



Today I've asked the man who was born blind to come and speak directly to us. Please give a warm welcome and listen carefully what our speaker has to say this morning.

Thank you very much. It is a great honor to once again **testify** about my Lord and Savior, the Blessed Messiah, Jesus.

Of course, I didn't always know him as the Messiah, my understanding and relationship with him **grew** over time. My **perception** changed along with my eyesight. Let me tell you about it.

I was born blind, and just like in **your** day, **being blind** was **not easy**, but it was **worse** in **my** day because people **despised** the blind. I lived in Jerusalem, the center of the world, the footstool of God Almighty, the most holy place, the Temple of God.

In my day, people taught bad things happened to people because of sin. If you didn't sin, nothing bad would happen. If you sin, God punishes you with some type of problem or calamity. The **victim** was **guilty** of some **personal sin**. That's what almost everybody believed.

One day, I overheard a group of **scribes** arguing that **I** had sinned while **still** in **my mother's womb**. They said she must have passed by one of the Roman standards that were carried by Roman soldiers as they traveled—and when I sensed one pass by I must have leaped for joy because I secretly yearned to be a pagan. They thought I had **committed apostasy before I was even born**, and God was punishing me with blindness.

Others disagreed. They said it had to be my **father** or **mother's fault**, or perhaps **both** of their **faults**, and God was punishing them by giving them a blind son.

Hearing such gossip and speculation made me **mad**. How **dare** they talk about my parents like that! We were no different than most everybody else in Jerusalem. We did good things and we did some bad things, but Scripture says God is slow to anger, merciful, patient, and quick to forgive. I was born into a family with **strong faith** in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We **were members** of the **Covenant**.

But I certainly was **not** treated as a member of the Covenant. I was **not** allowed to sit at the feet of the rabbis and **learn Torah**, like the other boys my age. I tried to listen in when the rabbis taught other boys, but sometimes people would **run me off**. Others **spit** on me; called me names; **kicked** me; **dumped trash** on me; and **threw rocks** at me.

It was a **good thing the Law commands** people to care for one another and to be charitable. If it wasn't for that, nobody would have given me anything, as I sat near the streets **begging** for food and coin. "Alms for the blind! Alms for the blind. Thank you my Lord. Thank you madam. You're so kind. God bless you. Alms for the blind." That's how I lived out my days. I tried to help my parents. I wasn't completely useless and worthless.

When I was older, we started to hear things about a **new wonder worker** who was working around the countryside and in Jerusalem. We were hearing there was a great holy man going around healing lepers and cripples, and he even restored the life of a boy who had been dead for a short time.

We **heard** this miracle worker had **cured** those who had **become blind**, **but not those who had been born blind like me**. No man can give sight to one who could not see from birth. If one has **never seen**, one can **never see**.

So my parents and I were excited that a man full of God's power was helping others around us. We knew that if he was the **Deliverer of God**, he would come to the **Temple of God**. Then, perhaps, he would bless us.

My parents **always** tried to get me a **spot near the Temple**, because that was **where** people were the **most charitable**. But with this new **wonder-worker** around, they took **greater pains** to get me **near the Temple**. Even if the man of God didn't pay attention to me, his **disciples** might!

I finally encountered Jesus during **the Feast of Tabernacles**, the **Feast of Water and Lights**, when we remember our liberation from Egypt and journey to the Promised Land, when we remember the Creator of the Universe provides and performs mighty acts to display his glory.

It was the **Sabbath**, what you call **Saturday**, and as usual, I was trying to listen to the teaching and singing of God's word in and around the Temple, when I heard another group discussing the **cause of my blindness**.

Then I heard a man say the most **extraordinary thing** about me: “**Neither this man or his parents caused his blindness.**” **Hey!** Somebody finally **got it right!** **Bad things just happen,** don’t they?

Then he went on and said, “**Instead of worrying** about **who** is **guilty** of sin, situations like this are times when we have opportunity to glorify God by doing good works. “Instead of **setting blame**, set about **making things better.**”

Now, if that was the only thing that happened that day, it **would have been sufficient.** That, all by itself, was **life changing!** But he went on. He said **he** was “the **light of the world.**” Now that was a very **peculiar** thing to **claim.** **God’ word,** the **Torah,** is “a **lamp** unto our feet, and a **light** unto our **path.**”

The **people of Israel** were also to be “a **light** unto the **nations,**” being **spiritual light** by **telling others** about God. How could he, a **single person,** claim to be **the light** of the **world?**

While I was pondering his claim, he stuck some mud paste into my eyes, and told me to go to the pool of Siloam. (In other words, he **sent** me to the pool called “**Sent.**”)

Everybody crowds around the Pool of Siloam during the Feast, so I had to push my way through the crowds to wash my eyes and face, just as Jesus had commanded. **Nothing happened** immediately. That wasn’t a big deal! **At least** he had **tried to help.**

So I started back to my begging spot, and as I was returning, **I started to see!** **I saw my feet!** **My hands!** I finally **saw** everybody and everything around me, and then I started looking for this miracle worker Jesus. I didn’t know what he looked like, but I knew his voice. I knew a group of disciples would be following him, and he probably had a large crowd around him.

So I started going around asking people if **they were Jesus,** or if **they knew where Jesus** was. That’s when people started noticing I was **looking** for somebody. I wasn’t begging for alms. I **could see!** So they started asking me what had happened.

Some couldn’t believe their very own eyes, and thought I was someone else. Some believed and knew a miracle had occurred, and wanted to help me find Jesus. But as more people came around me things got hectic: “What’s going on? What was God doing? How did I **earn** this privilege and miracle? What does the miracle **mean?**”

Well, those were **theological** questions, and we went to get the **expert opinion** of the **Pharisees,** the great men of learning, wisdom, and righteousness. **We** thought they **could see** and **understand** the **things of God better than anyone else.** They could answer what God was now doing in our midst.

