God Love in Action John 9
Mar 15, 2026 Steven Sifers

Good evening, Christ the King. My name is Steven. I'm grateful to be the deacon here at CTK. If we haven't met yet, I would love to link up with you after service in the fellowship hall. Maybe we can arrange a time that we can have coffee or tea together uh later in the week. Well, this evening we continue our journey in the Gospels. As Jesse read, we're looking at the story of a marvelous and wonderful healing. The story of the healing of the man born blind. Now, on the surface, this could just be a story about a man having his optical nerves recreated, having his sight gained back or gained in this case. But this really is a much deeper story. This isn't just a story about a man getting sight in his eyes. This is a story about light breaking into the darkness. It's a story about isolation giving way to belonging. And it's a story about a savior who draws near to us, who wants to be with us in our suffering, who wants to touch us where we are and heal our brokenness.

So, this follows very closely on the last two messages that we had. Uh Jared uh spoke on John 3:16. Uh for God so loved the world that he gave his only son. And then last week, Jesse talked about the Samaritan woman at the well and the thing we've been asking ourselves, what does love look like? Well, tonight we'll get another view of what love looks like. It's not the whole answer. That would be much more than one sermon could bear, but it will be a partial answer. Um, and I'm going to say the partial answer to what God's love looks like in this context is that God's love is active. It's near to us and it's inviting. You see, God so loved the world that he sent his only son. And his son pursues us across boundaries and across uh religious restrictions. And he seeks us because he wants to be with us. And God's love is near to us. See, Jesus came down to earth, became a human to be near to us. And so he comes right up to us, oftentimes touching us.

And then it's inviting. See, God's love invites us out of darkness and into light emotionally, physically, and spiritually. So, um, I just want to have you get a little taste of what the blind man's life was like. So, this is what I'd like you to do. I'd like you to get a little separation between you if you can. And then I'm going to ask you to close your eyes. So if you're comfortable, close your eyes. Don't touch anyone next to you. See if you can with your eyes closed. Imagine that this is the main characteristic of the blind man's life. no light at all. He's unable to see the faces of his family. He has no reference for the beauty of creation. No colors, no desert sunset. See, now you can from memory call these things to mind, but remember this man was born blind. He has no sight memories to call on. Can you feel the isolation sitting in darkness, no one touching you. Now imagine Jesus approaching you personally in that darkness. He doesn't shout from afar. He comes close.

He puts his fingers on your eyes. So now open your eyes. Suddenly you can see colors. You can see the faces of the people around you. You can see the nearness of your neighbors. Can you feel that little change from isolated darkness into welcoming light? Well, this just isn't a physical story about this man. It was his spiritual journey as well. And often, you know, it can be our journey, too. Many of us have known seasons of darkness, whether it's grief or doubt or

loneliness, depression or addiction or just feeling unseen and forgotten. You may be in a season of darkness right now. And I hope that this message this evening is a message of hope for you because this evening we'll see how Jesus not only restores sight, but he reveals himself as the light of the world and how he touches us. It points us to something profound about God's love for us. So before we get into the details of this, if you'll let me pray for us. Lord, I praise you as the light of the world.

I know that people do dwell in darkness. Some people are lost in darkness now. Some people are just in a season of darkness. Lord, help us to open the eyes or open the eyes of our hearts so that we would truly see you and that seeing you, we would be able to pass that light on to others in Jesus name. Amen. All right. Well, if you would like to follow along, please feel free to open a Bible. We're in the Gospel of John, chapter nine. We'll be starting in verse one. So, we begin with Jesus and his disciples. They're in Jerusalem, Jerusalem on the Sabbath. And they come upon a man who is blind from birth. And the apostles, the disciples, immediately make an assumption about the man. You see, it was common knowledge. It was universal. accepted in those days that if you were bearing some affliction, some illness, some sickness, disease, or a disability that you had sinned or someone had sinned. You were cursed.

