches out to us and who initiates that meeting if you're the boss in your workplace you can take out your diary and you can set a date and set a time and tell your employees you will meet me here at that time you know you can tell people perhaps in your work in life but in your family life when and where they will meet you can't you can't do that with christ he is lord he is ultimate absolute boss we can't take out our diaries and tell him that we will meet with him

at a convenient time in our lives we cannot say to him i will meet with you jesus when my work life is less busy than it is today we can't say jesus i want to schedule a meeting with you when my family commitments are just less intense than they are just now we can't take out our diaries and say to jesus i will meet with you in 30 years time where i've tasted a bit more of what this world has to offer it's not the way it worked for this man it's never the way it works if you forgive me for being personal for a moment i can remember being 10 years old and that fact hitting me so hard that on that day at 10 years old i became a christian and we're sitting in church with that false impression that i could sit in that same chair every week and say to jesus not this week not next week not the week after but one day soon i will i will accept you and then we sang well we the the the the words that we sang were read out psalm 95 today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart and that's for me when the pen dropped that's when i realized that today in that present tense jesus was meeting with me and next week i might sit in the same chair at the same time in the same place and he might not be meeting with me and that terrified me so i went home and i said sorry for my sin and all the times that i'd said not today i said thank you that you met with me today and spoke to me today please come in take my sin away come in my life and he did and i want to encourage you today if you're sitting in this place and you are hearing the word and it's making sense and you're not just now thinking about your chicken and potatoes or your next week if you're still allowed if you're hearing god is meeting with you don't harden your heart there are spiritual zombies sitting in churches all across the land and they sit there week after week after week like the woman who was 95 everything's going over the head nothing is going on god can break through these kind of hard hearts and we pray that he will but the point is today if you can hear if you understand your sin if you understand that there is a saviour who came to die for your sin god is meeting with you as he did with the blind man listen to him meeting with jesus the second point is trusting jesus and just a word about the man's condition before we think about this properly this is a man and he was born blind he was blind physically he had been blind since he was born and it seems that he was a well-known character the people recognised him they knew him verse 8 they recognised him as the man who used to sit and beg and i guess that many of these people who were in conversation with him they walked past him every day in his need and in his struggles and in his condition but note that jesus didn't walk past him many walked past him but jesus didn't walk past him the disciples were ready to walk past him but jesus didn't walk past him in 2013 i went out with a few people through to india there was lots i could say about that but one of the things that struck me in india that was most shocking was the poverty in a place you could be walking along the street in a city and there are people virtually dying on the streets in such acute need and in such a state and they're in desperate need of attention and when you aren't used to that you're walking along and you're horrified by everything that you see and i remember early on saying to one of the guys that was that was with us and guiding us around the place how can all these crowds walk past nobody seems bothered nobody's nobody's paying a bit of attention and his answer was it was a theological answer his answer was karma he said karma what do you mean by karma he says well the majority of people who are walking along the street just now out of a hindu background they believe in karma and so they look at a man or a woman who is dying on the street in desperate suffering and karma says this man is suffering because of an indiscretion in his life or the life of his family going back so he's paying his penance just now let him suffer on walk past he has to endure this in the hope of a better life when he comes back next time and the disciples of

Jesus they seem to have a little bit of that going on in their attitude as they walk along they ask Jesus in verse 2 who sinned was it him was it his parents and Jesus says neither sinned verse 3 doesn't mean to say that they were both sinless he's saying this man is not suffering because of his sin or his parents sin this suffering is not a punishment for sin and that's a lesson that we have to keep on remembering don't assume sickness and suffering is caused by personal sin and you might be sitting here this morning feeling absolutely fine and in good health and you say well of course I know that but you may be sitting in a hospital bed one day as many are who I speak with suffering greatly and asking the question of God what did

