Today is Part B of a 2-part message, but it mightn't seem like it, because the 2 parts have been separated by about a month.

After we had Part-A back on 23rd August:

- 5th Sunday of the month where we visit other churches;
- Robyn & I were away for 2 weeks for holidays & church conference (Tony);
- Last week, Emmanuel college were here

which brings us to today.

Anyway, we've been studying the Gospel of John, and we're up to chapter 9. And because we're doing the whole chapter, we'll do what we did last time, and I'll read it myself, to help hold it together.

But before we do, let's have a reminder of where we're up to.

At the end of Chapter 8, Jesus has just <u>blatantly</u> claimed to be God. When Moses met God at the burning bush, God revealed His Name as "I AM" – His personal Name, YHWH… And John 8 concludes with Jesus saying: "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." at which point, they picked up stones to kill Him… **Blasphemy**…. Jesus was claiming (not only that He was alive before Abraham), He was claiming God's personal Name, for Himself (I Am).

And so Chapter 8 concluded with V59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

And this is where we begin Chapter 9.

John 9:1

9 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.
2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

8 The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him."

He kept saying, "I am the man."

10 So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes
opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made
mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to
Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received
my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He
said, "I do not know."

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had
formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day
when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 So
the Pharisees again asked him how he had received
his sight.

And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I
washed, and I see."

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from
God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others
said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?"
And there was a division among them. 17 So they said
again to the blind man, "What do you say about him,
since he has opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind
and had received his sight, until they called the
parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and
asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born
blind? How then does he now see?"

20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our
son and that he was born blind. 21 But how he now
sees we do not know, nor do we know who **opened** his
eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for
himself."

22 (His parents said these things because they
feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed
that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he
was to be put out of the synagogue.) 23 Therefore his
parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So for the second time they called the man who
had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God.
We know that this man is a sinner."

25 He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not
know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind,
now I see."

[26] They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

[27] He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

[28] And they reviled him, saying, "You are **his** disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. [29] We know that God **has** spoken to Moses, but as for **this** man, we do not know where he comes from."

[30] The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. [31] We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. [32] Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. [33] If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

[34] They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

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

36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"

37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you."

38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

39 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?"

41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.

Righto:

Part A (for us), was a bit of a diversion – a side-topic. We talked about "suffering", and God's purpose in suffering. It

wasn't because of some horrible sin, that the blind man suffered. He was born blind, so that God could be glorified, through him.

And we picked this up, and considered, what it means for us today. We talked about how, when you and I suffer, the **way** we suffer, brings glory to God. It is normal, for Christians to suffer in this life. Sometimes we will suffer worse than unbelievers, for the sake of Christ… And as our faith remains strong (through our suffering), we bring glory to God.

Even when we are at our wits end, The Holy Spirit helps us to look beyond our current physical circumstances, and to rejoice in the eternal blessing we have, in Christ Jesus.

So, that was a little side-topic. Today, we're going to take-up the main message.

The Blind man received his physical sight, but the **focus** of this reading, is about "**Spiritual** sight Vs. Spiritual blindness". And yes, the blind man was blessed that he received his sight, but an even greater blessing (for him), was to receive spiritual sight.

Righto, so let's get into it.
Jesus said:
3 …"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

And then He said:

4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

Now, the image of light Vs darkness – it's a powerful image within the Gospel of John. Jesus is The Light of the World. Through His teachings/actions/miracles, Jesus was shining a light, into this dark world – He was doing the work of His Heavenly Father. In His very self, He was revealing to the World, what God is like.

But, the time allocated, for Jesus to shine His light, was limited. He said: 4 … night is coming, when no one can work.

Now, as we've discovered numerous times, the Gospel of John doesn't just tell us about what's going on in the physical realm. It also reveals what's happening in the spiritual realm…

And, it's going to be a while until we get there, but when we get to Chapter 13 (where Judas goes out to betray Jesus), 13:30 includes a short sentence "**And it was night.**"

You see, there comes a point in the Gospel of John, where the public ministry of Jesus comes to a close, and it's where Judas goes out to betray Him… And so we read today "4 … night is coming…." And when Judas steps out to betray Jesus, it says "**And it was night.**" The public ministry of Jesus comes to an end at His betrayal and crucifixion… And that, is why there is an urgency at this point "4 We must work the

works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

Now, did you notice, that the works of God, are not carried out by Jesus alone. Jesus includes His Disciples in the work that He does. V4 said: 4 **We** must work the works of him who sent me while it is day…

And this is true for Disciples of Jesus today. Yes, there was a period of darkness, where Jesus was betrayed and crucified, and His public ministry came to an end… But, we're not in darkness any longer. The opening paragraph of the Gospel of John tells us this. 1:5 says: 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

When Judas stepped out to betray Jesus, yes, it was night. But, death, did not keep Jesus down. When Jesus was betrayed and crucified, yes, there was darkness, but not any longer. We do not meet here today, to worship a dead God, and bemoan the fact that we are living in darkness…

Jesus overcame death. He rose from the dead. Darkness has not overcome the light. And the light of Jesus, continues to shine, today. The light of Jesus Christ, **is** shining into this world, as Disciples of Jesus continue to:

- proclaim the word of God; and
- carry out the works of God…

What an encouragement this is: to know that we don't have to try to do the works of God alone. Jesus says "We". "We must

do the works of the father, while it is still day"… What a joy it is, to be working with Jesus…

Anyway, Jesus healed the blind man. And I suspect the way He did it, is a bit different to how most ophthalmologists would approach it. For a start, it was a whole lot cheaper…

- He spat on the ground;
- made some mud out of the saliva;
- rubbed the mud into the man's eyes; and then
- He told the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam

So, he went and washed, and came back seeing…

Now, those who knew him, thought this was amazing. "Isn't this the bloke who used to beg on the street?"
And some said "Yeah, that's him."
Others said "Nah, it's not him, but it looks like him."