And because you were cursed, no upstanding person would come to see you. No one would talk to you. No one would even touch you. And so the person he was just wasn't afflicted with blindness. He was a social outcast. He was a religious outcast. He was cursed. There was no safety net for him. No social safety net. There were no jobs uh for the blind people. And so he was left to beg. In fact, that's how people knew him. Isn't that the man who used to sit and beg? You know, not only was he living in a world of physical darkness, he was living in a world of emotional darkness. He was alone and isolated from society. And now and that's what was behind the disciples question. Hey Lord, who sinned? This man or his parents? So now it just wasn't physical darkness and it just wasn't emotional darkness. This was a triple threat. There's spiritual darkness and he was in it. You see in Colossians it tells us that The domain, the domain of darkness is the realm of Satan.

Matthew uses the term outer darkness as a name for hell. And Wendy read in Ephesians earlier um to have no part of the unfruitful works of darkness. You see, if you're familiar with the book of Job, I'm sure you are. The book of Job can be described as a cry in the dark. The light of Job's life had gone out. He was in a spiritual wilderness. He was groping in the dark to try and find God. Well, in that book, darkness is used 35 times to describe Job's life. One of those words that Job uses is *salmavet* in Hebrew. Can you say *salmavet*?

It's translated as deadly darkness or the shadow of death. It's the same word that Jesse read earlier in Psalm 23, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. That's the *salmavet*. Throughout the Old Testament, prophets warn about *salmavet*. They say deep darkness, thick darkness, deepest gloom. They're all synonyms for dark, difficult times for a spiritual wilderness. So darkness is the setting of choice for the works of God's enemies. So, it's no wonder that Jesus was arrested at night in the dark. Well, that was the blind man's life.

Perpetual darkness physically, emotionally, and spiritually. You know, he had yet to experience Isaiah's words. People walking in darkness will see a great light. The light will shine on those who live in death's shadow. See, he hadn't experienced that yet, but he's about to. Jesus gives a big spoiler alert. You're in verse three now. The big spoiler alert. Jesus says, "It's not because of sin.

This blindness is that the works of God might be displayed in this man." And so now when Jesus says that the works of God, what's what he's talking about? Well, in this context, we'll see that these are signs, the works of God are signs that Jesus is who he says he is and that the kingdom of God is drawing near. See, in Luke, when John the Baptist's disciples come to Jesus to ask him, are you the one that we've been waiting for? So, Jesus doesn't give him a long theological answer. Um, he doesn't even say yes. He says, tell John what you have seen. and heard. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf regain their hearing, and good news is preached to the poor. So those are the signs of God. They're the signs that Jesus is the Messiah and that the kingdom of God is drawing near. Excuse me. I practiced this earlier. Okay. So Jesus is about to do this wonderful work. But before he does it in verse five, he reveals himself as the light of the world.

He says, "I am the light of the world." Because he is about to bring actual light into a man's life who had known only darkness. And so we move to verse six. And Jesus bends down and he spits in the ground and he starts forming mud and he anoints the man's eyes. So now if you can just step back from that just a bit. Can you picture yourself in that crowd? And Jesus spits on the ground and starts to form dust. And that is a real what the heck is going on at the moment in life. Come on Jesus. What is going on? on. What are you doing? Well, what he was doing would probably have awoken a cultural memory in their minds. It probably reminded them of Genesis 2:7. Then the Lord God took dust from the earth and formed man, and he breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living creature. Well, that's what Jesus was doing. And Jesus formed mud from the earth. He spit on it which is like breathing.

He anointed the man's eyes and the man became a seeing creature. This was just a foreshadowing of when God will recreate all things. He will make all things new. He will restore the world to the way it's supposed to be. And there will be no blindness either emotionally, physically or spiritually. So this was of course a great miracle. You know, if it was just restoring the guy's sight, that would have been monumentally enough. That would have been that would have made Facebook. I would have posted that if I saw it on my Facebook feed. But there's a deeper layer here in this miracle. Jesus is emphasizing his incarnation as Jared told us two weeks ago. God sent his son into the world. The sun became truly human. He was drawing near to humanity in all of its brokenness and isolation. He identifies with our suffering. He's not afraid to get his hands dirty when it comes to his love for us. He doesn't shy away from our messy lives and our sin and isolation.

