

**Sermon Notes of  
Guest Speaker James Petty's Sermon on July 7, 2019:**

**"Blind from Birth (John 9  
– Background Information)"**

**[In today's sermon, guest speaker James Petty shows us the commission of the church is to share the good news of Jesus and to guard the truth of God from assault.]**

**Notes**

Introduction:

- Just 3 days ago, we celebrated the birth of our nation and went through the typical things together such as eating wonderful meals, especially with potato salad, and delicious deserts, etc.
- We are celebrating the Declaration of Independence that was approved by Congress 243 years ago.
  
- So here's the question for us: what happened to the signees of the Declaration of Independence?
- We don't often realize what price was paid from the release of our bondage.
- It's because of what these people did that we are able to freely teach the Word of God in this nation.
- This is not possible in many nations today including the most populous nation of China.
  
- Now there were 56 signees of the Declaration of Independence and the document was distributed to the 13 colonies so it was well known who signed that document.
- Now, interestingly, 5 were quickly captured and tortured before they died.
- 12 had their homes ransacked and fled and eventually died in poverty.
- Thomas McKee had to constantly move his family because his possessions were taken, and he, too, died in poverty.
  
- Carter Braxton, a wealthy trader, saw his ships swept into the sea by the British Navy and also died in rags.
- John Hart, who was driven from his wife's bed site as she was dying, saw that his grist mills were also laid to waist, also died a few weeks later after he could never relocate his children.
- Also 9 of these signees fought and died in our Revolutionary War.
  
- All of these men were not your typical wild-eyed rebel rousers but were soft-spoken men of means and education.
- Standing tall and unwavering, they pledged, "For the support of this declaration and with firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."
- Most of us don't recognize what those signees went through for us.

### Christian parallel:

- Now there are many parallels here to the Christian life as Jesus began to lead His people out of the house of bondage.
- Jesus was killed and His closest friends were killed in support of Him.
- The thousands who received the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost had to flee for their lives from Jerusalem, leaving behind their possessions.
- We don't often think about the price that's paid for liberty.

### Background to John 9:

- So the Holy Spirit is basically going to tell us about the background to John 9.
- John 9 also holds a very high regard in the minds of the scholars.
- Quoting C.K. Barrett from *The Gospel According to John*:

*"This Chapter expresses more vividly and completely than any other John's conception of the work of Christ."*

### **John 9:1, As He (Jesus) passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.**

- This is a stunning story of a blind beggar who was given sight – it's one of the 7 miracles that John wrote about.
- Now, the Holy Spirit is telling us to go back to the beginning, because why was the man born blind in the first place?
- Here we have a loving God and this man has suffered all his life.
- The word "birth" here in the Greek is *genets* and is only used once in the New Testament and is to be distinguished from the normal word for birth (Greek: *odina*) which is the act of travail and pain a woman experiences.
- So this verse is telling us that the meaning of this miracle goes deeper than the miracle itself.
- And Jesus specifically mentioned this in verse 4: "This miracle was done so the works of God may be revealed."
- So, the blind man now becomes a representative of humanity. His healing represents the future healing of all mankind.
- It's good to back into history and learn how come mankind has had to suffer and how come we are continually suffering in this life.
- And then we can share this understanding with others who are also suffering.

### **Genesis 1:1, In the beginning God (Hebrew: *Elohim* – plural intent), created (Hebrew: *bara*) the heavens and the earth.**

- Here we see that God identifies Himself to Israel, who just came out of Egypt, which was a polytheistic nation.
- This is a standalone verse, in one sense.
- This verse also tells us that God created the heavens and the earth.
- So this is showing God's power and His love

- Now, here are a couple of definitions of “bara” from a Hebrew – English Lexicon:
  - 1) “Create from nothing.”
  - 2) It can also mean “Create new conditions and circumstances from existing material.”
- And Hebrews 11:3 (ESV), tells us, “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”
- So we know that God has created matter out of nothing,
- But, is this referring to time when mankind was created?
- The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges quote doesn’t think so:

*It is a mistake to suppose that the word “bara” necessarily means “to create out of nothing.”*

- So, as we see, there is a school of Christianity that says “This is a young earth.”
- They believe that the creation of the earth was only 6000 years ago, maybe 10,000.
- But, now we have the scientific community consensus that says the earth is around 150 millions of years old.
- So, will the general Christian community turn off the scientific community by insisting that the earth is only 6000 years old?
- We need to understand that the scientific community may be right.

From the GCI Website (Joseph Tkach’s quote on this subject):

*We do not deny the evidence from science that indicates a long history of life on this planet. We need not find an insoluble conflict between living faith and scientific evidence.*

*The audience to whom Genesis was written lived in a world that worshipped many gods (polytheism). Given this purpose the age of the earth was not an issue. At issue was which god or gods created the earth.*

*The Hebrew word “bara” is a word that describes a specific act of creation although not necessarily out of nothing. The Hebrew grammar allows for translations that convey the possibility of previous epochs before the present creation.*

*Genesis tells us the origin of a world in which human beings were created, sinned and for whom Jesus died. This we know for certain from the text. The supposed belief is that God created the heavens and the earth and every living thing in 6 days.*

*Christians do not need to feel that faith requires a 6000 year old earth theory. It can cause people to reject the Bible.*

- Perhaps a better way to read Genesis 1:1 is this way, “In the beginning God prepared the earth for human habitation.”

