

THE IMPACT OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY BY SEVEN SPIRITS

PART 2

David Baker, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 15 March 2026
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

What I am going to do today is continue from where I was two weeks ago looking at the seven outcomes of Christ's ministry that He nominated Himself when He stood up in the synagogue and read from the prophet Isaiah. We will go back there, and I will read those verses again and briefly catch up where we were. Then I want to continue to look at these outcomes. We only looked at the first two a couple of weeks ago. I want to continue from there. We will see how far we get in terms of time today.

Let us go to Luke chapter 4 verse 16 which is right at the beginning of His ministry. 'So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. [Verse 17] He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book [or He would have unrolled the scroll - perhaps all 7.34 metres of it. I am enjoying that picture and the theatrics of that], He found the place where it was written [He is quoting from Isaiah chapter 61 here, but I am reading Luke 4 verse 18 now]: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me... [When He is saying 'Me' there, He is speaking as the King. This is the anointing upon the King, and the anointing is the Spirit of the Lord. It is not the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord (or the Spirit of Yahweh) is the full capacity that belongs to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of Yahweh that is ministered by the Holy Spirit - that full capacity. That is the power that enables the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to make offering to reveal One Another and to multiply Their life and fellowship forever. So, Christ was anointed with that capacity (the Spirit of the Lord) and for these purposes... and then He begins to nominate:] ...because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor."'

The gospel is the good news. We are very briefly summarising here. It is the gospel of God, which is the gospel of sonship. This is proclaiming that we, the sons of men are called to become the sons of God; but then more than that — we, the sons of God have been predestined to be conformed

to the image of Christ as men in the image and likeness of God, remembering that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit's Covenant purpose is, 'Let us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness.'

He is preaching this gospel to the poor, and He is talking about the poor from a spiritual perspective. In the first case, 'the poor' describes the entire human race that is completely destitute and bereft because it has been cut off from the life of God. The entire world is poor; but of course, much of the world thinks it is rich. This is the dilemma. This is particularly true in the church - the delusion that we are poor, but we think we are rich. This was the issue that Christ Himself addressed among the Laodiceans. Quoting this passage in Revelation chapter 3 verse 17, 'Because you say, "I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing... [That is the key statement. 'You have need of nothing.' That is the delusion. That is the deception.] ...have need of nothing" - and you do not know that you are [in reality] wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.' So the gospel is preached to the *poor* but only received and appropriated by those who are *poor in spirit*.

This introduces another dimension of 'poor'. It is the 'poor in spirit' and the poor in spirit are those who have been illuminated to see their fallen condition, while at the same time they have been illuminated to see the hope of their calling. We become poor in spirit when we are illuminated to see both the heights of our calling and then also the depths of our iniquity. So 'poor' (just the word 'poor') - the destitute, that is the baseline for the whole fallen human race. 'Poor in spirit' is the outcome of illumination and poor in spirit is not pathetic. It is not pathetic because it is the outcome of illumination. It is actually the place of faith.

The faith of God is the riches that is likened to gold refined in the fire. This is what the Lord is wanting to minister. When the King is speaking, His command is the word of faith; and that word contains the capacity to believe and obey. He is ministering true riches to us - the riches of faith.

That is likened to gold refined in the fire. I will continue to quote from Jesus speaking to Laodicea in Revelation 3 verse 18. He says, 'I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.' We are talking about a very particular kind of riches here and that is the riches that belong to the faith of Christ Himself - the faith of God. That is a very precious possession when the faith of God is ministered to you. This is not your own faith that you have conjured up in yourself. It is the faith of God that is ministered to you as a gift, and that gift comes through hearing the word of God.

