

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

John 9:1-12

Key Verse: 9:4

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

In the last part of chapter 8, we learned that Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the truth because he came from God and went back to God. Jesus is the truth because he taught what the truth is to those who believed in him. The truth is that Jesus came from God and went back to God. This simple statement tells us that Jesus is the Son of God who opened the way for sinful mankind to go back to God. In the past several thousand years, men of thought and philosophy have searched for the truth through the study of epistemology. But they failed because they did not know Jesus, who told mankind that he came from God and was going back to God. When we know the truth, we come to know the true meaning of life. When we know the truth, we are happy. When we know the truth, we are happy whatever the situation. When we know the truth, we are happy even in the midst of the suffering and agonies of life, for we experience the [pain](#) of suffering so that we might understand those who are suffering. When we know the truth, we are happy and free. In the first part of chapter 9, Jesus heals a man born blind. Through this event Jesus teaches us how to subjugate our fatalistic view of man. No one is happy as long as he has a fatalistic view of man. In this passage Jesus teaches us how to cope with man's fatalistic view of life and be happy. In this passage we also learn Jesus' shepherd heart to heal a man born blind. We also learn that Jesus wanted to plant in the man born blind faith in God.

First, the very fatalistic disciples (1-2). One day as Jesus went along with his disciples, he saw a man born blind. The Old Testament suggests that parents' sin results in the suffering of their children (Ex 20:5; 34:7; Ps 79:8; Isa 65:6,7). There was a traditional thought in the Jewish world that a blind man was cursed by God. When the disciples saw the man, many questions bubbled up in their minds (1,2). They questioned first to themselves, and next to Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" They didn't say, "Or is it God's sin?" But they obviously questioned God's love and providence. The content of their question was not at all optimistic; it was very fatalistic. The disciples had learned gospel faith and the hope of the [kingdom of God](#) repeatedly. But still they were very fatalistic and under the influence of the mundane world. What is worse, they were under the pressure of the political authorities, who had attempted to do away with Jesus and his people because they appeared to be a newly rising political power which would make their political establishment stumble at any moment. The disciples were also fearful. In addition, they were uncertain about their future prospect.

As soon as the disciples saw a blind beggar at the roadside, they felt sorry. They heard the blind man's begging voice, "Alms for the blind! Alms for the blind!" While they were looking at the miserable blind man, his misery reflected on themselves. They saw all the miseries of mankind through this poor blind man, identifying their own situation with that of the blind man. The disciples did not understand

why this man was born blind. And they did not know why the blind man had to suffer--not just for one day, but for a lifetime. They asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (2) Their question raises one of the fundamental questions of mankind: What is the cause of human misery or sufferings? Hebrew people thought that human suffering comes as the result of someone's sin. So the disciples asked, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" This question implies that if not by man's sin, then it is by God's mistake. This kind of thinking is based on the theory of cause and effect. This kind of thinking makes people very fatalistic. There are so many gorgeous young men and beautiful young girls. But most of them are very fatalistic. There is a girl student. Her father is a professor and her mother is a doctor; she is from a well-to-do family. She studied well under the protection of her parents. She studied diligently to please her parents. She graduated from a renowned university and entered a medical school. She kept a low profile, but because of her excellent scores in medical studies everybody came to know her and wanted to talk with her. Then she should be happy. But she became very fatalistic because of a premonition that somebody was going to stab her in the back. She became very fatalistic due to people's attention, and she was assaulted by a hallucination that somebody would stab her in the back at any time. She went to a mental clinic and began to take heavy medication. Her case shows us that a distinguished situation doesn't guarantee man's happiness; rather, it can cause him to be very fatalistic. It is surprising that most wealthy men are very fatalistic, not knowing the meaning of their bone-crushing past labor to make money. Now they do not know what to do with their huge amounts of money. Many old, wealthy people suffer, thinking that their children are all spoiled because of misuse of money and are unworthy to receive their inheritance. They are even more sorrowful that one of their relatives whom they don't like will inherit their wealth. There was a noble prince whose name was Prince Buddha. One day he thought about life. He came to know the fact that nature comes back to life again and again when the beautiful spring days come back again. But men suffer so much and die and cannot come back to this life ever again. So he came out of his palace and lived the life of a wandering beggar. In order to soothe his fatalism, he lived a life of begging, suffering beyond measure. He concluded that, for human beings, the best way to transcend this world is to forget everything and live with mercy. This sounds good, but it is very fatalistic. The disciples had left everything and followed Jesus in order to become his disciples. But when they saw a man born blind, man's fatalistic elements of life overwhelmed them. Here we learn that men are basically very fatalistic, and that there is no remedy for this.