So the crowd pushed me to the religious experts, and then they **demanded** I answer **their questions:** “What happened!? Where!? Who!? When!?”

“Ah, hah!” one of them interjected, “**He healed** on the **Sabbath!** Do you hear that my brothers, a **Sabbath-breaker!** An **evil man** out to deceive the world!”

“But,” others interjected, “How can an evil person do such things? “**Only God and the ministers of God** can give sight to the blind.”

Then the Pharisees asked *me* to tell **them who** Jesus was. Me? The outcast? How was **I** to instruct **The Teachers?** The only **logical answer** I could come up with was what I told them: “**Jesus must be a prophet of God.**” They wouldn’t agree to that; and some of them started to claim **I was an imposter**, and that I had **never been blind**.

So they had some of the **temple guards** go and **get my parents**. As my parents were being dragged to the Pharisees, they worried I was going to be **stoned to death**.

And when they were finally presented to the Pharisees, they were shocked by a fury of questions: “Is this **your** son? Is this the one you **claim** was **born blind**? **How** is it he can now see? Why can he **now** see?”

My parents **did know** how I gained sight. They did know why I could now see. After years of begging the Creator of the Universe, Blessed be He, for a miracle, **their prayers had finally been answered**. After hoping against hope that **Jesus** would pay attention to their son, he had paid attention and **healed** him!

But... if they said such things the Pharisees would get angrier and **kick them out of their synagogue**, and keep them from worshipping at the Temple. They would become **outcasts** like I had been all my life. They would lose family, friends, and Temple. What could they do? They answered as prudently and cautiously as they could: “He is of age; ask him!”

Furiously, the Pharisees turned to me. They all were in agreement Jesus could **not** be a **prophet of God**, and could not be responsible for such a great miracle. So they commanded, “**Agree with us! Confess to God** and to **all of us** that **you** were **wrong about Jesus! Glorify God** and tell us **truthfully** how **you came to see.**”

What could I say? **God demands truth** from us, but the **leaders** of God were **not interested in the truth**. I didn’t want to argue with them and I had to “**give glory**” to God so went ahead and told them the **truth**: “**I don’t know** if he is a **sinner** or **not**,” I said, “**but I** certainly know that **once I was blind and now I see.**”

But this only caused them to hound me all the more; they wanted to know exactly **how** Jesus had done it. So I asked, “Why are you asking me? Do you want to be his disciples?”

That did it. That **shut them up**, but it **also shut me out of the Temple**. “**You!** You’re a **disciple of Jesus!** **We’re not**. We’re definitely **not!** “We are the **disciples of Moses**, the one who gave the light

of God, the one who brings forth refreshing water from God. “Moses we know. **This man Jesus we know nothing of!**”

Now, that was another **amazing thing** to say in our day. After all, **I** wasn't the **only person Jesus** had **healed** around Jerusalem. But by this time, I was tired and annoyed, and blurted out what I was thinking, “That's hard to believe,” I said. “**We** know that that God does not **listen to sinners**, but if **anyone** is a **worshiper** of God and does the will of God, **God listens to him**. **Never before, since the world began**, has it been heard that anyone **opened the eyes of a man born blind**. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

That made them **furious**. “How **dare you** attempt to **teach us!**” they screamed. “You're nothing but a **sinful scoundrel**. “**Leave us!** Leave the Temple precincts! “**Don't dare walk in these colonnades again!**”

What a terrible turn of events that was; and the day had started out so well. I was blind and then I could see. I thought everybody would be happy and praise God with me. But it didn't turn out to be the case. I had been thrown out of synagogue and temple.

I walked away. My parents stayed behind. They were too afraid to go with me.

I eventually settled down in a secluded spot near one of the animal stalls. After a while, my despondent isolation was broken by a question, “**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**” Do **I** believe in the **Son of Man**? Do **I** put my trust in the One who would come to Israel, make the **world right**, and **vindicate the righteous?**

Of course I believe and trusted such a person **would be sent** by God, but **who** in the world was **that!**? “Point him out and I will join him,” I said. “I will help him make our society a more holy and righteous place.”

Then the man answered, “**You have seen him**, and it is **he who is speaking to you**.” Then I recognized his voice; it was **Jesus!** The one who had healed me! The light of the world! The Son of Man. The Righteous One from God! At that recognition, I fell down on my knees, put my face to the ground, and **worshipped him**.

All of my crying and praising attracted a group around us. Then Jesus said, “For **judgment I came** into **this world**, that **those** who **do not see may see**, and those **who see may become blind**.”

Ooo, that was sarcasm at its best. **I** knew what Jesus meant, but the Pharisees didn't. They questioned, “Are **we** blind?”

Jesus replied, “If you were **truly blind**, you wouldn't be **guilty** of sin, but since **you** say you are **the sighted leaders** of the **blind**, and since you study the things of God, yet **refuse** to acknowledge the work of God in your midst, your **guilt** will **always remain**.”

With that, we walked away, and Jesus took me **back home to my parents**. That's how I started to know Jesus, and how I started to understand what he was all about.

What about ***you***? Has Jesus **opened the eyes** of **your heart and mind**? Are you **growing** in your **understanding** of Jesus? Do you **tell others about what Jesus has done for you**?

I certainly hope so, for that is **our calling**: to **know Jesus**, to **make him known** to others, and to **do good things** for him.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to once again speak about Jesus.

May your **eyes be opened**, your **tongues loosed**, and your **hands and feet engaged** in the **service of Christ** our Savior. Amen.