Then as soon as we hear it, it plunges us immediately into a trial of faith so that that faith does become *our* faith. That is the whole purpose of the trial of faith. The gold does need to be refined in the fire. That trial of faith is the process where the faith of God that has been given to us as a gift does become substantial in us and becomes genuinely *our* faith. That is when it really is our most precious possession. Peter says in 1 Peter 1 verse 6, 'In this you greatly rejoice [Now we know that he is speaking about our sonship and then our salvation that will be revealed in the last time] though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes... [so much more precious than physical gold. We are talking true gold here that has been refined in a fire] ...much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

Let us continue. We are briefly summarising here to gather up some of our key points. Luke 4 verse 18: 'The Spirit of Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted.' There are three kinds of broken-heartedness that we need to consider, and they are all quite different from one another.

The first kind is the outcome of the Fall. It describes the spirit that is in darkness and the soul that cleaves to the dust. Your spirit is your identity; but if your identity is not connected to your name that was discussed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from before the foundation of the world, your spirit is in darkness. It is lost. It is

disconnected. In the absence of any illumination then, your soul with all its faculties (your mind, your will, your emotions) will cleave to the dust. This means that all your physical senses - what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you taste, all these things - cleave to those physical senses. That is the only way it is gathering any kind of information to make sense of itself and the world around it - to try to work out where it fits - or where you fit. You are comparing yourself with others and you are competing and all these things. When that is the case, we are locked up into pursuing identity-verifying mechanisms, trying to find ourselves. The more we pursue that and the more we look for it, the less we find it, and the more lost and bereft we become. 'He who pursues emptiness will himself become empty.' Pro 28:19. It exacerbates the big aching void. You have the dystrophy of identity-verifying mechanisms, and then also the damage. We add to that, the damage that a person causes themselves through rebellion; and then also the damage that is caused by others. The spirit does need to become connected to its name. That is the first point and that is necessary. That is what happens when we are born again as a son of God. The spirit does need to become connected to its name. And the dystrophy and the damage do need healing. This is the first dimension of broken-heartedness that I am talking about. Every person does need to be healed. I am talking about your inner man - not your physical body - your inner man. The spirit does need to become connected to its name, as I said, and the dystrophy and the damage does need healing; but healing is not possible until a person is willing to let go of their victim mindset by recognising firstly that Christ has fully identified with them. He has died with them. He has joined them.

Secondly, they are responsible for *His* wounds. We recognise that Christ is dying *with* us, but also *for* us and also *because of* us. This brings us to a whole new dimension of broken-heartedness, which is the godly sorrow that we experience when we begin to look upon Jesus Christ whom we have pierced. Once we begin to look upon Christ that way, and we touch this new dimension of broken-heartedness, that opens the door for our healing of all the dystrophy and the damage as we then walk in

the fellowship of His offering and suffering. The psalmist says, 'The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart.' Psalm 34:18. And Psalm 147 verse 3: 'He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.' He is talking about in the fellowship of *His* wounds.

Now the opposite of that is the broken-heartedness (of unfulfilled expectations). This is this third dimension of broken-heartedness. All these things are big focuses. The opposite of a true broken-heartedness... (which is godly sorrow, as we look upon Jesus Christ whom we have pierced, which opens the door for healing) ... the opposite of that is the broken-heartedness that is an expression of unfulfilled expectations. That is what we have been considering in relation to Mary and Martha. That is an expression of unbelief. In that regard, 'hope deferred (unfulfilled expectations) does make the heart sick'. It is a broken- heartedness, but it is a very detrimental kind of broken-heartedness.

Now, to summarise... I know that this is a long sentence but see if you can follow this in terms of these three dimensions. I have tried to integrate it into one sentence, but the sentence needed to be a little long. Are we ready to go? Alright. We need to be delivered from the broken-heartedness (which is the expression of unbelief), to the broken-heartedness (that is the outcome of looking upon Christ whom we have pierced), so that the dystrophy and damage that belong to our underlying broken-heartedness can be healed in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Did you follow that? I just pulled the three dimensions into one. I will move on because I do want to look at these further dimensions here of Christ's ministry.

