

# OpenTheo

## Man Born Blind (Part 2)



### **The Life and Teachings of Christ** - Steve Gregg

In this discourse, Steve Gregg reflects on the story of the Man Born Blind in John chapter 5. Despite the multitude of sick people that gathered at the Pool of Bethesda to be healed, Jesus chose to heal this particular man as an act of God. The Pharisees questioned the man's former blindness, but upon his insistence that Jesus had healed him, they began to question Jesus' divine nature. Gregg emphasizes the importance of recognizing the truth in the light, as those who reject it remain in blindness.

### **Transcript**

At the Pool of Bethesda in John chapter 5, we are told there was a great multitude of sick and impotent folk waiting for the waters to be stirred by an angel so they could go in and be healed. Jesus, we are told, approached one of those people. Of this great multitude of sick people, he approached one, and without even being asked by the man, Jesus just healed him.

Jesus initiated the whole thing. The man didn't even appear to have a great deal of faith, but Jesus just healed him. He said, get up, take up your bed and walk.

The man did it, and Jesus and the man apparently left the scene. And there are a whole bunch of impotent sick folk that Jesus didn't approach and do that to. Why? Well, he doesn't owe us an explanation.

There are other things God can do that are just besides heal the sick. Healing the sick is a very nice thing in many cases, but it's not always, I guess, the best thing. In this case that we're reading, however, though, the work of God was to heal the man.

But even if that were not the case, it can still be said that whatever sickness or handicap we have that we are unable to shake, that those are there too that the works of God might be seen in us. The work of his grace in our lives, if not also the work of healing us, which may also be a possibility. Now, when Jesus said in verses four and five, I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day.

The night is coming when no one can work. As long as I'm in the world, I am the light of

the world. The impression that is given here is that he's using day and night as metaphors, respectively, of his presence and his absence.

I must work the works of God while it is day, meaning while he's alive on the earth. The night is coming when no one can work could presumably refer to when Jesus is no longer able to do anything. He's going to die.

And when he says, especially, as long as I'm in the world, I'm the light of the world, just as the sun is the light of the world during the daytime, Jesus is the light of the world while he's in the world, suggesting that his presence on earth was like daytime for the world. His departure is like nighttime, and that could be how he's using it. But one problem affixes to this simplistic answer, and that is that in verse four, Jesus, the night is coming when no man can work.

And although Jesus, his personal work on the earth, as opposed to his later work through the church, but his personal activity on the earth ceased shortly after he said these words. And darkness of a sort came on the world by his absence, yet it wasn't the case, and it still isn't, that no man can work. We can still do the works of God.

We're still required to. So it's a little difficult knowing what he meant when he said the night is coming when no one can work. If he's just referring to his departure, certainly he did not believe that his disciples would be unable to do any works after he's gone.

As a matter of fact, Jesus himself continued to work through his disciples in the book of Acts and in the present time. I'd like to suggest that the night and the day refer not only to Jesus' lifetime and his death, respectively, or reverse that, but any man's life and any man's death. For every man there is a day time of his life where his eyes are open, where he's awake, where there's light.

There's a time when his eyes shut in death, and it says it where he goes into the night of death. This is true of every man. The night comes for every man, and when that night comes, no man can work.

No man can work when he dies, after he's dead. He has only one lifetime to live, and that is his daylight period. Then comes the night, and after that he can do no more works.

Now, Jesus is saying this, I think, generically of how it is with all men. All men have their daylight period of lifetime, and then their time is over, and they can do no more works. Therefore, it is argued, you've got to do as much as you can while it's day.

He applies that generic to his own self, because like every other man, he had a prescribed length of time he was going to live that was the day. Then he was going to die, and his earthly work through his personal presence and so forth would be over. The things that he had to accomplish by his personal presence could only be done within a limited time frame, and therefore he had to be busy about it.

Now, later on, in John 11, when Jesus decided he was going to go down and raise Lazarus from the dead, his disciples objected to this, and they indicated that... Let's see here. They reminded him that they had tried to kill him down there in Judea before. I'm looking for the exact verse I'm thinking of.