Second, this happened to display God's work (3-5). How did Jesus answer their question? Look at verse 3. "'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'" Jesus here tells them that man's life purpose is not to feel miserable because of one's human condition, but, whatever the situation might be, to display God's glory. Jesus told the same story in John chapter 11. There were two beautiful sisters, Martha and Mary. Their parents died when they were very young. These two sisters had a sickly brother, Lazarus. One day Lazarus was at the brink of death. Martha and Mary sent for Jesus to come. A messenger came and said to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this,

Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory, so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Here we learn that man, whether he is a gorgeous man or a blind beggar, is made to live for the glory of God. The theme of all Calvin's works is "For the glory of God alone." In order to live for the glory of God, he ate one meal a day and wrote more than 100 books in his lifetime. He wrote the "Institutes of the Christian Religion" when he was 25 years old in order to defend the Protestant church from the corrupt Catholic church of his time. Martin Luther was an apprentice monk. But church rituals and a church leader's lifestyle did not help him to become a Christian. So, for quite a long time, he tortured himself to be free from a guilty conscience. One day, he read Romans 1:17b. It says, "The righteous will live by faith." He learned that man obtains salvation only by faith, not by human merit or work. He wrote the 95 Theses and nailed them to the door of the church in Wittenburg. Since then he was branded as a heretic. Once he was called to the Council of Worms. At the Council of Worms he defended Christianity as based on faith from first to last. He won. He was released. But there was a danger that on the way back to his home he would be killed by the Catholic police. His friends kidnapped him and saved his life. They kept him in a castle at Wartburg. There he was confined to house arrest. During that time he translated the Hebrew and Greek Bible into German. His German Bible became the standard of German language. In his lifetime he suffered much. But he was sure that he lived by faith to glorify God. So he could overcome himself and the pressure of the Catholic church.

Here we learn that the man born blind was born with a supreme obligation to display God's glory with his blindness. The word "to display" has deep meaning. Each person's life must display God's glory, as the sun shines on the whole world. There was a widowed mother. She had two sons and a daughter. She sold wine to laborers in the marketplace in the hope of raising her second son as a medical doctor. But her second son gave up his medical career and became a UBF shepherd, disappointing his mother's only hope. Because he displayed glory to God in this way, he has become a man of God who has sent out 1,300 missionaries all over the world through his ministry of the last 20 years. God blessed his family, and his older brother became a multi-millionaire. His older brother is very rich, but his mother lived with the poor servant of God, all her life. At first, she believed in Jesus for the sake of her second son. Later, she believed in Jesus personally and obtained the kingdom of God as her inheritance. Once there was a fund-raising campaign for a relief offering in UBF. At that time, there was a medical student whose hope was to get into the AMA, the American Medical Association. He was so poor that he usually ate one meal a day. But he wanted to participate in the campaign to raise relief money for Bangladesh. He prayed and prayed, but he could find no money. Then God gave him wisdom to sell his blood to a blood bank. He did this, even though he was suffering from malnutrition due to a lack of food. In this way, he glorified the name of God. He became a good example for the last 35 years in raising many sacrificial servants of God. Someone asked him, "Why did you draw out your blood and sell it and give the money, not to your mom, but to Bangladesh people?" He said quietly, "I did it for the glory of God." The one who asked the question was his very slippery sheep. This slippery sheep finally became a dedicated servant of God.

There are many people who want to show off themselves. Many students from a certain university have come to UBF. But whenever they show off by playing a musical instrument or singing, the next week they disappear. They go to another place to show themselves off. Thus we have labored in vain for about 20 students. In the past, many young men studied hard to become men of fame and wealth and show themselves off. But these days there are many boys who show themselves off so that they can have many girlfriends. These days there are many girls who brag about having many boyfriends. This seems to be their only showing off subject. Anyway, when men live for their own glory, they become very miserable. Hemingway had hemorrhoids. He could not sit down and type. So he arranged five typewriters positioned for typing in a standing position. He worked hard. Nobody knows why he committed suicide after receiving the Nobel prize. But Biblically speaking, he lived for his own honor. So he found no meaning in life. Even his Nobel prize did not give meaning to him. His work to describe rugged American individualism didn't give any meaning to him. When he had no meaning of life, he had no strength to maintain his fame and wealth. So he destroyed his life with a rifle.