Let us read Luke 4 verse 18, continuing to read this key passage. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken- heartedness, and to proclaim liberty to the captives.' Let us slow down now... 'to proclaim liberty to the captives.' What kind of captives are we talking about? We are not talking about prisoners in a prison cell. What kind of captives are we talking about? Jesus is specifically talking here about slaves of sin. He goes on to spell that out very clearly. We are talking about slaves of sin. And the prerequisite for the liberty

is to firstly recognise our predicament and accept the captivity. You would think that that would be an easy thing to do, but we are talking about a very peculiar kind of captivity here where you do not know that you are captive. It is quite a crisis to accept that this is so.

I want to talk about what this looks like and how prevalent this is. To illustrate this point, we will continue in the Gospel of John. In terms of preaching the gospel to the poor, we looked at the example of Jesus and His ministry toward the 5 000. Then in terms of broken-heartedness, we looked at Jesus' interaction with Mary and Martha. We will stay in the Gospel of John for the time being and pick this up in relation to the believing Jews in John chapter 8. This is where Jesus really addresses this. We will read from John 8 verse 28. 'Jesus said to them [let us just get the background here], "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things [He is describing His whole ministry here. Verse 29]. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." ' Every miracle, every point of deliverance, it was all a good work that the Father had given Him to do. He was walking in complete obedience to the Father, being led by the Spirit. It is all an expression of the faith of the Son too. He is genuinely pleasing God here. Verse 30: 'As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.' This is a big point. These are believers. We are not talking unbelievers; we are talking believers. Many believed in Him - believed what He had just said. Verse 31: 'Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him... [He is not talking to those who did not believe Him; He is talking to those who believed Him. He is not evangelistic here - He is focusing on delivering this group of believers from their captivity - but they did not know they were captives. This is the crisis] ... Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide [or continue] in My word, you are My disciples indeed. [What He is saying is, 'You need to keep walking in the light of the word that I proclaim to you. There is going to be a word of present truth as a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. If you will keep walking in the light of that word, then you will be My disciples. You will be learning from Me. Specifically, you will

be learning what it means to abide in the fellowship of the Father, the fellowship of the Son, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.' That is discipleship as Jesus said in the 'great commission'. He sends the disciples to make disciples by baptising them in the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit. And how were they to do that? By teaching them to observe all the commandments of Christ and walking in the light of that word. That is what we are learning. That is what a disciple looks like. Verse 32] ... And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."'

This is an amazing statement. This is a very positive sermon. Jesus is preaching a word of deliverance here. 'And you shall know the truth.' In relation to the Father, you will know the truth of who you are as a son of God. Also remembering that marriage is the 'Father's holy institution', you will come to know as sons and daughters of Abraham and learning that culture. You will also come to know the truth of who you are as a husband and who you are as a wife. There is wonderful truth here to learn. Then in relation to the Son, it is the truth of who you are as a member of the body of Christ. Then also remembering that Jesus Christ is the Head of every house, it is who you are in your house - the truth of who you are as a father; the truth of who you are as a mother; the truth of who you are as a child; the truth of who you are as a grandparent; all these things belong to this truth. 'You will know the truth.' Then in relation to the Holy Spirit, it is the truth of who you are as a temple of the Holy Spirit and a witness of Christ in the church and in the world, which means you are revealing Christ by ministering the seven Spirits of God. There is living water flowing from your innermost heart.

As I said, that is all pretty good, I would have thought. I would have thought Jesus was on a real winner here with this sermon to say, 'Just continue in the light of My word and you are going to learn all this truth.' Never has a more positive statement been made. However, the underlying point here (or what Jesus is inferring as He makes this statement and this is what needs to be accepted), is He is inferring that they did not yet know the truth. More than that, He is also inferring that they were presently in

bondage because He is saying to them, 'You *will* know the truth and the truth will make you free.' Big implication: 'You are presently in bondage; but can you please receive the good news? I have come to set you free.' But they jag on the point that they are in bondage, and they are not happy to receive that. Verse 33: 'They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been in bondage to anyone." ' It goes very black and white - a bit of an overgeneralisation. I do not know who taught them their history as children as they were growing up, because I seem to remember that they spent 400 years in bondage down in Egypt; and then the whole 10 northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians and scattered among the nations. And then the southern tribes spent 70 years in bondage down in Babylon. That is not germane. They are offended at the point Jesus was making to them right now. They were then taking their stand. They said, 'We have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say you will be made free?' They did not miss the point. They did not miss it. They got it. They were taking their stand though on a religious position and it was the foundation then of their religious projection.