Okay, verse 8. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone you, and are you going there again? Jesus answered, verse 9, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of the world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. Now, this expression doesn't seem to use the exact same metaphor of life and death that we have in John chapter 9 about walking in the day and the night coming when you can't walk or can't work, but it's a similar idea.

The idea is daytime represents the time of opportunity. Every man has a daytime, has an opportunity where he can walk, he can travel. He's using, of course, the natural fact that in those days they didn't have electric lamps and so forth, and when the sun went down, it was time to go to bed, really.

I mean, you could burn oil lamps for a little while, but that was pretty expensive. People generally went to bed when the sun went down. And they didn't travel outside when the sun was down, unless it was a full moon, because they just couldn't see.

You couldn't walk when the darkness came. Therefore, the period of daylight is compared with opportunity. Opportunity to walk, opportunity to travel, opportunity to do things.

Night just represents the end of that opportunity. And so, what he's saying here is there are 12 hours in the day, and what he means by that, I'm talking about John 8, 8 or 8, 9, excuse me. Wrong again, 11, 9. John 11, 9. He said, are there not 12 hours in the day means the day is going to be 12 hours long.

Nothing is going to change that. You can't, no circumstance is going to change the prescribed length of the day. And so also, the day of opportunity or the opportunities that God gives a man to work is not going to be shortened or lengthened by mere human intervention.

See, the disciples were afraid that Jesus going down to Jerusalem might result in his being stoned. They've tried to stone you last time you were there, you're going to go there again. What Jesus is saying is, hey, the day is not going to be made any shorter by the plans of man.

A day is 12 hours long. A man's opportunities, the length of it is prescribed by God. And, you know, as long as you're making the best of your opportunities, that won't be shortened by man or lengthened by man.

You can't by hiding out avoid death. And you can't by, or nobody by trying to kill you can kill you if you're in the will of God. They're not going to shorten your daylight time because a day is a certain length of time as God has decreed it to be.

So Jesus uses this idea of day and night in a couple of different places, once here in John 9 and again in John 11, to suggest the opportunity that a man has in his lifetime to get something done, to accomplish what he's here to do. And realizing that there is an end to that opportunity, which is represented by the coming of the night. Verse 6, John 9, 6. When he had said these things, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

And he said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is translated, scent. So he went and washed and came back seeing. Therefore, although he didn't see Jesus, apparently Jesus had disappeared at this time from what we gather.

The man went and washed, but after seeing Jesus was no longer around, not immediately. Therefore, the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, Is not this he who sat and begged? Some said, This is he. Others said, I think it just looks like him.

But he confirmed it, I am he, he said. Therefore, they said to him, How were your eyes open? He answered and said, A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and I received sight.

Then they said to him, Where is he? And he said, I don't know. Now, why did Jesus use clay? I don't know. I don't have a clue.

I doubt if it had curative properties. I doubt if clay has some kind of organic or mineral or sometimes curative properties. I don't think there's anything like that involved.

I think it was obviously symbolic. Jesus had the raw naked power to just heal without any such emblems. But many times he did things in a way as to convey something.

What he was conveying is not entirely clear. It is possible, it's been suggested, that since God made man from the dust of the earth in the first place, that here was a broken or a damaged article, and Jesus, the God who created man in the first place, is here patching up the damaged specimen with the same substance. So it would be symbolic of the fact that he, the same one who created man from the dust, was able also to do repairs on the same and using dust as the common denominator to make that correlation.

That's possible. In fact, it sounds pretty good to me to tell you the truth. I don't know if that's the reason he did it.

We're never told why he did it. One thing is interesting is that Jesus healed a number of

blind men, but he never did it the same way twice. Sometimes he put his hand on, sometimes he put his finger on their eyes, sometimes, as in this case, he put mud in their eyes or something.