[15:07] I do we're given many corrections in the Bible that we cannot draw a straight line between suffering and sin remember the book of Job he wasn't suffering because of his sin he was suffering because of his righteousness and a satanic attack so we need to remember that and we need to follow the example of Christ who did not walk past somebody who was in need and who was suffering Jesus did not walk on by like everybody else was walking by why not tell you why not because Jesus is not full of karma but he is full of grace and he is full of compassion and he is full of love and Jesus sees this man and Jesus is going to do a work of grace and glory in this man's life verse 3 and let's take that and apply it as well it's encouraging for us to know especially when we're going through a hard time there's sometimes the most amazing works of grace and glory sometimes the most powerful lessons of God's love for us we learn not in the easy times but as we suffer that was this man's testimony

Jesus is going to do a work of grace in this man's life but the man was going to have to trust Jesus look at verse 6 what Jesus does as we go on here Jesus spat on the ground and he made some mud with his saliva and he put it on the man's eyes why did Jesus do this there's a whole myriad of pages about why Jesus did this and why this method the bottom line is we don't know we don't know why Jesus did this the mud had no healing qualities it wasn't magic medicine mud so why did Jesus do this why did he use the mud why did he make the mud why did he touch the man could he not just have spoken healing yes he could have he did it before so why this well I don't know but my guess is that this was probably a very practical test by Jesus to see how much this man would trust him

I wear glasses sometimes I wear contact lenses so every year I have to go for a contact lens test and if you've ever been for a contact lens test it's uncomfortable and he's poking your eyes puffing air into your eyes and your audition tell you to sit in the chair and you put your chin on the thing and they come so close you can feel their breath on your face and it's very uncomfortable but you trust them and you know your need so you don't pull away stay there and this man he doesn't pull away from Jesus can you imagine it if it was you and you're sitting there and having all your life this man that you don't know comes along and he starts making a mud pie and then he's approaching you you're hearing him and then not only does he come close to you but he takes the mud and he starts putting it on your eyes you've got to trust somebody see a lot of stages to let him get that close and this man he trusts

Jesus he trusts Jesus as he draws near he trusts Jesus as he starts to make the mud he trusts Jesus as he takes the mud and he starts to apply it like a salve onto his eyes he trusts the touch of Jesus and then he trusts the word of Jesus verse 7 as we move on Jesus tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloan what does he do he goes and he washes in the pool of Siloan wouldn't have been easy for him he can't see and so he's got to navigate his way to this pool but Jesus speaks Jesus passes on this word and this man he doesn't question Jesus words he doesn't modify Jesus words he doesn't reject Jesus words he doesn't form a committee with his friends and ask for a sort of wiser opinion on the perspectives on Jesus words he obeys them he believes them he acts on them so the man verse 7 went and washed and came home seeing that's what happened and the principle follows through from us in terms of application we might we might not be physically blind but we are born spiritually blind and we need the touch of Jesus and we need the word of

Jesus and we need to respond in obedience to the word of Jesus we need to receive the grace of Jesus you can think of a friend of mine who was going through the most dark horrific time and in his lowest moment Jesus drew near and in a supernatural way in a wee room one night he felt the touch not the physical touch but the sense overwhelmingly of the presence of Christ and the comfort of Christ and the strength of Christ and he was taken through the most grim situation as he felt the touch of Jesus he was blessed feeling the touch of Jesus but the sad thing is he never responded to the word of Jesus and still to this day he has not responded to the word of Jesus he was blessed in a hard time but he's still lost his eyes are still closed pray for him

[22 : 27] I'm not going to tell you his name but pray for him this man his eyes needed to be washed in the waters of the pool of Siron which means sent as the text tells us our hearts they need to be washed as we sang and for that spiritual cleansing we need to go to the one who was sent by the father to save sinners we need to go to Jesus we need to go and be washed in that fountain that's filled with blood so the hearts will be cleansed there's no other way for this man to be cleansed there's no other way for this man's eyes to be opened Jesus didn't give him options he said this is what to do there's no other way for you and I to be cleansed many false paths are communicated to us but there's only one true way and that's

