

## **Our Blindness**

SW12.04.05am (o)

### **John 9:13-39**

**And Jesus said, "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." - John 9:39.**

INTRO: Because of frosted windows from the freezing temperatures, police officers could not see that an illegally parked vehicle was occupied by an 85-year-old man.

1. It happened in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and the vehicle was impounded. Thankfully, some movement was noticed inside after the vehicle arrived at the police impound yard.

2. Police Spokeswoman Lisa Lammi said, "They accessed the vehicle and sure enough there was an elderly man inside. He was disoriented but he was not unconscious."

3. Even though the man had spent several hours inside the vehicle with temperatures reaching, 14 degrees Fahrenheit he was still conscious and he was taken to a hospital for observation.

4. It was frosted windows that blinded the police officers to the desperate situation of an 85-year-old man.

(1. At least they had an excuse.

5. However, many are blinded spiritually to their own needs and the needs of others around them.

6. The Pharisees had just seen the evidence that a great miracle had been performed. A man who had been born blind had been healed by Jesus and now he could see.

(1. Even though the Pharisees saw the evidence they still denied that it could be true.

1. they still denied the evidence that they saw with their own eyes!

(2. The Pharisees could see with their own eyes yet they were still blind to the truth that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ.

I. There is a range of spiritual blindness beginning with blindness to our own personal need for Jesus like that of the Pharisees.

1. In Leeds, Alabama, Patrick Conaty did something that was shocking to many. One of the comments heard that day was: "If they did it in church, that's fine. Downtown's not the place for that."

2. Those were the kind of comments offered by area residents as they passed Patrick as he hung on a cross.

3. Conaty splattered fake blood on his body and climbed onto a 14-foot cross to demonstrate what Jesus has done for us as sinners. Conaty called it "Salvation Awareness Day."

4. Some were no doubt dismayed that their blindness to and willful ignorance of the sacrifice of Jesus was interrupted that day.

5. Some will accept the cross of Christ, but some will respond harshly as they did to Mr. Conaty and even to Jesus himself. As the apostle Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 1:18**, **"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."**

6. Here's some other comments made by the people that day in Leeds, Alabama:

"It was the sickest thing I've ever seen."

"It was sacrilegious."

"I think he needs some clothes on."

"It's terrifying. People need to realize what effect it'll have on small kids."

7. If Jesus was hanging on a cross outside in the church parking lot what would you say? How would you respond? How have you responded to the sacrifice of Jesus?

8. Here is something to contemplate: J. Vernon McGee estimated that 75% of the members of the average church might not be genuinely saved.

(1. Billy Graham states that 80% of those who make salvation decision in his crusades are already on a church roll somewhere.

9. That must mean that if 75% of the members of the average church are not genuinely saved that they are blinded to their need for salvation.

(1. It must mean that those who were on the church roll and later were saved in a Billy Graham crusade were blinded to their need for salvation.

10. It can happen very easily, I know several people personally that it has happened to and I know that it happened to me as well.

(1. I grew up in a nominally Christian family. We went to church on Easter and for about a two year period beginning when I was 10 years old we attended church almost every Sunday.

(2. One of those Sundays we all walked up to the front of the church and they sprinkled us with water and we became members of the church.

(3. If anyone asked if I was a Christian which they sometimes did I tell them I was a Christian because I had been baptized and I was a member of a church.

(4. It was not until after I was married for several weeks that I finally learned that being a Christian, being saved is not about being baptized or a member of a church.

1. Instead, it is about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

11. Do you know Jesus as your personal Savior? Have you invited Him into your heart in a state of repentance, asking for forgiveness of your sins (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; John 1:12; John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10, 13; Revelation 3:20; 1 John 1:9)?

II. Blindness to your need for Jesus as your Savior is one form of spiritual blindness. But there can also be a blindness to the great harvest that is waiting for laborers (**Matthew 9:37-38**).

1. Sadly, there are millions of Christians (perhaps billions) who have never even given a Gospel tract to a lost person much less talked to someone about Christ.

2. Jesus said to His disciples and I believe He says the same thing to all that follow Him, "**Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.**"

(1. Paul Harvey once said, "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium.")