It does appear that Jesus avoided any kind of methodology that could be systematized and imitated. He made it clear that although he sometimes did hand motions and did things and said words and so forth associated with his miracles, he didn't do them all the time or repeatedly. He did it differently often enough to show that the power was not in any of the rituals.

The power was not in the mechanism or in the methodology. It was not the case that there was a certain formula for success here that Jesus had mastered like a magician or a sorcerer would. The fact of his doing it differently on purpose every time probably argues for the fact that he wanted to avoid giving the impression that if you do these certain motions, this is how things get done.

It's not the motions. It's the authority of Christ. I can't say with any dogmatism why he used clay in this case.

I made a suggestion that may make sense, but it may not be the reason. In any case, we see that this is the only time he did this precise method. There is a fair amount of focus on the method in this story.

The people say, how did this happen? He says, well, he put clay in my eyes and washed them and came out to see. But even though the story as we told several times in the chapter of how Jesus did this, and people are interested in hearing how he did it, the real issue in the chapter is not really Jesus methodology, but whether he had the right to do it and what this miracle has to tell us about who Jesus is. So the people asked where Jesus was.

The man didn't know. Now, he was at this point talking to his friends and neighbors, apparently, who had known him before. It says in verse 8, therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind, they didn't recognize him.

They were his friends and neighbors, but he was so different. You can see how that would be the case. A person who could see would be operating, I mean, his movement through a crowd would be entirely different than a blind man.

His expression on his face would be different because he would be reacting to visual stimuli, which he had never reacted to before. The man looked enough like the same guy that they raised questions, is this him? But he was different enough that they wondered. And apparently it wasn't until he confirmed it, yeah, that's who I am, I'm the one.

I'm not just someone who looks like him. That they really knew for sure it was him. Which is often the case when people are converted.

People who knew them before hardly recognized them. There's a rather cynical anti-Christian song on an album by a group called Loggins and Messina. Some of you may know Loggins and Messina's music, but most of you are probably too young.

But there's a song by Kenny Loggins on this album called Didn't I Know You When. And it's very clearly trying to insult a Christian. He's talking about, didn't I know you when you were a neighbor? Didn't I know you when you used to love the ladies like I do? And he says, now you're passing the hat around, you're saying you're his disciple.

And you're bragging about the life you left while you're bragging about the life you found. There's no mistaking the scenario here. He doesn't ever say Christian or anything like that.

But it's clear that he's trying to indict a friend of his who is no longer the same. And didn't I know you when you were like me? He says. I hardly recognize you in this new form.

And that's true. Not everyone sees the change as an improvement when you become a Christian. Especially those that are convicted of their own sins by your having changed.

But the change that takes place in a Christian life is they become a new creation. Old things pass away and everything becomes new. And in fact, some people are barely recognizable after they've been saved.

I may have told you, I don't know if I did or not, but back in Santa Cruz when I lived there, there was like a mental hospital that we used to go into as well to do some ministry. And the first time I went there, when I came to the door, a lot of the patients, the inmates there were kind of crowded on this little glass window in the door. And they were all looking out and stuff to see who was coming in.

And there was one face at the window that just struck me when I saw it. She was an old, haggard, hag-like woman with straw-like gray hair. But it wasn't just that she was an old woman.

It was the particular countenance she had, she reminded me so much of the witch or the evil queen in the animated movie Snow White. You know how the queen took that potion and she became a hag? You know, the quintessential witch figure. And when I saw that face just through the window before I even went in, I thought, man, that woman looks about as possessed as anyone I've ever seen.

And sure enough, when we were in there ministering, she was in the crowd there. And I just couldn't help when I saw her thinking that way about her. And after we were done ministering to the group, we kind of spread out to talk to people individually.

And I sat down next to her to talk to her. And I began to share with her some things

about the Lord. And she broke down and wept because she said, I don't know if she was telling the truth or not, she said she had murdered her husband.

And I talked to her about how the Lord could forgive her and restore her and so forth. Anyway, she prayed with me to receive the Lord. And when I came back the next week and every week afterwards, she was there.