This healing sign that he did is a sign that the kingdom of God draws near to us through Jesus Christ. So now a little higher theology here. He was also doing this thing. He was refuting a heresy in that time called Gnosticism.Gnosticism is the thought that only the spirit matters. Only

the spirit is good. The world, the material things of this world. They're evil. They're corrupt. They're to be disregarded and avoided. But see, the gnostics must not read about this miracle because in this miracle, Jesus uses the things of the earth, the material world. He uses the dust. He uses his spit. He uses his touch to restore the man's sight. And this is just an indicator to us that this world and what we do in it, matters. Jesus Jesse says matter matters and that's true. So matter matters. All right. So uh yeah so Jesus is incarnate. He comes down and he can do the only way he can touch people is through his incarnate body. Right? And we know that the incarnation is not temporary.

Jesus didn't just put on flesh here on earth for a little while. No, Jesus put on flesh. He died a bodily death. He was resurrected in his bodily form. He ascended to heaven in his bodily form. He sits at the right hand of God today in his bodily form and he will return in his bodily form. At the embassy that would be amen.

Well, what is this? Because of this, we also have the promise of a bodily resurrection. Paul says in Romans, "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." Amen again. So, as you know from the passage, uh this man didn't immediately regain his sight, right? He had to do something in this process. In the process there was something required of him. He had to respond to Jesus's love. And so Jesus tells him, "Go wash your eyes in the pool of Saleom." And when he goes, he returns. He's restored to sight. But he's restored of sight, not just physically. His life is restored now generally, socially, and emotionally because he is no longer cursed. He has sight. He's not going to be a beggar. He's probably going to get a job. People are going to talk to him. People may even touch him. No more isolation. No more loneliness.

Now, the next few verses we didn't read, but it's all about uh the Pharisees and the town's people and um even his parents. And the first thing they're doing is talking back and forth trying to figure out is this the guy? Was that the guy? Was it that beggar? But he was blind. Now he sees. What's going on? Bottom line, it was him. He was blind and now he's not. So, if you'll go to verse 25 then with me, this is one of my favorite parts. You see, the Pharisees, they're having this guy. They're interrogating him. They want to know if it was him or how did it happen? Who did it? How can this be? See, the Pharisees, highly educated, highly theological, this was getting in the way of their worldview and they didn't want it to happen. So, they begin to gaslight the man. They're like, "This can't happen. There's no way." And he is just a man born blind, just a simple guy. His answer to them is this, or this is my paraphrasing of his answer to them.

Look, I do not have a fancy degree like you do. I do not know all the theological implications of this. But this is what I know. I was blind, but now I see. Well, they didn't like that answer. Yeah. That flew in the face of all their thinking and so they cast him out. Talk about emotional whiplash. They cast him out. It's like they wanted to capture him in darkness again. They were putting him back in social and religious isolation. But you know what? They wanted him there, but Jesus did not. So Jesus actively seeks him out. He heard he was cast out. He goes and finds him. And then he begins a conversation with him that is very similar to the conversation with the Samaritan woman. Jesus says, "Do you believe in the son of man?" Now, the son of

man is one of the titles of the Messiah. And the man says, "Who is he that I may believe in him?" And then in verse 37, Jesus says something that the blind man had probably never heard before. Jesus says, "You have seen him. It is me.

And the man sees Jesus for who he truly is and he believes and he worships Jesus and he's saved. So, this is really a profound reversal. The man was once shrouded in physical darkness. He was shrouded in emotional darkness and he was shrouded in spiritual darkness. And he gets his sight back. But that doesn't immediately result in salvation. He sees Jesus again and this time Jesus says to him you when he says I am the son of man he says you have seen him and the man believed. So this is the sight not of just the eyes. This is the sight of the heart. We're going to sing a song that says open the eyes of my heart. That's what happened to the man. the blind man. Not only was his physical sight restored, the eyes of his heart were opened so that he could see Jesus and be saved. And that was kind of the conclusion of his journey. We would say that's just the beginning of his journey because he needs some discipling. But that's the end of this journey.

