

ONE THING I DO KNOW

John 9:13-41

Key Verse: 9:25

“He replied, ‘Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!’”

In the last passage Jesus healed a man born blind. Jesus taught us not to be fatalistic about hardships and suffering. Rather, we must use the opportunity to display the work of God. There is no fatalism in Jesus. Jesus’ one touch changes any fatalistic situation to display the glory of God. Let’s not allow fatalism to dwell in our hearts. Let’s look at Jesus, trust and obey Jesus, and render glory to God.

In today’s passage we can see how the work of God continued. The man whose eyes were opened testified boldly about what Jesus had done for him. He was persecuted. But in the end he met the Messiah and worshiped him. Many people receive grace from Jesus. But not all of them continue in his grace. Let’s learn how to grow in Jesus’ grace.

First, “He is a prophet” (13-17).

Look at verse 13. “They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.” After being healed by Jesus, the former blind man was so happy. He could see! He may have wanted to go to the Mount of Olives and watch the sun set on the western horizon, its rays glistening on the beautiful Jerusalem Temple. He must have wanted to see the faces of his parents, other family members and friends. He might have wanted to see the latest model of chariot or the local athletic contests. His emotions must have been flooding with joy and thanksgiving that welled up in praise to God. This should have been the happiest day of his life. However, he had no opportunity to do any of these things. Immediately after he was healed, his neighbors brought him to the Pharisees for examination. They knew it would be controversial. They didn’t want to be accused of disloyalty to the religious hierarchy. They were like communists who betrayed family members to prove party loyalty. It was because they were living in fear. The Pharisees’ grip on the religious and social life of Israel was stronger than an iron fist.

The Jewish leaders ruled by sheer coercion. They had already decided to put out of the synagogue anyone who accepted Jesus as the Christ (22). In that society, being put out of the synagogue was serious. It meant being cut off from public worship, and from social and economic life as well. It meant experiencing continuous public contempt and certain poverty for one’s entire family. The man who had been healed was brought before these Pharisees. The specific issue they raised was that Jesus was healing on the Sabbath. To gather evidence for their charge, they asked how the man had received his sight.

A few hours before, he had been a blind beggar. After being touched by Jesus, his life changed so dramatically. Now he was standing alone before the governing body of Israel as the center of a religious investigation. With his new eyesight, he had to look at the faces of the Pharisees. The atmosphere was tense, and the pressure was on him. How did he respond? He said, “He (Jesus) put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see.” He simply told what Jesus had done for him. Like him, whoever receives Jesus’ grace should simply tell the facts of what Jesus has done for us. What about me? I received Jesus’ grace of forgiveness of sins. As a teenager, I looked good on the outside. I was a faithful Catholic, an honor student and a good son. But on the inside I was sick with sin, especially pride and lust. I committed indecent acts and became a slave of despair. But Jesus visited me through one-to-one Bible study with Dr. Abraham Kim. Jesus’ word spoke to me, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mk 2:17). Through the systematic study of Mark’s gospel, Jesus revealed himself as my Christ who died and rose again for my salvation. Jesus called me as his disciple and gave me hope to be a useful person in his history. Jesus established a beautiful house church with a woman of God. If I tell the whole story, I must write a book. But the fact of what Jesus has done for me begins here. What has Jesus done for you? We must testify to the facts.

We live in a relativistic society that often denies absolute truth or objective reality. It tells us to blend in with religious pluralism by ignoring principles. It tells us to live by our feelings. Peer pressure forces many people to keep quiet in order to get along. However, we should be people of truth, and people of facts, who tell what Jesus has done for us. We should do this even in a hostile environment.

When the man testified to Jesus' grace, the response of the Pharisees was divided. Some said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" They didn't know how to resolve their division. So they turned to the blind man and asked him, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." Now they were not asking for the facts, but for the man's opinion about Jesus. It required him to say what he believed in his heart about Jesus. The man said, "He is a prophet." This meant that Jesus was a man from God. It meant that to believe Jesus and follow him was right in the sight of God. The man went beyond stating facts and took a clear stand on Jesus' side.

Second, "one thing I do know" (18-25).

The Jews were having a little trouble with the facts. They hated to accept the man's testimony, for it revealed that Jesus is the Christ. So they decided to investigate the man's parents. We can imagine how much these parents had struggled with their son. Since he was blind from birth, he needed special care. After all his parents' sacrifice, he was a blind beggar. They seem to have been disheartened, and resigned to their fate. But by God's grace, their son had been touched by the Messiah; his sight was restored. He had suddenly become a very important person. His parents should have been happy and supportive. But they were not. They said, "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." They totally avoided their responsibility. They did not love and support their son at the most crucial time. It was because they were fearful. Parents cannot be fearful. Parents must be courageous to love their children to the end.

Moses' parents are a good example. Moses was born under Pharaoh's decree that all Israelite boy babies must be thrown into the Nile River and drowned. To resist this decree was to risk one's life. Many Israelite parents succumbed to fear and tossed their sons into the river, shedding many tears. But Moses' parents were different. They did not give in to fear. They knew that God, not Pharaoh, was ruling the world. By faith in God, they resisted Pharaoh's decree. First, they hid Moses for three months. Then God gave them wisdom to send him to Pharaoh's daughter who adopted him as her own son. In this way Moses was spared the death sentence and became prince of Egypt. Like them, all parents must have faith in God and love their children sacrificially.