But it was hard to believe it was the same woman because she was radiant. She was actually a lovely old woman. I mean, she really was quite, I mean, she was probably 70-ish, you know.

Maybe not, maybe she just looked that old before. But she just had a wonderful countenance. And if you had seen her before and after her conversion, you could easily say, is this the same one? I don't think that could be the same one.

I mean, there's similarities there. You know, some of the features are the same. But could that really be the one? And, of course, that's talking about physical, you know, change in the way people look.

More important after conversion is the change in behavior, the change in countenance and attitude and so forth. It should, in fact, be the case that once you have come out of darkness into light, that those who knew you when you were in darkness, you know, they hardly recognized you. You should be that different.

It says in 1 Peter 4, something like this. It says in 1 Peter 4, verses 3 and 4, For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in licentiousness, lust, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them to the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

They think it's strange. They can't quite make it out. This difference, this change in your life.

Now, some of you never did a lot of scandalous things before you were saved. And, therefore, the change won't be seen so much in the fact that you don't get drunk anymore because you never did. But there should be a tremendous change in the way you relate to people and, you know, the way you handle stress and trials and things like that.

Those things are distinctive things that are changes that God makes in the life of one who is regenerated. And these things are significant enough, and should be significant enough, that it should surprise your old friends when they see you having gone through this change. Verse 13, then.

They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now, it was a Sabbath when

Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Of course, that makes it a controversial act on his part.

You weren't allowed to do cures on the Sabbath. Then the Pharisees also asked him, the blind man, again how he had received his sight. And he said to them, he put clay on my eyes and I washed and I see.

He's getting more brief. He's getting tired of telling the story. Therefore, some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God, meaning Jesus is not, because he does not keep the Sabbath.

Others said, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division even among the Pharisees there. They said to the blind man again, what do you say about him? Because he opened your eyes. He said, he's a prophet.

He had heard nothing more than that about Jesus, but he knew he was sent from God. There could be no doubt about that. He didn't fully understand the deity of Christ.

But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, is this your son whom you say was born blind? How then does he see? As if somebody has to defend themselves of being able to see when they were blind before. I have to give an answer for this.

His parents answered them and said, we know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but by what means now he sees, we do not know. Or who opened his eyes, we do not know. He is of age, ask him, he will speak for himself.

His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that he was the Christ, they would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, he is of age, ask him. Now, here we have, you know, this story is really interesting because it records the reactions of so many different people to this miracle of giving sight to the blind, or as we could make an analogy, to this person being converted.

The friends are the first to notice. They, you know, they ask what happened. They marvel at it.

And in this case, these are religious friends. Therefore, once he is told his story, they want to know how this measures up with religious orthodoxy. So they go to the religious experts.

They go to the pastor of the church. What do you think about this? Now, these Pharisees remind me a lot of some liberal pastors I've met, especially during the Jesus movement when people were delivered out of drug addictions, and, you know, I mean, major



addictions without withdrawal, and healed of things, and just were totally changed. And their parents or their friends, you know, weren't sure what to make of it.

In fact, not all parents are even glad when their children give up drugs to become a Jesus freak. You might have heard about the case where a couple of people from the Anastasis in Greece actually converted a young boy from the Greek Orthodox religion to Christianity. And he was converted out of fornication, and drugs, and alcohol abuse, and all this stuff, and he became a radiant Christian.

But his mother was infuriated. She said she liked him better when he was a pagan. She'd rather have him in drugs and alcohol and so forth, and she actually brought charges because there was a law in Greece against converting people from Greek Orthodox Church to the official state church.

And it looked like these guys from the Anastasis might, in fact, have to spend time in jail there. Things turned around for them. But there are people who object to the change, even though the change is clearly good and beneficial, they just don't like it.

And some of them are just suspicious of it because it's so unusual. They don't know what to make of it. And people who are religious, like the Jews were, they wonder how this squares with what the religious authorities would say.