Verse 34: 'Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly I say to you, whoever commits sin [He is talking the *action* of sin there] is a slave of sin." ' But He is not talking the action of sin in that second case. He is talking about the *law* of sin. Let us explain this. I am going to use a very trite example. What is He saying? He is not saying, 'If you steal cookies from the cookie jar, you are the slave of stealing cookies.' Let us go slowly here. He says, 'I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.' What He is not saying is that if you steal cookies from the cookie jar, you are a slave of stealing cookies. Stealing the cookie is the *action* of sin. (I am using this as an example because hopefully no one is enslaved to stealing cookies.) You can take this as an illustration and then apply it more broadly to what Jesus is trying to say. Stealing the cookie is the *action* of sin, but behind the action there is a lust or a desire that motivates the action. That motivation (that desire) belongs to the *law* of sin. The fundamental desire... (This is where cookies are not a great example, because you say, 'It is actually the law of my belly.' Let us go more

broadly than that.) ... The fundamental desire that belongs to the law of sin is *covetousness*.

Covetousness is wanting something that does not belong to me. I am trying to get some very simple statements here. Covetousness is wanting something that does not belong to me. So when I take the cookie (or whatever the cookie represents), I am obeying that desire. More fundamentally, it is wanting to be someone that I am *not*. It is much more fundamental than actually doing anything. It is 'I want to be somebody that I am not.'

Covetousness was fathered in the heart of man by Satan himself. It is his desire. The corruption in Satan from the very beginning was to become something that he was not. Satan himself had a wonderful mandate. 'He was perfect in beauty [as the Scripture says] from the day he was created.' He was the leader of the angelic host of worship. There was absolutely no reason for him not to be happy with whom God had created him to be. Then he did become corrupted and he began to covet what he was not. He is saying, 'I will ascend above the stars of God. I want a mandate above the seraphim, and I want to sit among the congregation on the furthest sides of the north.' He starts coveting the predestination of man because 'the further sides of the north' is talking about Mount Zion. It is talking about the place of the true temple. He is coveting that. Then even more than that, he is saying, 'I will be like the Most High.' He wanted to be like God the Father Himself. The desire, once it gets to 'I want to be like God', what he is saying is 'I want to father - I want to be like God the Father. I want to father my own image. I want to be... (and this is what he fathered then in man - the desire) ... to be the source of our own name and works.' Satan wanted to be like the father. He wanted to be a source.

God the Father is the source of *truth*. This is the truth we need to come to know that sets us free. God the Father is the source of truth. In contrast to this, when Satan speaks from his own resources, he speaks a lie. Now, Satan fathered in the heart of man that we can be the source of our own name and works. That is, we can make ourselves in our own image or we can make our own projection. This is the sin that Jesus is talking about now. It is the sin of a projection.

For a believer, this is generally a religious projection. In this case that we are looking at here (and I am not reading the full account), Jesus does go on to further expound this, and it all finishes with them wanting to stone Him. We will not read the whole account. In this case, the believing Jews were reacting against what Jesus was saying. They did not agree. They did not agree with His word.