To live for the glory of God seems to be the most stupid thing to do in this generation. There are many who study the Bible one-to-one. But when they are asked to attend the Sunday worship service, they are frightened, assuming that they have to commit themselves and live for the glory of God. This kind of cowardice has caused a lot of trouble to the work of God through parents and the anti-Christian movement. But when we see what such cowardly people are doing, we find that their lives are very miserable. Many are discovered to have contracted the HIV virus. If a man doesn't live for the glory of God, his life purpose is taken away. If he doesn't live for the glory of God, the devil snatches him away and uses him as an instrument of doing evil. Think! Who wants to contract the HIV virus when he is young? Nobody wants to. But when one does not live for the glory of God, he cannot but live for the glory of Satan. The result is the HIV virus, drug abuse, alcoholism, and all kinds of evil-doing. Therefore, in whatever situation we may be, whatever kind of person we may be, each of us must live for the glory of God. That's the purpose of life given to man. God made man to live for the glory of God, not for the glory of Satan.

There is many a person who says, "I am the most miserable person in the world because of my poor human situation." Nationally speaking, many Russians may think, "We are very miserable because we are not as rich as Americans." American teens may think that they are miserable because their fathers ran away, or because their mothers do not wash dishes. The man born blind may have thought he was the most miserable creature because he could not see his mom's lovely face and beautiful nature with his eyes. His eyes were there only to weep. Because he could not see, he misunderstood everything. As a result, he lived in prejudice and in the darkness of night all the time. This is Satan's temptation. Even though he was a man born blind, he was obliged to display the glory of God to the whole world. He should not think about his miserable situation; he must think about how to display the glory of God in his blind situation. This is a Biblical constant.

There is a good example of one who lived for the glory of God. Joni Erickson was 17 in July 1967. She dived into Chesapeake Bay and broke

her neck. Since then she has been a quadriplegic, confined for life to a wheel chair. She became very fatalistic when she realized that she could not move even to commit suicide. But God did not abandon her. God intervened in her life through one-to-one Bible study with her shepherd. Through Bible study she found the life of mission for herself even in her situation. When she decided to display God's glory with her entirely paralyzed body, she wrote many pamphlets about the victorious life of faith and drew many pictures by holding the pen or brush in her mouth. Formerly, her purpose of life was to show off herself to boys like a pom-pom girl. After the accident, her new purpose of life was to display God's glory. In order to display God's glory, she fought against her fatalistic element of life as a matter of life or death. Through her spiritual fighting with herself, she rendered glory to God. It is indeed amazing.

There was a young man who walked around barefoot during the icy winter of 1979. He ate only raw meat to express his sorrow and his fatalistic view of life. He wept so much before his younger sister over his broken family situation that his eyesight deteriorated to the point that he was legally blind. He met Jesus personally through a dedicated servant of God. Since then he began to wear shoes and socks. He also became a blessing to his sister. Jesus' words, "...but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life," are the words of life which can heal any person's dark thinking and transform any kind of wretched person into a child of God. The seed bed of the tragedy of mankind is self-seeking. The fountain of happiness is to live for the glory of God.

Third, the time to work for God (4,5). Look at verses 4 and 5. "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." In this allegorical expression "day" refers to "lifetime," "Night" refers to "after death." Jesus is telling us that God gives man his lifetime to work hard to display God's glory, not to grieve over his miserable human destiny. The night of darkness is coming, when no one can work. How tragic it is for a man to discover that he wasted all his time in miserable feelings.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." When any person accepts Jesus in his heart, Jesus drives out all the dark and dead things in him and fills him with the Holy Spirit. So the author said in his prologue, "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world" (1:9). The blind man was in utter darkness. But when he accepted Jesus into his heart, he could see the light. Those who have accepted Jesus have the light of life. They know what they are doing, and they are happy in Jesus. Here we must remember Jesus' words, "I am the light of the world." For example, Leo Tolstoy wrote such beautiful novels to enhance the moral standard of Russia. But he was a humanist. In other words, he lived for himself and for Russian people. He did not live for the glory of God. Thus he did not receive the light of Jesus. Everybody says that at the time of death, one expresses his entire life. At his death, Tolstoy could not remember many good words derived from the Sermon on the Mount. Rather, he was overshadowed by the darkness of death. He was so desperate that he ran out to the street, collapsed, and yelled and yelled, "Tragedies! Tragedies!" and breathed his last. Tolstoy is the case of one who did not see the light of

Jesus. Here we learn that we must firmly believe that Jesus is the light of the world. Where there is no Jesus, there is only the darkness of sin and death. Where there is the light of Jesus in one's heart, there is peace and joy, and the glory of God shines upon him even in his dream.