3. If you are unwilling, unmotivated, uncaring about the lost you cannot be described as a "**fisher of men.**"

(1. Therefore, you must be spiritually blind to the great harvest of souls that Jesus so very much wants you to participate in reaping, you're just a keeper of the aquarium.

4. If this is your condition, I would urge you to repent and fall upon **1 John 1:9** as the cure of your blindness.

5. George Sweeting, in his book *The No-Guilt Guide for Witnessing*, tells of a man by the name of John Carrier who in 1949 was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

(1. Later he was transferred and paroled to work on a farm near Nashville, Tennessee.

6. In 1968, Currier's sentence was commuted/terminated, and a letter bearing the good news was sent to him. But John never saw the letter, nor was he told anything about it.

(1. Life on that farm was hard and without promise for the future.

(2. Yet John kept doing what he was told even after the farmer for whom he worked had died.

7. Ten years went by. Then a state parole officer learned about Currier's situation, found him, and told him that his sentence had been terminated. He was a free man.

8. Sweeting concluded that story by asking, "Would it matter to you if someone sent you an important message—the most important in your life—and year after year the urgent message was never delivered?"

9. We who have heard the good news and experienced freedom through Christ are responsible to proclaim it to others still enslaved by sin.

10. In Decision magazine, Peggy DesNoyers writes:  
My job as a psychiatric home-health nurse brought me in touch with many people who were hurt or angry and who were searching for answers to problems in their lives.  
I knew that Jesus was the answer, but I couldn't bring myself to talk to them about him.  
I was the master of excuses.  
[Until] one patient changed my life.

Wanda was a 56-year-old widow in chronic depression.  
All of her family had died, some of them tragically, within a span of 16 years.  
The loss and her grief overwhelmed her until life for her became a burden she was unable to bear.

One day she quit her job, went home, pulled the curtains, and refused to leave her house.

Eventually she stopped eating, and even the smallest of tasks became too difficult for her to do.

An observant neighbor had noticed the changed in Wanda's behavior, and that neighbor made arrangements for her to be taken to a hospital where she was admitted to the psychiatric ward.

At the end of her hospital stay, when she went home, I was assigned to be her home-health nurse.

I visited her weekly to make sure she was taking her medication and was eating and taking care of herself.

Over the course of six months Wanda continued to recover. Although I knew she needed to meet Jesus as her Savior, I reasoned that she would soon be attending church and would hear about him there.

One day I went to Wanda's house for my regular visit, and I was surprised to find the door ajar.

I knocked and when there was no response, I pushed the door open and stepped inside.

The living room was vacant, so I went to her bedroom and found her lifeless body on the bed.

There were several empty medication bottles beside her, and in her hand she held a noted addressed to me.

I sat on the bed beside her and took the note.

I read: "Dear Peggy, I'm so sorry. I tried it your way, but I got tired. Please forgive me. I tried. I just couldn't do it. I got tired."

I slid off the bed onto my knees and cried my heart out to my loving, forgiving Father: "Lord Jesus, she tried it my way. I gave her the best that I had. But it was my way. I didn't tell her about you. I didn't tell her about your way."

On my knees beside [Wanda's] lifeless body I promised God that I would never pass by another opportunity to tell someone about him.

11. The title of Peggy's article in Decision Magazine was "*Silent No More*"

(1. Are we doing all we can to make sure that people get the message? The most important message of their lives?)

12. We need to open up our eyes to the harvest fields, they are ripe unto harvest. Jesus is telling us that there is nothing wrong with the harvest.

(1. However, there is a lack of workers, a severe lack of workers.

III. Then there is a blindness to the physical needs of others like that of the rich man being oblivious to the need of the poor beggar Lazarus (**Luke 16:19-26**).

1. Phil Collins song, "**Another Day in Paradise**" has lyrics that are convicting of our blindness at least they are to me. Here are a few of the lyrics:

She calls out to the man on the street  
'sir, can you help me?  
It's cold and I've nowhere to sleep,  
Is there somewhere you can tell me? '

He walks on, doesn't look back  
He pretends he can't hear her  
Starts to whistle as he crosses the street  
Seems embarrassed to be there

Oh think twice, it's another day for  
You and me in paradise

Oh think twice, it's just another day for you,  
You and me in paradise

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She calls out to the man on the street

He can see she's been crying

She's got blisters on the soles of her feet

Can't walk but she's trying

Oh think twice...