So now I have a question for you. Why might Jesus choose to touch the blind man? Why would he use touch? Because he doesn't need to, right? Um when the centurion came to him and said his servant was ill and dying, Jesus didn't go. Jesus healed that servant with just a word from afar. So he doesn't need to do that. So why might he use touch? Because he often touched people, right? He healed the sick. He blessed children by touching them. He restored the outcast. So I think he was demonstrating that physical human touch is necessary for people and it's something that we should be doing. See, science has discovered that when people touch other people, uh a biological thing happens. Oxytocin, the cuddle chemical is released and the cuddle chemical is necessary. It's good for you. It's good for your mental health. It's good for your physical health. It's required. It's just not um it it's just Not. What's a good word for that? Optional.

The other thing it does, not only does it activate oxytocin, it suppresses cortisol. And cortisol is your stress hormone. It's the one that gets you all anxious and sometimes depressed and feeling awful. So, um, human touch, it's good for us. In fact, the absence of it is bad for us. It's called touch starvation, and it leads to all kinds of bad activities. Um, it's depression, heightened stress, poor sleep, uh, developmental harm, especially in newborns, which is why I love to hold newborns and the elderly also. In a world, you know, that so desperately needs touch, we're called to be the agent of God's love through touch, but through other things, too. If God's love is active and it's um uh near to us and it's inviting. We have to as his agents be active. We need to be near. We need to be inviting. Well, well, how can we do that? Well, I have, oddly enough, four suggestions for you. This is how you can be active and near and inviting in your everyday life.

And during Lent is such a good time. So, first, admit your need for light. See, Lent's a great season to spend some time in quiet prayer asking God to reveal the areas of spiritual darkness in your own life. Doubt, persistent sin, grief, loneliness, feeling unseen by God. See, the first step out of darkness is humility. Admit, "I was blind." Don't be like the Pharisees who thought

they saw. Second, obey the simple steps that Jesus gives. So the blind man, he didn't receive his sight right away, right? He had to go, he had to act in faith, he had to respond by going to wash in the pool of Salom. So when Jesus calls you towards the light, whether it's through your scripture reading, whether it's a prompt of the Holy Spirit to forgive someone or to repent or to serve or to seek community, take the obedience step even if it seems small. Maybe it's inconvenient. Do it anyway. Obedience opens the door to clear spiritual vision just like washing did to the man's sight.

Third, testify to what you know. See the man's powerful witness. It was simple. I was blind, but now I see. So take some time to share with the people around you, maybe a small group, just your neighbors, how God has brought light to an area of darkness specifically for you. It doesn't require a big theological degree or speech. It doesn't require a perfect answer. It's just how God worked in your life to bring light out of darkness and your testimony like the blind man's can point others towards the light. So last, don't neglect touch in your life and the life of others. Now my family's looking at me like what? Don't neglect touch in your life for the life of others. Science and scripture attest to the need for human touch and human contact. So reach out to those around you. I hesitate to say put your screen down and do actual physical contact with people. So Jesus is the light of the world. He still seeks out the isolated. He still touches our broken places.

He still opens eyes physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I pray that we will receive his touch this season. So, and that we will share that touch so that more people can say, "I was blind, but now I see."

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the clarity of your scripture. Lord, thank you for your incarnation. Thank you that you are and you still are the light of the world. Help our hearts if we're in a place of darkness. Help us, Lord, to seek the light. If someone around us is in a season of darkness, help us to be the instrument that you use to shine light on their lives, even if it's just sitting with them in their darkest time. Lord, you promise to be with them in the dark and You promised to call us out of the dark. Lord, call us out in Jesus name. Amen.