The man must have been disappointed in his parents. Jesus had done a wonderful thing for their son, but they cleverly dissociated themselves from Jesus. Each person makes his own decision about Christ. In the end, our true family members are those who accept Jesus as the Christ. In England there is Shepherd Ian Kaier. He received Jesus' grace. Then his father supported him in every way, even becoming a one-to-one Bible teacher. It was because he loves Ian and he loves Christ.

The man was summoned a second time before the Pharisees. They treated this man like a criminal. They were determined to intimidate him until he changed his story. So they quoted a phrase, "Give glory to God," and said, "We know this man is a sinner." This phrase, "Give glory to God" was spoken by General Joshua to Achan when the Lord uncovered Achan's hidden sin. It was a charge to tell the truth at the cost of his life. The Pharisees perverted the use of this phrase to bring the heaviest possible pressure on the man. At this point, many people would have changed their story. Galileo was once on trial for teaching that the earth was round. When he did not recant after being asked kindly, he was next threatened with death. Then he changed his story and said the earth was flat. But right after being set free he said, "The earth is really round." How did this man respond?

Look at verse 25. "He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'" This man did not try to answer what he did not know. He was not drawn into a theological debate. Though he was formally uneducated, he was wise. His wisdom grew as he stood on the truth. So he said, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know." But he did not stop with "I don't know." He went on to say, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" Here we see that he was not merely trying to defend himself. He wanted to tell what Jesus had done for him. When he thought about Jesus' grace, a well of thanksgiving opened up in his soul. Jesus had given him the most precious gift, free of charge. The man testified to Jesus' grace out of his deep gratitude. Perhaps he sang "Amazing grace." We learn from him how to hold on to one thing Jesus has done. We often hold on to one sin we committed, condemn ourselves and share self-condemnation with others. Or we hold on to one complaining topic and share ingratitude with others. But this man held firmly to the one thing that Jesus had done for him and shared the grace of Jesus with others.

This man makes a great contrast with the man Jesus healed in chapter five. That man had been paralyzed for 38 years. But at one word of Jesus, he was completely healed. But he did not thank Jesus. Instead, he betrayed Jesus to save his own skin. When he did not hold on to Jesus' grace, he remained under the power of sin and death. Jesus' grace is like sunshine that blesses all people on earth. We have all received Jesus' grace in one way or another. But how we respond to Jesus' grace makes each person very different. To grow spiritually we must thank Jesus and hold on to one thing Jesus has done for us. We must hold on to one thing Jesus has done for us even though the whole world seems to be against us. We must hold on to one thing Jesus has done for us as a matter of life and death. Then we can grow strong in the grace of Jesus and be people of grace and truth.

Third, in Jesus' grace he overcome the world (25-34).

Look at verse 25 again. "He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'" As he spoke, his voice gained power. His statement ends with an exclamation point. The truth burning in his heart was stronger than the devil's pressure. 1 John 4:4b says, "the one who is in you is greater than the one that is in the world." When Jesus is in our hearts and we testify to his grace, we become very powerful. Actually, it is not we, but Jesus in us.

The religious leaders were shocked by the man's courage and clear testimony. They felt powerless and simply repeated their previous question. The man answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" The man was actually rebuking them because they did not dialogue with him honestly. He was also full of humor. At that point, the religious leaders lost their tempers and became irrational and abusive. They became like street bullies who resort to violence when they cannot win an argument. They claimed to be disciples of Moses and slandered Jesus, saying, "We don't even know where he comes from."

The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." The logic and systematic reasoning of this man is remarkable. He has become the most brilliant debater. His point was crystal clear. Jesus is from God.

The Pharisees were totally defeated. They felt inferior to this man who had once been blind. So they tried to paint him with condemnation by using the elements of his past life before Jesus touched him. They said, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. They might have won a physical battle. But they were completely defeated by this man intellectually and spiritually. Here we learn that one man with Jesus can overcome the world. This man fulfilled Jesus' hope for him and displayed the glory of God.

Fourth, the man believes and worships (35-41).

Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out. Jesus found him. Jesus always finds his sheep in their time of need. But Jesus did not say, "I am really sorry for the way they treated you." Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Jesus was not overly concerned about his human condition or emotional state. Jesus wanted him to grow in faith. As we have seen, the man had struggled admirably to hold on to the grace of God, overcoming fierce opposition. He had won a great victory. Still, he needed to go one step further in his faith. Jesus wanted him to make a confession of faith in him as the Son of Man, or the Messiah. This confession of faith unites us with Christ as his precious children forever. Through this confession of faith we receive eternal life and the glorious kingdom of God as our inheritance.

Look at verses 36-37. "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. When this man held on to one thing Jesus had done, he finally met the Messiah in Jesus. When he confessed that Jesus is the Messiah, his soul found perfect rest and peace. He received the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He received a living hope of the kingdom of God. He formed an unbreakable bond of love with the holy Son of God that would carry him to the kingdom of heaven and eternal glory. Then he worshiped Jesus as God. He

confessed his love to Jesus. He offered his new life to Jesus to be consecrated and used for his glory. He surrendered his life to Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Jesus' coming revealed that a man born blind could display the glory of God. Jesus' coming brought eternal life to one soul who simply trusted in him and testified to his grace. But Jesus' coming also exposed the hypocrisy and legalism of the arrogant religious leaders.

In this passage we learn that even though Jesus' grace is poured out on us from heaven, this does not guarantee our spiritual growth. We must learn how to hold on to the grace of Jesus in our hearts. We must hold on to one thing Jesus has done and testify about it to others. When we do so, we can know the Messiah and have eternal life.