Oh lord, is there nothing more anybody can do

Oh lord, there must be something you can say

You can tell from the lines on her face

You can see that she's been there

Probably been moved on from every place

'cos she didn't fit in there

Oh think twice...

2. Are you blind and uncaring about the physical needs of those around you like the rich man called dives was to that of the poor beggar Lazarus?

3. If so, fall upon **1 John 1:9** in repentance as the cure for your blindness.

4. I for one know that there is a need for me to be able to see beyond where I now am able to see. Lord, help me so that I may see. Amen.

IV. All three areas of spiritual blindness are a hindrance to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. **Matthew 28:18-20**

1. At Christmas time every year we promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering which goes to support our missionaries across the world.

2. If we do not truly know Jesus as our personal Savior we will see no need to reach out to others and we will see no need to support missionaries beyond our shores.



3. So, coming to know Jesus as your personal Savior and having an assurance of your own salvation is vital to seeing the Great Commission fulfilled.

4. Once we know Jesus as our Savior we must be able to see the great need that people across this world have for Jesus. We need to understand that the harvest is ready.

(1. The harvest is ready just as Jesus said and it is waiting for the workers to go out into the harvest field.

(2. That is also part of what the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is about.

(3. The Lottie Moon Offering provides the resources that enable the workers to go out into the harvest fields.

5. The harvest is ready and there are more workers that want to go but sadly the money is never there to send all of the workers that are willing to go.

6. The third area of our spiritual blindness is that of being blind to the physical needs of the people around us and across this world.

7. This is also an area of need that is vital to the reaping of the harvest.

(1. When people are hurting, sick, and hungry it is hard to reach them.

(2. However, when you meet those needs, you help provide housing, medicine, doctors, and food.

1. It opens up hearts and minds to the Gospel. That's what Jesus did in healing the man of his blindness.

(3. This too is what the Lottie Moon Offering is about and it goes hand in hand with the providing of the workers for the harvest.

(4. The Lottie Moon Offering also provides the tools that those workers need to be effective in reaping a harvest of souls.

V. And where does it all begin? It begins right here at home. It begins with our overcoming our own spiritual blindness.

1. And when we do we will have an assurance of our own salvation.

(1. And when we have that assurance of our own salvation we will then want to share that joy or our Savior with others.

(2. And at the same time we will want to meet their physical needs.

2. It can begin right here. It can begin right here today through the removal of the blindness in your own heart.

3. Will you open your eyes, will you lift them up to the harvest fields? Look Jesus says, can you see? They are white unto harvest.

4. During the summer after my freshmen year at college I found out what it is like for a brief period of time to be blind.

5. My sister and her husband were visiting us and had brought their trail bikes with them. I had never been allowed to ride a motorcycle because my dad had had a bad experience once on one when he was young.

(1. But that day I talked my brother-in-law and my sister into allowing me to learn to ride. They took the bike out to the pasture where there were very few things around for me to hit and off I went.

(2. Before I had gone very far I thought of something I wanted to ask them and turned around. Somehow instead of slowing down I accelerated, veered off to the right, ran up a fence post.

1. The bike went one direction and I went the other headfirst through the barb wire.

6. When I fell I was cut up by the barbed wire on my face, shoulders, arms and chest - and I hit my head very hard.

(1. When I stood up and opened my eyes I couldn't see. Everything was just black. I began yelling, "I can't see!" "I can't see!" "I can't see!"

(2. They led me to the house and called an ophthalmologist in a nearby town.

7. After several minutes I began to see some light and the blackness just fell away. Except for the cuts there appeared to be no permanent damage and the cuts would heal.

(1. Being blind is a frightening experience.

8. Do you know what I was doing most of the time while I was blind for about 20 minutes? I was praying over and over, "Lord, help me to see!"

9. If you are here today and you are spiritually blind it is just as desperate a situation and you ought to be praying just as desperately as I was that day, "Lord, help me to see!"