

Wednesday meeting – 22nd March 2017

Today's theme is Blindness. During lent, the first theme we looked at was

- **Temptation.** We looked at the temptations of Adam and Eve and then we looked at the temptations of Jesus and we reflected on our own temptations. On the second week, we dealt with something called the Divine Encounter. We reflected on Abraham's divine encounter, Jesus' divine encounter and then our own. That's why praying for others works. When you pray for people, you can clear the skies and God in His mercy can give them a divine encounter. When God gives a divine encounter, all arguments, logic is thrown out the window.
- **Then we looked at the third Sunday which is Living Water.** We saw the living water is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who comes to us gives us a gift. In the Old Testament, we saw how Moses was given a staff so that he could tap the rock and bring water. Water was essential, the rock was a big obstacle - he tapped the rock with the staff, and suddenly the obstacle started giving water.

We have been given the same gift. All of us have been given a staff and the staff is the word of God. You tap the rock with the staff by faith in His word. You use it against the rock that is standing in your way and out of that rock will come living water. The Holy Spirit's baptism and experience flows into our lives. The very problem becomes our source of life.

There are two Jesuits who do an inner healing ministry in the international renewal - Matthew Linn and Dennis Linn. They are psychiatrists as well as Jesuit priests. In their book on inner healing they say that the people whom they met who has had a deep divine encounter had the same problems as the people whom they had met in mental institutes. Those who were in mental institutions, the problem had broken them and crushed them. They were under treatment and drugs and they were being watched night and day. Those who were in the communities had had a divine encounter through those very incidents. What happened was, the people in the care saw it at the human level, while those who had a divine encounter through the word of God and the Holy Spirit coming into their lives through that problem, actually grew and received a blessing from the Lord. So the answer to our problem is to take the staff of the word of God and use it on the rock, which is our problem, and allow the anointing of the Holy Spirit to turn it into living water.

This next Sunday is even more interesting. It speaks of Blindness.

As I go through the readings, I can see there are three dimensions of blindness:

Physical blindness. We can't see with our eyes.

Mental blindness. When our mind is unable to go beyond a point we are mentally and intellectually blind.

Spiritual blindness. When we cannot or refuse to see God.

Today I'm going to talk about all three blind events and how the Lord Jesus is an answer for all three:

1 Samuel 16:1

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel?"

Samuel is displaying one of these three types of blindness -- Mental blindness. He couldn't get over the fact that Saul has been rejected by God. Why? Because Samuel is the guy God used to anoint Saul. When Samuel was used by God to anoint Saul and Saul was now, not anointed God but now he was annoying God. God said, "I have gone on to someone else." But, Samuel couldn't leave Saul. It has happened to many of us as well. We think that people here in this world are really powerful. We think politicians are powerful, my uncle is powerful and we are ready to negotiate and live with them. The Lord is saying, "You are blind! You are not able to see that I am more powerful than them."

We think our problem is powerful, our sickness is powerful. That's why we call the sickness 'My sickness.' I have appropriated it to me - my cancer, my diabetes. If you want it the Lord says you can have it.

This mental block is also called a blindness. First physical blindness and second mental blindness. Samuel was having it and all of us have it to good measure.

1 Samuel 16:1 continued

"Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

When God is moving, we are unable to move along with God because we are holding on to what was. That happens when we are mentally blocked. We can't get through to the new thing God is doing. That's why most of the time, God has to choose a new generation to do something new. The older one gets blocked. We did it beautifully in our younger days but no more. After some time nothing is taking place. There is no movement of God because God has passed on to another place. What block is that? Mental blindness.

1 Samuel 16:6

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointing stands here before the Lord."

He saw this young, handsome guy and said, "Surely this must be the guy because he looks strong and powerful and he is the eldest."

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The

Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

We can easily get caught to this. We can work from the standards of the world so easily. In actual fact, God is above these situations and He is saying, "I am thinking differently."

That's what happens to these prophets. They live normal lives until they start hearing His voice. Then they start to look abnormal to people. They are receiving downloads from God and God is telling them another way to think. When you think in another way, everyone else thinks something is wrong with you.