But the blind man kept on saying "It is me"…

10 So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

He said, well, **11** "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight."

Naturally, the people wanted to see Jesus, but the man didn't know where He was.

Alright, the Blind Man, can now see,,, but not everybody's happy about this.

Enter, the Pharisees…

The Pharisees are always out to get Jesus, and Jesus is always 'poking the bear', by doing His miracles on the Sabbath day. BTW, apparently it was OK for them to pick up rocks to stone Jesus on the Sabbath, but it wasn't OK for Jesus to heal the blind man on the Sabbath… (Double standards)…

Anyway, the Pharisees asked the Blind Man, how he received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

And at this, the Pharisees were divided… Some said, "Well, if He's doing these things on the Sabbath, then He can't be from God." Others said "A sinner can't do this sort of stuff."

So, they asked the Man, "Who do you think He is?"
"Well, I reckon He's a prophet"…

But, the Religious Leaders, thought it was a 'con'. They didn't even believe that the man had been born blind, so they called in his parents: "Is this your son, who <u>you say</u> was born blind? How then does he now see?"

And they said, “Look, yes, he is our son. And yes, he was born blind,,, but we don’t know how that happened… He’s an adult – ask Him.”

They were afraid, you see… The Religious Leaders were so against Jesus that they had already made it clear that anyone who confessed that Jesus was the Messiah/Christ, they would be banned from the synagogue…

Alright, their minds were already made-up, and no matter what evidence Jesus presented to them, they refused to see…

And it goes on. They call the man in again. “Tell us again”… “We know Jesus is a sinner. Tell us again what He did…”

And the man just stuck to his testimony. “I can’t comment on whether He’s a sinner or not, but what I do know, is I was blind, but now I see.”

And then he got a little bit cheeky (& I love this bit): “Why do you want to hear it again? Oh, do you want to become His disciples too????”

And the Religious Leaders laid their cards on the table: “We’re disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to moses,,, but this Jesus bloke, we don’t know where He comes from”…

And the man’s answer reveals just how deluded they were, in their judgment of Jesus...

30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

And Oh, they hated that…
34 … "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

The man was kicked out of the synagogue, but Jesus welcomed him, into the Kingdom of God…

When Jesus heard he'd been kicked out, he went and found him.
"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"
36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"

37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you."

What an amazing thing… Up until that morning, the Man had never seen a thing in his whole life… But now, he has seen the Son of Man…

V[38] He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

And you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure, this is the first person to worship Jesus in the Gospel of John.

Anyway, V39 reveals what this whole chapter is about:
[39] Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

It's about gaining spiritual sight, or being spiritually blind…

You see, a lot of people don't like the Gospel. There are no shades of grey here.
It's either:

- black/white
- light/darkness
- truth/lies
- eternal salvation/judgment…

You see, when it comes to judgment, most of us like to remember the little snippets where Jesus says things like "[12:47]….I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world." But that's only half the story. It goes on to say that there is a coming Day of Judgment, and that on that day, we will be judged by the words that Jesus has spoken…

The reason that Jesus came into the world (the first time), is to open our spiritual eyes, because Jesus is coming back – He is

coming a second time. And when Jesus returns, this time, He will come in judgement. All those who have believed in His Name, will enter into eternal life, while all those who reject Him, enter into judgment…

He came, to give spiritual sight.
Do you see???

The Religious Leaders had the evidence of the healing of the Blind Man. We have the same evidence… We **also** have the evidence of the eye witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus…

But, despite the evidence, the Religious Leaders closed their eyes to Jesus. They suffered from self-inflicted spiritual blindness…

The data is in. The greatest cause of Spiritual Death, is self-inflicted spiritual blindness…

And the greatest cause of spiritual blindness, is "pride"…

You see, if Jesus is "Lord", that changes everything.

We humans like to:

- do things our own way;
- be our own masters;
- call the shots and be beholding to no one…

But if Jesus is Lord, He is Lord and Master.

The Kingdom of God, has not taken place in a vacuum.

- The more we understand science, the more we realise, the evidence of creation, is far greater than any other theory. Every other explanation, is laughable….

  But, those who are spiritually blind, refuse to see.

- The evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, is overwhelming…

  But, those who are spiritually blind, refuse to see.

- The transforming power of the Spirit of God (to change a life), is evident, for any who will open their eyes…

  But, those who are spiritually blind, refuse to see.

Because the Pharisees could see, but refused to see, their guilt remained. Things will not go well for them, on the Day of Judgment…

If The Lord has enabled you and me to see, and **we** wilfully close our eyes to the Lordship of Jesus, because we don't want to have to take it too seriously,,, our guilt remains…

You see, the whole purpose of Jesus opening our Spiritual eyes to the truth, is so we can <u>respond</u> to Him, and be Born Again, as Children of God…

If God is opening your eyes, SEE… Do not remain wilfully spiritually blind?

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father,
we praise You, for our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank You that the Light of the World
came into the World
and revealed God to man.

Lord Jesus,

We praise You,
that darkness has not endured.
Your Light has not been overcome by darkness.

And that together,
You, and Your Faithful Disciples
continue to do the work of the Father
in this dark world.

Lord,
we pray for an opening of Spiritual Eyes.

And for an end to wilful Spiritual blindness.

Lord,
We believe.

Our greatest sin,
has been our rejection of You.

And so, we repent of this.
And along with the blind man,
we say:
“Lord, I believe.”

It doesn’t matter to us
how the world will judge us /reject/condemn.
Lord, we believe.
And we worship You.

Amen.