- God did bless the earth in so many different ways for mankind, especially the Garden of Eden.

The master plan God has set in motion for humanity:

- The triune God is saying to each other in Genesis 1:26:

**“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”**

- Now there is a lot of conjecture about what it means to be in the likeness of God.
- But, in Isaiah 45:8, God tells us,

**“I am the one who says to the earth, ‘Let salvation blossom and let righteousness sprout forth.’”**

- Number one, God wants us to live forever with eternal life with Him – this was His plan from the beginning.
- And secondly, to be in God’s image, we are to be righteous.
- That’s an incredible job to do because Scripture tell us, “There is no one righteous, no not one” Romans 3:10).
- So how is this going to be that we will all become righteous?
- Scriptures tell us that there is going to be a pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon mankind.

**Isaiah 44:3, I will pour my spirit upon your seed.**

- And it is the Spirit we must have to be complete.
- Now back in the Garden of Eden, you will notice the words, “There was a tree of life in the midst of the garden” (Genesis 2:9).
- Now, step one of the creation was physical creation – flesh and blood.
- But, there had to be another step taken in order for us to live forever and that was that God would put His Spirit in us.
- So there was going to be a union of the Spirit and the flesh.
- So Adam and Eve were to partake of the fruit of the tree of life which obviously had the Spirit of God in its fruit.
- It’s interesting that Jesus says the same thing:

**John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”**

**John 6:53, “Unless you eat my flesh (spiritually), and drink my blood (spiritually), you have no life in you.”**

**John 3:3, 5 (Jesus telling Nicodemus), “You must be born from above.” “You must be born of the Spirit.”**

Obtaining eternal life:

- It was easier for Adam and Eve to obtain eternal life before they sinned – all they had to do was to partake of the tree of life.
- Now we have to partake of the tree that Jesus hung on – that’s the tree of life now for us.

- We have to believe that Jesus' sacrifice paid the penalty for our sins and when we do, we will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- And the entering of the Holy Spirit in our flesh is a type of special union.
- And God gives us an example of this union in a physical fashion by instituting marriage.
- Marriage is a union between a male and a female.
- Marriage is a life sustaining union, because it produces life.
- Marriage is also a type of spiritual union that produces spiritual life.
- It's also part of our calling to help produce spiritual life in others.
- In other words, Jesus is carrying on His work through us.
- We are to share the truth with others – they won't find it anywhere else.

### Commission of the church:

- Now God gave Adam two responsibilities in the Garden – “to dress it and to keep it” (Genesis 2:15).
- This is not the best translation because God is not interested in agrarian tasks for humanity.
- Instead, God wanted Adam to serve people, which is the job of the church today.
- Our Christian job is servant leadership, which shows others how to have a relationship with Jesus.
- And a better translation of the verb “to keep it” would be “to guard it.”
- Thus, the church today has the job of guarding the truth because God's truth is under assault by society as they hammer away at it.
- Now Jesus, in His ministry told people how to have a relationship with God forever.
- And Jesus also guarded the truth, as well.
- Now Satan went to the Garden of Eden and defeated Adam and Eve with his verbal assault.
- And he tried the same tactic with Jesus and attacked Him when He was at his weakest point in His life – He was without food or water for 40 days and 40 nights.
- Remember, Satan doesn't want mankind to have a relationship with God and live forever and so he tried to stop Jesus from entering into His earthly ministry.
- As we said before, the church has the responsibility to share the good news of Jesus and to guard the truth.
- In the United States, as never before, God's truth is under assault by the control of the media and the educational systems.
- Our schools are under attack where the government took prayer and the Bibles out of our schools.
- It's interesting that the Supreme Court in 1844 said, “The Bible should be taught in all the schools of the nation.”

### Decision time:

- What would Adam and Eve do – would they obey God and take the road to eternal life or would they decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong?
- When they looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, human reasoning told them that it looked pretty good, and when they took of its fruit, it tasted good.
- When we sin, it's all very good in the beginning – it seems like the right choice.

- For example, when you take drugs for the first time, you feel great.
- And so you take it again and again because it feels so good and then later on you will obviously not feel very good and your life has been wrecked. Sin catches up with you.
- This is why humanity had to suffer and learn the hard way – God allowed it.
- But then God sent a Savior to redeem humanity.
- In John 9, the healing of the blind man is just a precursor of what Jesus will do at His second coming – He will heal all mankind.
- And Jesus was also telling us in His ministry that we will be the rulers in His future kingdom, as well.
- But for now, we have lots of trials ahead of us, but we need to be like these people who signed the Declaration of Independence by standing tall, because there is a great future ahead of us

Closing prayer