Once again, God was addressing the mental blindness. So if Samuel, a man who walked with God his entire life, had mental blocks - can you imagine what we are having inside us?

1 Samuel 16:10

Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these."

What was happening to Samuel? He would have looked at each one and thought, "This one is good, that one is good." But he was getting a download from the other side. Samuel was a man who heard the voice of God and we know this because as a young boy, he was sleeping in the sanctuary and God spoke to him. Right from that time God has been speaking to Samuel. He is the one who appointed Saul himself, under the guidance of God.

But even though he heard the voice of God, he also carried many attitudes of the people of his time. It is the same with us. Though we carry a download from God occasionally, most of the time, we carry the attitudes of our people. We need to deal with our blindness, otherwise we can easily find people like that and the moment you start analyzing other people, you lose the opportunity of finding what God is telling you. It's a good time to allow the Lord to speak to your own heart.

1 Samuel 16:11-12

So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

God has a job for each and every one of us. Not only does He love each of us, not only will He set us free from within - but He has a mission for us. If you cooperate with Him, He will find a way to get you there.

Many people spend days and months in anxiety

- Thinking about what their enemy is doing,

- Thinking of the blocks they are having –
- blocks in the office and at home,
- Everyone is against you and you don't know what will happen.

Did you know that that is intellectual blindness? If God has chosen you and you're cooperating with Him, be sure that He will find a way to get you there.

If you look at David, he is the lady who is made first. You can see it in the gospels as well. You can see it in the selection of Jesus, the family he selects, becoming a carpenter, choosing fishermen. You can say one thing that is sure and predictable about God is that He is certainly unpredictable. He has His own ways. When people say, "It will never happen like this, you'll never get that chance, it'll never work out," I tell myself: If God wants it; it will take place.

You sort that out in your mind and you will sleep well and get up happy, because God is working for you while you're sleeping. If you're working by yourself I feel sorry for you because you are working while you are sleeping, and that is why you get all those terrible dreams and fears and anxieties and stress. You are working on it while you are sleeping - you can't switch off. How many people can't switch off because of the issues of life?

The gospel has a beautiful insight waiting for us:

John 9:1

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.

This is physical blindness. We dealt with intellectual blindness and now we are looking at physical blindness.

John 9:6-7

Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Jesus is capable of giving us physical healing - don't ever reject it or demean it.

Thank God we are experiencing a breakthrough now where we can actually experience it. There are so many people who are testifying to being healed by the Lord.

When there is a word for healing, you must cooperate by doing something you couldn't do. It seems to be that when you do that, there is a surge of a breakthrough that takes place and people begin to be released. Someone was telling me about a person who didn't have his cartilage. He was prayed over and told to do something he couldn't do. One thing the person without the cartilage couldn't do was to kneel. This person immediately knelt down and remained kneeling for an hour. That's a real sign that God gave this person a breakthrough.

Healing can be gradual as well. It may take time. Instantaneous healings can take place but it can take time. As you grow into it, it will take place.

I can see Sohan here and he received a word of knowledge about a spine injury. We were in India and that's where the word of knowledge came. He came and said, "That word is about me, but what shall I do?" From the way he spoke I knew that spirituality was not his forte. I asked him to believe and he asked me how to believe and I told him to pretend he was already healed.

Every week he used to come here after that and when I asked him how he was doing, he said, "Still pretending." He was playing tennis for the national team and he couldn't play anymore because of the injury. Then God actually healed him and today he has gone back to tennis and he is playing.

Physical healing is an essential part of the ministry of Jesus. Today he wants to make it a part of us because that's the best way of evangelizing. All the arguments are out the window the moment a healing takes place. We want more and not less. But a physical healing is only the beginning of the healing process.

John 9:8-9

His neighbours and those who had formally seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

You need to witness to what God had done - not for your sake and for your glory, but to make sure that other people also open themselves up to the glory and blessing of God. It is only if you witness that faith is ignited in somebody else. You don't have to talk about yourself, you don't have to talk about what God is doing through you - but you can certainly witness to what God has done through supernatural power. It kindles faith in people who never had any, and suddenly, the power of God is doing the snowballing effect of touching more and more people.

John 9:13

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.