And so they take him to the clergymen, take him to the theologians. What do you think about this situation? This guy was blind, now he sees, and he says that this guy healed him. What do you make of it? And the clergymen didn't have any room for this kind of supernaturalism, nor for this kind of irreligion because Jesus did it on the Sabbath.

And that was particularly offensive because they didn't believe that anyone should do cures on the Sabbath day. And that was what was even more objectionable. Jesus was going about doing his father's works, paying no attention to what day of the week it was, and they just didn't have the flexibility in their old wineskins to allow for this kind of new wine that was saying, hey, let's do the works of God and not worry about the calendar.

So their religiosity, their ritual convictions and so forth, did not leave room for God to do what he wanted to do. And many churches are in that condition. If you get converted in some churches, you won't be able to stay for very long because there are actual pastors of the liberal sort who think that being born again is a bad thing.

They really aren't. And so these guys tried to find some fault with the guy's testimony, but what could they find? I mean, he just said, well, here's what happened. I was blind, I see.

And so what are we going to do? How are we going to discredit this situation? This obviously was pointing to a move of God that was taking place outside of their religious circle, which threatened the validity of their whole religion. And therefore, they were

desperate to try to discredit it. And the first way they thought they would do so is to say that Jesus was a bad guy.

He broke the Sabbath, so he couldn't be from God. But not all of them were convinced of that. Some of the Pharisees even said, well, how can a man who's a sinner do such signs? So there was no full agreement among the Pharisees on that particular objection.

And so therefore, they thought, well, maybe he wasn't really blind. Maybe the testimony is false. We haven't seen the medical records that confirm that this man really was blind, and therefore we don't know that a miracle really happened.

How do we know his testimony is true? These kinds of things just don't happen, and we have reason to be skeptical. So someone apparently thought, well, let's ask his parents. They ought to know.

And the parents were brought in, and they must have marveled. You would think they'd be delighted to see their son, who had always been blind, now restored to normal. But they were more concerned about their social standing in the synagogue.

They knew his story because he'd told it, and they no doubt believed his story, that Jesus had done it. But they claimed not to know. Well, we know he was blind, but we don't know how he got his sight.

We don't know who did this. Well, that was a lie. We're told that they said that for one reason.

Not because it was true, but because they were afraid of being put out of the synagogue. And a lot of people have been rejected by their families for their stand for Christ. Not because they were really now living in an objectionable way, but because it brought embarrassment upon their families in the religious community they were in that didn't have any room for the true gospel to be having its effect on people's lives.

So these people, rather than be put out of the synagogue, decided to, as it were, deny the Lord, or claim they didn't know about the Lord, even though they really did. Verse 24, So they again called the man who was blind and said to him, Give God the glory. This religiosity is sickening, you know what I mean? They didn't care about God.

But what they're saying is, if you're giving Jesus the glory, you're really depriving God of the glory. So let's not make any mistake, let's not give Jesus the glory. After all, Jesus can't be of God himself.

It must be God who did it, rather than Jesus. We know, they said, that this man is a sinner, meaning that Jesus is a sinner. Now the sin they have in mind, of course, is the fact that he did what he did on the Sabbath.

That's what they mean, because they didn't really know him to be a sinner otherwise. In John chapter 8, he says, Which of you convicts me of sin? John 8, verse 46. And none of them were able to do so.

They didn't know of any sin he committed. But they claimed to know he was a sinner because he was not observing their Sabbath restrictions. And the man answered and said, Whether he's a sinner or not, I don't know.

One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see. And this testimony was hard to resist. They tried to theologically undermine Jesus.

The guy said, I don't know. I can't argue the theological points with you. Jesus is a sinner, Jesus is not a sinner.

I can't claim to know all that stuff. I know one thing though. I know that he made my eyes open.

I know I was blind and I see. That is indisputable. You can wrestle with that all you want theologically, but that is the fact and that's what I know.