Jesus we need to trust him so there's this meeting with Jesus then we see the man trusting Jesus thirdly we hear the man professing Jesus and I'll just fly through this fly by the man he can see his physical blindness is gone he's met with Jesus and he's trusted Jesus thus far so as to receive his sight but it's only now actually having trusted Jesus and having known that sense of blessing that the difficult questions begin and that's good for us to know if you're here this morning and you're thinking about becoming a Christian if you feel God is speaking to you and you're in the moment having a war in your heart and you're thinking about how to respond to that you need to be aware because Jesus makes us very aware he's not some slick salesman he tells us if you trust me not everyone will be happy about it if you're a new Christian things are beginning to get tough don't be surprised by that not everyone will be happy that you're trusting

Christ just as not everybody was happy about this man's encounter with Christ the questions start to fly in first of all from his neighbours look at verse 8 down to verse 11 we hear all these questions that fly in from those who pass them by every day neighbours recognise this man they see a change in this man they see a new hope in this man so they come to him and they ask him what's happened what's going on with you and he's ready to give an answer here's a question can our neighbours and our friends see the hope and the change and the transformation that Christ has brought into our lives do they recognise us as people who are different to the way that we once were are they asking questions of us about what makes us different they should be and we should be ready to give an answer so there's questions from the inquisitive neighbours and then there's two rounds of questions in the religious heavies round 1 verses 13 to 17 and then round 2 verses 24 through to 34 for and there's no time to go into that but what we can see is that although the man's vision of

Christ is not sharp in the first instance there is a mustard seed faith in Jesus and he professes it he doesn't have all the answers and he's not frightened to say on a number of occasions I don't know you're asking me questions I don't know the answer but he professes what he does know about Jesus and there's a great lesson for us there you don't have to have all the answers to profess Christ if you think you have all the answers you shouldn't be professing Christ because you don't have all the answers neither do I we don't need to be frightened as Christians to say quite often I don't know the answer to the question you're asking but we need to be ready to say a word about the Jesus that we do know was this profession costly for the man yes did it disrupt his life yes did it affect his loved ones yes his parents came under the cosh because of the change in their son's life look at verses 18 to 23 this man he's no sooner got his vision that he's in conflict with the religious establishment he's thrown out of the synagogue which means that he's cast out of normal social and business life he's an outcast now on the margin of society he knew all that as he was answering these questions but still he professed

Jesus and once he's thrown out of the synagogue and he's suffering look at Jesus in verse 35 how gently and graciously he comes and he finds him and he meets with him and he blesses him for taking that hard stand the fact is professing Christ it can be costly and it can be painful and it can make our lives complicated but Jesus acquires it and Jesus expects it and Jesus blesses us in it and I know we live in a day where everybody says to us your faith is your faith keep it quiet keep it in that box shushed about your faith Jesus says don't shushed about your faith profess your faith in me even if it gets you into trouble in this world even if it means you do clash with the religious establishment even if your parents wish you wouldn't and tell you to calm down with it

[29 : 26] Jesus says no profess me it's part of what it means to be saved Romans 10 verse 9 if you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved are there people here this morning who have had their eyes opened who have had their sin cleansed and who are still keeping a very very low spiritual profile not speaking about Jesus not sitting at the Lord's table to say that they belong to Jesus because this man professed his faith in Christ his witness is still being blessed even today as we talk about how many people will be blessed and encouraged in their faith because of your profession when you make it what was this man's story a meeting with Jesus a trusting

Jesus a professing of Jesus and finally just in a word worshipping Jesus see the stages as the man comes to see people keep asking him who is the man who healed you verse 11 he speaks about Jesus as a man verse 17 he speaks about Jesus as a prophet verse 31 he speaks about Jesus as one who does God's will verse 35 he begins to recognise that Jesus is the son of man the son of God and now that you see him clearly he professes him in verse 38 as Lord and he worships him and we don't know what happened to the rest of his wife but he leaves worshipping the

Christ he now knows that was this man's story that was his response what's yours Jesus is meeting with him with you will you trust him and if you trust him will you then profess him and worship him these things are written so that we will believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God so that by believing he will have life in his name let's pray