



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC When All You See Is Darkness

SPEAKER

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THEME Encountering Jesus: The Book of John

DATE

7 & 8 March 2026

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In a world filled with confusion, uncertainty and moral darkness, many people believe they can see clearly. Yet the bible teaches that spiritual blindness is far more common than physical blindness. This blindness can appear in many forms and often happens gradually. To overcome it, we must step into God's marvellous Light, which drives out spiritual darkness and enables us to see with true spiritual understanding.

RECOGNISE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

John 9 recounts the story of Jesus healing a man who was born blind. The healing elicits different responses from three different groups of people as a result of spiritual blindness in each of these groups.

1) Response from the Neighbours

The neighbours recognised the blind man who had been healed, for he used to sit and beg in the city. Yet they struggled to believe that such a transformation had taken place. Sceptical of his healing, they repeatedly questioned him about how he had received his sight. Although the man clearly explained what had happened, they remained unconvinced. In their disbelief, they asked where the man who had healed him was. This response reflects the reality described in 2 Corinthians 4:4, which says that the 'god of this age' (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God.

A cynical and sceptical heart disbelieves and doubts God's power, resulting in spiritual blindness.

2) Response from the Pharisees

The Pharisees also repeatedly questioned the man about how he had received his sight. In doing so, they completely missed the significance of God's miracle and instead focused on the laws and regulations, accusing Jesus Christ of breaking the Sabbath. Rather than rejoicing over the healing of the man who had been born blind, their response was marked by a critical and judgmental spirit. Because Jesus did not conform to their strict interpretation of the law, the Pharisees concluded that His act of healing was wrong.

A legalistic spirit looks for faults in others according to its own standards. This attitude leads to spiritual blindness.

3) Response from the Man's Parents

When the man's parents were questioned about their son's healing, they were reluctant to speak openly. Instead, they redirected the questions to their son, saying that he could speak for himself. They feared being ostracised and put out of the synagogue. As Proverbs 29:25 warns, "The fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe."

A spirit that is fearful of man results in spiritual blindness.

Spiritual blindness can take many forms. A critical heart that doubts God's work, a legalistic spirit that focuses more on rules than on grace, and a fearful heart that prioritises human approval over God's truth can prevent us from seeing clearly.

RECEIVE SPIRITUAL SIGHT

How then can we receive spiritual sight? Three practical ways are to:

- 1) Ask God, or
- 2) Seek guidance from godly people around us,
- 3) Deepen the spiritual sensitivity in our lives.

Just as spiritual blindness does not happen overnight, learning to receive spiritual sight also happens progressively. The blind man took a step of faith in obedience, making the arduous journey from the city to the Pool of Siloam. Through this act of obedience, God not only restored his physical sight but also revealed Himself to him and ultimately redeemed his soul. In John 9:38, the man boldly declares, "Lord, I believe," and he worships Jesus Christ.

Our spiritual senses, including spiritual sight, are sharpened as we trust God and obey Him in small steps. Likewise, as we journey through life with Jesus Christ, our faith is strengthened as He reveals His truths and we witness God working in our lives. Through His grace and the salvation given by Jesus Christ, we experience love, joy, and peace in our daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual blindness can happen subtly and progressively. However, the good news of the gospel is that Jesus, the Light of the World, is able to open blind eyes. The life of Fanny Crosby beautifully illustrates this truth. Though physically blind from infancy, she possessed remarkable spiritual sight. Through her deep faith in Christ, she wrote many beautiful hymns that have blessed believers for generations, showing us that true sight is not found in physical eyes, but in hearts that recognise Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Like Fanny Crosby, as we experience God's illuminating Light opening our spiritual sight, we should be inspired to reach out to those around us, guiding them into the Light so that their spiritual eyes, too, may be opened.

QUESTIONS

1. What forms of spiritual blindness do you commonly see, and how can you guard against them in your own life?

2. How can you sharpen your spiritual sight to experience vibrancy in your relationship with God and follow His good and perfect plan for you?

3. In the midst of the chaos and darkness in the world, what can we do to bring spiritual sight and God's Light to those around us? Identify practical steps to do so.