Obviously, this man didn't have a comprehensive theology, but neither does any new convert. The man at this point thought Jesus was a prophet, as he said earlier. And Jesus was a prophet, but that was not a full understanding of the deity of Christ.

But it's probably excusable that people who first get saved don't fully understand the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ and so forth. I believe that as they study the scriptures, they will have to come to that conclusion. But this man didn't immediately know those things.

He didn't even know whether Jesus was a sinner or not. After all, he never set eyes on Jesus. When Jesus encountered the man who was blind, he'd never seen Jesus with his eyes.

And he probably hadn't heard much about Jesus. So all he knows is this guy, someone who must certainly be of God, has done a miracle on him. He said, that's what I know.

You wrestle with that. You deal with that. I'm not going to argue the theological points with you, he said.

Verse 26, Then they said to him again, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? Now, the man, this guy gets pretty feisty with them. He answered them, I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples? Then they reviled him and said, You are his disciple.

We are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses. As for this fellow, meaning Jesus, we do not know where he is from.

The man answered and said to them, Why? This is a marvelous thing. That you don't know where he is from. And yet he has opened my eyes.

Now, we know that God does not hear sinners. But if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, he hears him. Since the world began, it has been unheard of that anyone open the eyes of one who is born blind.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. Now, the man had a very good theology. As I say, it wasn't altogether enlightened.

He didn't know who Jesus was. He just knew that Jesus was from God. That's all he knew at this point.

He also may not have been entirely correct in saying that God doesn't hear sinners. Obviously, sinners who cry out to God for mercy, God hears that. Although what he meant probably was God doesn't honor the request of sinners about things like doing miracles and stuff like that.

That God honors his own people. He honors righteous people. There's probably more truth than error in that statement.

Although, of course, the devil can do miracles, too, and his people can be given power to do that. The man may not have fully understood the nature of... He may not have had a complete theology of how miracles are done or anything like that. How could he? He wasn't an educated person.

But one thing he knew is that what Jesus had done could only be a work of God. It was clearly not the devil who had healed him. It spoke of Jesus being a good man and being from God.

Or a prophet or something. But it certainly was not the case that he was a man that God had any objections to. If he had not been of God, he wouldn't be able to do this.

No one's ever heard of such a thing. From the beginning of history, no one's ever heard of anyone opening the eyes. One was born blind.

And so he actually makes a very strong theological affirmation. Although he chooses not to debate the point up in verse 25. Yet he gets around to making a theological assertion in verse 34 or 33.

Where he said, if Jesus was not from God, he couldn't do this. And they answered and said to him, you were completely born in sins. And are you teaching us? And they cast him out.

So their pride was offended that here a guy who had no theological training at all was teaching theology to them. And obviously more sensible theology than they had.

Because they couldn't think of any sensible explanation.

They couldn't dispute him, so they just threw him out. I know some churches like that too. They can't dispute your points, your biblical points.

They just soon throw you out of the church instead of having to deal with the points. That is not, of course, the way that people behave who love truth. You know, I mean, these people obviously stood to be corrected in their view about Jesus.

And had they been truth lovers, they would have accepted the correction. They would have said, wow, we've really been selling this guy Jesus short. We didn't realize he could do this kind of thing.

He must be really of God. But that's not what they were interested in. Just like the parents of the man were not interested in truth so much as their acceptance in the religious system.

So the leaders of the religious system were not so much interested in truth as they were their status in the religious system and the security of the system itself. Verse 35, Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And when he had found him, he said to him, do you believe in the son of God? Now, I like verse 35 because what it says is that Jesus finds the outcasts.

When Jesus heard that they had cast this man out, he was an outcast. Jesus found him. Now, Jesus healed him first, but didn't follow up on him when everything was going OK for him.

But when he was rejected for his testimony for Christ, Jesus revealed himself to him deeper than before. He said, do you believe in the son of God? Well, the man had believed in Jesus the prophet. He had believed in Jesus, the man who must be from God.