Here the real problem starts. If nothing is happening everyone likes you because you're good - good for nothing.

John 9:14

Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

Actually, Jesus could have avoided a lot of problems by healing this guy earlier. But I'm thinking he wanted to do it on the Sabbath because he was dealing with another kind of blindness –

Spiritual blindness. Spiritual blindness is where you think you are walking with God, but in actual fact you have lost Him. That's a terrible place to be in. I think he wanted to expose spiritual blindness out of love for these people. So he healed this man, knowing it's going to create a controversy.

John 9:15

Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

This man didn't have any religious understanding or background - he just said what happened.

John 9:16

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

You can see the discernment of the Pharisees. Their discernment was faulty because they were legalistic. It can easily happen to us. We can get caught up in a structured understanding of reality that our discernment of God's movement itself can be faulty. We can lose God while we are serving Him. These people were devoted to God, and yet they lost Him because they got entangled in a structured, religious system.

John 9:16-17

...but others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided. Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet."

Not only was he healed of physical blindness but he was now enlightened in his mind. He saw who Jesus is. First he is physically healed, next he is intellectually liberated to see the truths of God. The truths of God are not found by mere intellectual knowledge and education. It is found by the mercy of God giving us divine revelation. As we pray, I can tell you, if you don't have faith in certain areas - worship the Lord and reflect on it and God will enlighten your mind, and suddenly it becomes so simple to see it.

If you're dealing with a fear that you can't get rid of,

- Don't try to fight the fear but bring it to the Lord
- keep a connection with Him,

and suddenly you will see that the fear is taken away in a moment because He gives you an insight into your mind. That's when He has healed your intellectual blindness.

So the Pharisees met the blind man again, and as they met, here goes the discussion:

John 9:34

To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how are you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

When you're in the flesh and you hear an opinion that is contradicting your own, you throw them out and say, "Get out! Don't try to be too smart." What did they do? They called him a sinner for birth. The concept of sinner in the time of Jesus is a little different from our own understanding. They believed that

if you wanted to be right with God, you have to follow the law. What about shepherds and people who worked in the fields? They didn't study the law. Because they didn't study the law and didn't know it, they were labeled sinners. You don't have to commit a sin to be a sinner, but because you didn't know the Lord. That's why they said, "You were steeped in sin before you were born. How dare you lecture us! We know the law, and you are trying to tell us." This is an attitude that survives century after century.

John 9:35

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

Jesus asked this from the blind man who now sees.

John 9:36

"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

Look at the two attitudes of the Pharisees and this blind man. The Pharisees had begun their research from the point of view that Jesus is a fraud. You call that carrying a prejudice and an attitude. In actual fact, all of us carry prejudices and attitudes. This blind man, because he had a divine encounter and had been healed by the Lord was carrying an openness. That's why he said, "Tell me who he is so that I may believe in him." That is the attitude of faith. The Pharisees say, "Tell me who He is and I'll tell you that he's a fraud." You have the same attitudes today in our world: People who begin from the point of view that you're a liar, a fraud and a man who has done wrong.

This is the challenge that we have. If we carry this attitude, whatever information we have will never convince us. That's why, today, people continue to be blind to what God is doing, even though the evidence stares them in the face.

John 9:37-38

Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him.

First he was healed of his physical blindness and he saw with his eyes. Second he was healed of his mental blindness and he saw Jesus as the prophet of God. Third he was healed of his spiritual blindness. The first to confess that Jesus is God and as far as I know, he is the first one in the gospel of John who confessed that Jesus is God. Nobody is worshipped by a Jew expect God alone. Thomas later does the same thing, after the Lord is resurrected. But the blind man receives that gift even before Jesus' death and resurrection. Physical blindness healed, leads to mental blindness healed and enlightened, leads to spiritual blindness healed and enlightened and now this man can see.

Here is the challenge you and I are having: Are we ready to allow Jesus to heal us? Physical healing, mental healing and spiritual healing.

The good news is, you don't need to understand or analyze - you only need to allow Him to come into your life.

Let's look at the epistle and this is confirmation:

Ephesians 5:8

For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light...

Physical healing from the Lord, mental enlightenment and spiritual illumination. Suddenly we are walking in the light of the Lord.