Fourth, Jesus opens the blind man's eyes (6-7). Jesus has taught his disciples how to overcome the fatalistic way of thinking in their hearts. Here Jesus teaches them how to overcome fatalism and be a good shepherd. Once Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. It was the expression of Jesus' shepherd heart. Jesus had nothing. But when he had a shepherd heart, he could feed 5,000 people with a boy's five small barley loaves and two small fish. This time, Jesus really wanted to heal a man born blind. Jesus understood his sorrow. Jesus saw the tears flowing down from his blinded eyes. Jesus' heart went out to him. Jesus was ready to open his eyes. Yet he had no medical instrument in his hand. He had no cup of water in his hand. But he felt sorry for the man born blind. At that time, a blind man was an impossible person to heal. But there is no impossibility in Jesus. Look at verse 6. "Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes." When he had no water, he used his saliva as water. When he had no medical instrument, he used mud on the ground as medicine. He spit on the ground, made some mud, and put it in the man's eyes. In this way Jesus found the way to heal the man. When we see Jesus' way of healing the man born blind, it looks very funny. But this is the expression of divine love; it is the expression of God's shepherd heart for mankind. Of course, Jesus could have just opened his blind eyes with a word. But he showed his shepherd heart by spitting his saliva on the ground, mixing it with mud, and applying it on the blind man's eyes. This shows that those who have a shepherd heart can open even a blind man's eyes. When we read Russian history, we learn that Russia is really a beautiful country. There is Tchaikovsky. There is Tolstoy. There is Dostoevski. There are 800 years of history. The land of Russia contains so many natural resources that Hitler wanted to get it in his lifetime. But there were many Tsars and Tsarinas and many kinds of rulers and classes, all of which had oppressed people. Yet there were no distinguished shepherds. Once we thought Lenin was a good shepherd for Russians. But he was the most selfish political leader in history. Even though Russia occupies ten time zones now, people are so intellectual and honest in excellent humanity. Their history was suffering after suffering. Now they have no direction. They need many good shepherds like Jesus who mixed mud with saliva and healed the man born blind. America had many of those who had the fear of God. They were good shepherds. This country has been blessed so much. But the shepherds are disappearing and all over the country, selfish people are rampant. We must learn the shepherd heart of Jesus for the man born blind and practice it. Surely God will bless this country as a shepherd nation.

What was the blind man's response? The blind man had already suffered enough during his short lifetime due to his sensitivity as a blind man. He must have been too sensitive to bear anyone's hassling. But Jesus put mud mixed with saliva on his eyes and told him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The man born blind could have become very rebellious and cried with a loud voice, "You also despise me! You also make sport of me!" After saying this, he could have sat down and cried

with his blinded eyes. But amazingly, he obeyed Jesus' command, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." When he went and washed, his eyes were opened. Here we learn that faith requires obedience. Without obedience, faith is nothing. But even though he was a man born blind and was suffering from his sensitivity as a blind man, he heard the divine voice. He also saw the light of Jesus through his blinded eyes and obeyed the word of Jesus. Then Jesus could open his eyes. Here we learn that when we want to be healed from a fatal deformity or sickness, we must obey our Lord Jesus' divine command, "Go, wash at the pool of Siloam." When he obeyed, his eyes were opened. When he obeyed, his eyesight was restored. When he obeyed, his joy was restored. When he obeyed, hope was burning in his heart. When he obeyed, he could see the Son of God, Jesus Christ. When he obeyed, he could appreciate Jesus' shepherd heart bestowed upon him. Jesus has a great shepherd heart for each of us. But we must hear his voice and obey. Then we can see the kingdom of God, and we can enter the kingdom of God.

Today Jesus teaches us how to overcome fatalism. Today Jesus teaches us that the purpose of life is to display the glory of God. Today Jesus teaches us that we can see the kingdom of God and enter the kingdom of God when we obey his words, "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam." Finally, we must remember that Jesus is the light of the world. There is no fatalism in the light of Jesus. There is only joy and happiness and burning hope in Jesus.