However, for us, we generally *agree* with His word. We generally agree. We agree that it is good. However, we want to use the word as a resource to reinforce or promote the projection that we have created for ourselves. When we do that, the other law in our members (the other law is the expression of our self-centeredness) brings us into captivity to the law of sin. We are captive then to our own covetousness. I am summarising very briefly the package in Romans chapter 7. The apostle Paul identified that captivity by saying, that if we are captive to our own covetousness, that is a wretched place to be and a very tiring place to be. It is very tiring to maintain a projection and particularly tiring to maintain a religious projection. I am sure we would all agree. This is what the Lord wants to set us free from. When Jesus is saying, 'Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden or overburdened [He is particularly talking about being overburdened because we are trying to maintain a religious projection], and I will give you rest. I will deliver you from that.'

It is very interesting (and I will only do this very briefly), but I think when you are looking at all these outcomes and the nature of Christ's ministry, they all have a specific application toward marriage. And that is what the Lord is addressing to a large degree in this season. It is not exclusively applied to marriage, but it is interesting that I think there is a very specific application to marriage. Thinking about this one (He is wanting to set the captives free), it is very interesting to me (as I have said previously) that the moment Adam and Eve fell, their eyes were opened and they became aware of their nakedness - meaning they became aware of their disconnection from the life of God and all their personal deficiencies and all the deficiencies in their marriage. Right from that point when the woman fed the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to Adam her husband and he

ate it, there was enmity in their relationship. The Lord summarised to the woman, 'Your desire will be for your husband, but he will react against you and seek to rule over you.' So we have this package of enmity. But despite all that enmity, the one thing that Adam and Eve agreed on (and they agreed on almost instantaneously) was the need to cover their nakedness with a religious projection. They immediately worked together to sew the fig leaves and cover themselves. Then when they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden, their response was to further hide themselves among the trees (or we could say very colloquially - act busy!). That was their job — to tend the trees and tend the gardens. So they hear the Lord coming; they have created a projection; and to avoid the interaction, 'Quick honey, grab the pruning implements or whatever it is and just act busy.' I do not know that they are necessarily hiding behind a tree branch. I tend to think it is 'Let us just act busy like we are doing what we have always done and should be doing, and maybe the Lord will not notice.'

This is a very strong thing that is part of every marriage since the very beginning. It is that agreement between husband and wife to maintain the projection. 'There is nothing to see here. Let us all continue as normal.' This is the captivity there. That is a very tiring — a difficult place to be. The Lord is wanting to come and set us free from that captivity, so we are able to be real. John 8 verse 35: 'A slave does not abide in the house forever.' Hopefully I am illustrating the type of slavehood that I think Jesus is addressing here. 'A slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.' Verse 36: 'Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.' The Lord is wanting to minister to us to set us free to the glorious liberty that belongs to sonship.

Let us continue, still just working from Luke 4.18. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.' It is very interesting... (and I do not know that I have fully digested the implication of this) ... but it is very interesting that Jesus added this one. 'Recovery of sight to the blind' is not in Isaiah chapter 61. He unrolls the scroll. He is reading word for word from the

book. Then He ad-libs. He has the prerogative to do that because He is the Source of the prophetic word. So He writes something back into the Scripture here as He speaks. What He adds is 'to give recovery of sight to the blind'. That is a very interesting thing. Jesus was coming to fulfill the prophetic mandate of Isaiah.

I will see if I can *begin* to digest this a bit. Jesus was coming to fulfill the prophetic mandate of Isaiah. The Lord spoke to Isaiah immediately after his conversion, recorded in Isaiah chapter 6. He identifies the nature of the second time of his ministry. Isaiah has a polarising ministry from there. He said that the primary focus of his ministry was to invoke a judgement upon the people. The Lord said to Isaiah, 'I want you to go, and this is what you are going to be doing: Make the heart of this people dull, their ears heavy and shut their eyes.' In other words, he was invoking the judgement of blindness.