But he had never heard the expression son of God with reference to Jesus. So he said in verse 36, who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? Now, this is, I think, an important thing that we see here. The man did not, prior to this, believe that Jesus was the son of God.

Not because he was against believing that, but because he never heard it. He said, who is he so that I can believe in him? And I am under the impression, and I certainly don't think that my opinions about this hold total weight or anything like that, but my impression would be, there may be people who are really saved, who have a very inadequate understanding of who Jesus is, but who love him and would believe anything about him that he told them. You know, they just don't know much.

There are probably people in the Catholic Church like that, I'm sure there are. There are no doubt, I mean, I really get on thin ice when I suggest this, but it's occurred to me,

there could be maybe, surprisingly, people even in the Mormon Church and the Jehovah's Witness religion, who conceivably, I don't say that I know of any, or I've met any, and it may be they don't exist, but it seems conceivable to me that people might love Jesus, knowing but little accurate information about him. And their knowledge may not even be so much as would ordinarily save a person, but it's their love for him and their belief in him insofar as they've had light about him, that I think would probably be the thing that God looks at most.

But, if people are in that category, they will quickly believe the true things about Jesus once they hear them. Like this man. This man didn't know anything more about Jesus than he was a prophet, but that's because he hadn't heard.

But he was already loyal to Christ, he was already suffering persecution for his loyalty to Christ. He was kicked out of the synagogue and out of his own family for being loyal to Christ. To say this man was not saved or not a believer would be wrong, I think.

But he'd never been told yet a higher Christology. And when Jesus found him, he decided to reveal more of himself to him. And I believe that Jesus does reveal more of himself to us at times when we've taken a stand and suffered rejection and so forth for his name's sake.

There's great reward in heaven for those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and also reward in this earth, I think, because it's possible to get to know him in the power of his resurrection and in the fellowship of his suffering. And as those who had already decided to reject Jesus now decide to reject this man because of his loyalty to Jesus, this man was fellowshiping. He's getting to know Jesus in the fellowship of his sufferings with him.

And so Jesus honored that and said, OK, you need to know more about who I am. Now, I guess we could theorize as to whether this man was really saved before this point. I mean, he didn't know Jesus was the Son of God, and presumably people have to know that to be saved.

We could say maybe the guy wasn't saved before that, but it's hard to say that in view of his tenaciousness to stand up for Jesus against all opposition. On the other hand, you've got people like the Jehovah's Witnesses who face tremendous persecution and ridicule for their position, although they've got wrong views about Jesus. In fact, somebody said, somebody who knew these things, someone who had actually spent time in a Nazi concentration camp, said that it appeared to them that the people who suffered most and most faithfully for their faith in the Nazi concentration camps were the Jehovah's Witnesses.

They were the most unyielding. They would not deny their faith under torture and so forth. Of course, we know there were Christians like that, too.

But someone who was there observed that Jehovah's Witnesses stood strong. Now, what do we make of this? Now, that doesn't prove they're saved. But it seems to me like if someone is that loyal to God and to Jesus as they understand Him, then God will eventually honor that and bring them to a better knowledge of Himself.

I mean, if somebody is determined to be loyal to Jesus, then I think Jesus is determined to be loyal to them. And while we might say, well, they're not saved in this condition of this theology of theirs, maybe they're not, but I can hardly believe that Jesus would allow them to die without coming to enough knowledge to be saved if they've responded to what little light they have. But this is not, in any sense, an endorsement of Jehovah's Witnesses because most Jehovah's Witnesses I've met aren't open-minded about who Jesus is.

You know, they've got a wrong theology, and when you show them from the Bible what the right theology is, they put these blinders on and refuse to see. They are not like this man. This man had an inadequate Christology, but as soon as he heard maybe Jesus was a son of God, he said, well, tell me about it so I can believe it.

He was willing to believe what Jesus said about it, but he just had never heard it before. It's this desire to believe, to walk in the light. This is the condemnation that people have, that light comes to the world, and men hate the light because their deeds are evil.