Jesus then came and He was fulfilling the prophetic mandate of Isaiah. His ministry was fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah. For that reason, He spoke in parables. Immediately after the parable of the grounds, the disciples asked Him (and that is the first and foremost of all the parables), 'Why do you speak in parables?' Jesus responded, and I will quote these passages from Matthew chapter 13 verses 10 to 13. 'The disciples came and said to Him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. [That is describing the polarising impact of the word] Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand [He means, 'You are going to hear the words that I am speaking with your physical ear, but that word is not going to go down into your heart and bring any kind of understanding. You will hear, but there will be no understanding.] ...and seeing, you will see and not perceive.' ' ['With your physical eyes, you will see.'] This group here were physically seeing Christ Himself. They were

physically looking at Him, but they did not perceive who He was. This is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in relation to how this crowd was interfacing with Christ. So He says, 'This prophecy is fulfilled... [verse 15] for the hearts of this people have grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I shall heal them.'

On one level, the ministry of Christ is actually making their predicament worse. Jesus came to invoke the judgement of blindness upon those who had closed their eyes and become dull of hearing and dull of heart. However, at the same time [I think this is why He adds it], He would also come to reverse the judgement and bring recovery of sight to the blind for those who *were* willing to receive His words. I think this is an amazing thing that He adds to say, 'I am actually going to bring a reversal in relation to this judgement for those who are willing to receive it.' At the same time, He had come to give recovery of sight to the blind.

We have a very good illustration of this in the Gospel of John. We will stay in the Gospel of John here in John chapter 9 concerning the blind man. Jesus saw a man who had been blind from birth. Immediately, the disciples want to be on top of all the pastoral principles in terms of 'how do we interface with this man?' They are asking for a good bit of pastoral advice here. They asked Jesus, 'We see the man; he is blind.' They are not so much worried about his blindness, but they want to know why he is blind. 'Is that the result of his sin or is that the result of his parents' sin?' (This is so they can get a good little pastoral handle that they can apply to other situations.) Jesus responds to them and He says, 'It is actually neither of those things.' He explained that he was blind so that the works of God should be revealed in him. That specifically means that through this man and his healing, Christ would be glorified as the light of the world and the One who gives recovery of sight to the blind. This is where this additional element that Christ has added to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah is going to be exemplified. This blind man has been chosen for a very specific purpose, but we

do need to make the distinction between his physical side and his spiritual side.

Let us keep going. Now we know Jesus spat on the ground and then made clay with saliva. Again, this is an amazing thing. Jesus is the Son of God and in the beginning, He spoke the entire universe into existence by His word. He is speaking it all into existence. He is proclaiming the word of the Father who is the Source of the creation. Jesus is the expression of the word of the Father. He is proclaiming it all by His word. But He did not speak Adam into existence. He did not say, 'Let there be man, and there was man.' He lovingly formed the physical body of Adam from the dust of the ground. He is forming all the internal organs - everything that belonged to man. He is forming him from the dust of the ground. Then He breathes into his nostrils the breath of lives and Adam became a living being with spirit, soul and physical body. He has now identity as a person.

This blind man here... (We know identities are multiplied through procreation. The physical act of procreation is actually bringing forth a new spirit, an eternal identity, which is an amazing thing too.) ...We get all the way down to this man and he has received identity as the outcome of procreation. He has identity, but there was a deficiency in relation to the formation of his physical body. In the same way that the Lord in the beginning formed Adam from the dust of the ground, Jesus right here, right now, spits on the ground and forms from the dust with His saliva, new eyeballs for the man in the same way He formed Adam's eyeballs in the very beginning. Then He picks up the eyeballs, and He puts them into the man's head. Then He gives him a word to obey. He says, 'Go down to the Pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So there is a word here. The man still cannot see. He has new eyeballs, but he cannot see. So Jesus says, 'I want you to go down and wash.' As he obeys that word, he goes, he washes and he received his sight, and he comes back rejoicing.