They don't want to come to the light. But those who do righteousness come to the light. And this man had come to as much light as he had, and now Jesus was going to honor him with more light, and the man was quite obviously not of the sort who wanted to hide from it.

He was willing to embrace it. Now, I want to make clear what I've just said and what I didn't say. I did not say that people like Jehovah's Witnesses are saved just because they're sincere or anything like that.

I don't believe that most Jehovah's Witnesses are saved or are likely to get saved, because most of them are committed to an error which they are not willing to move from, even when shown scripturally that they're wrong. But I did say it's conceivable to me that there might be people who are locked in at the moment to some system of wrong theology, but who love Jesus insofar as they understand him, that they read the Bible and are doing maybe their best, but haven't read enough yet or haven't been convinced enough yet of certain things that are truer than what they believe about him, and that God, I think, will honor that. And if they're not saved yet even in their sincerity, I believe God will make sure that he reveals enough truth to them that they will not die lost.

God sees those who are willing to be outcasts for him. And like in this case, Jesus came to him, found him. The man didn't find Jesus.

Jesus found him. And he said, Do you believe in the Son of God? And the man said, Who is that, Lord, that I might believe in him? He's already calling Jesus Lord, but he didn't know this business about the Son of God. Now, we might say, Well, maybe this guy didn't even know that he was speaking to the same person who had healed him.

It's a possibility, but he had heard Jesus' voice previously, and he was hearing it now. In all likelihood, he knew that this person who was speaking to him now was in fact the one who had healed him earlier. That's why he would immediately refer to him as Lord.

And Jesus said to him, You have both seen him, and it is he who is talking with you. In other words, he said, I am the Son of God. Then he said, Lord, I believe.

And he worshipped him. And then Jesus made the remark that I've commented on earlier. For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.

And some of the Pharisees who were there with him heard these words and said to him, Are we blind also? And Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you'd have no sin. But because you say, We see, therefore your sin remains. Those who were in true ignorance, Jesus came to give them light.

Those, however, who had light that they were rejecting, those who could see but didn't want to see, he came to make them more blind. He came to take away what light they had, he says. This is making the same point, I believe, as Jesus made in Matthew 13 when he was asked by his disciples why he spoke in parables to people.

He said to them in verse 11, he answered and said to them, Matthew 13, 11, Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, Hearing you will hear and shall not understand. Seeing you will see and not perceive.

For the heart of this people has grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and lest they should understand with their heart and turn, that I should heal them. He is saying, those who have a thirst for knowledge, though they do not have any knowledge, they will be given more. Those who do not have a thirst for knowledge, will have what little knowledge they seem to have taken from them.

Because although they see, they refuse to see. Although they hear, they refuse to understand. Far be it from them to allow themselves to see, hear and understand, so



they can turn and be healed, he says.

That is not in their plans. And so he came with light, and when he brings light, people who are receptive to light will receive it. People who love darkness will wince, and they will turn back, and they will move from the light.

People with some light that they do not like will be made blind. And that is what Jesus said he came to do. The Pharisees said, are we all so blind? I am not sure why they understood him to say that, but they must have been convicted when he said that.

He said, if you were blind, you would have no sin. And that simply means, if you really had a genuine ignorance, if you had no light, you would not be accountable, at least not as accountable as you now are, because you claim to see. Therefore, your sin remains.

It is not the case that anyone is truly completely blind. If they were, that is spiritually, if a person had no spiritual sensitivity at all, Jesus indicates they would have no moral responsibility either. Without spiritual sensitivity, there is no moral responsibility.

However, there is no one who has no spiritual sensitivity. Even non-Christians who have never heard the gospel have conscience, they have the creation crying out to them that there is a God. There is nobody who is devoid of light altogether.

There are many, however, who pretend like they have no light and prefer not to see it, and those are the ones whose sin remains. And responding to the light you have, I think, is what he is talking about there. People who are willing to respond to the light will be given more.

People who are not will have taken from them even what little they have. Well, we're out of time, but we've covered the material, so we'll stop right there.