Now, who is he going to be looking for? He will be looking for Jesus. He cannot find Him because Jesus has moved on. He is pressing on with whatever the other works of the day happen to be. Now all his neighbours (you will know the story), everyone who knew the man and probably

had known him for many, many years, all start arguing. This man is interesting. Wherever he goes now, all these discussions spring up around him. He is the trigger for all these arguments. He always has to keep sticking his hand up and saying, 'Excuse me, I am actually the man. Can I speak into this?' You have the neighbours arguing about whether it is the man or whether it is not the man. He sticks his hand up. 'Yes, I am the man.' They then take him to the Pharisees. He told the story to the Pharisees. Now again, an argument springs up around him. Some argue that Jesus could not have come from God because He did this on the Sabbath. Others argue that if Jesus was a sinner, how could He perform such a miracle? Do you see that there are just two perspectives here?

When they asked the blind man, he said that he believed Jesus to be a prophet. That is an important statement. There is an element of belief here, but there is a further dimension of faith (or belief) that this man was going to need to receive for his spiritual sight to be fully restored. He is physically seeing well. He has 20-20 vision now. These are fresh eyeballs, so they are good. But his spiritual sight still needs further healing. It is like he has just come... (to compare him to another blind man) ...it is like he is still seeing from a spiritual perspective — 'men walking around like trees'. He believes that Jesus is a prophet. That is the extent of his illumination to this point. He proclaims what he knows and what he believes.

Now the Pharisees then call his parents of course and they want to confirm that this is indeed the man who was born blind and the parents are happy to confirm that; but they are not happy to go beyond that in terms of just how his eyes were opened. That is where they deflect it back to the man. 'He is of age, you ask him.'

John 9 verse 24: 'So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give *God* glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." ' They are trying to reconcile this. 'How do we approach this? How do we explain it? Let us say that God has healed the man but let us try to leave Jesus and His part in the whole thing out of it.' Now, of course, the man is not happy with that. The man responded to say, 'I do not know that He is a sinner. But what I do know is that He opened

my eyes.' Now the Pharisees asked him then to explain again how this happened. This is where the man is really starting to grow in confidence and he says to them, 'I have already told you how it happened. Why do you want me to tell you again? Do you also want to become His disciples?' This is where we really get the perspective of where the Pharisees are coming from, because they react and say, 'You are His disciple; we are disciples of Moses. That is the ground that we are standing on.' The Pharisees say, 'You are His disciple; we are the disciples of Moses.' What they are saying is, 'We already have our theology, and that is the measure that we use to judge every person and every word that comes. We are the disciples of Moses; that is our theology. We have our words sorted and we will judge everything else in relation to that.' Now that was the veil across their eyes. It was more than a veil - this is defining their blindness. 'We judge everything new according to what we already know. We do not know where Jesus is from.'

In John 9 verse 30, the man suddenly launches into a fantastic little sermon. He has a real anointing and an unction here when he responds to that. 'The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvellous thing that you do not know where He is from, yet He has opened my eyes."' Then he goes on to spell out exactly where He is from. In verse 31 he answers all the predicaments. 'We know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began, it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. [I think he is being very literal there in terms of this creative miracle that Jesus had just performed - forming the eyeballs from the dust of the ground.] If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.' He is saying, 'I absolutely believe He is from God. I know where He has come from.' Now the Pharisees responded, 'Are you teaching us?' And they cast him out of the synagogue.

Let us pick this up in verse 35 now. 'Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" ' Can you see this is a further step? 'Do you believe in the Son of God?' The man has just proclaimed (and very boldly) in the middle of the whole Jewish Sanhedrin, 'I believe

committed to all the terms of mutual benefit and also both respecting all the no-go areas. That is what we have as a happy marriage. 'Nothing to see' here actually equals in parenthesis. The Lord is coming and saying, 'I am not wanting you to have an unhappy marriage; I am wanting you to have a 'one-Spirit' marriage. The Lord wants us to have a one-Spirit marriage and that requires us to be real about the impediments that need to be removed and the reformation that is required.

I will finish here. When the word comes, we confess that we have faults, but we do not necessarily see all our faults. We are confessing that we do not yet see all our faults, but we know that they are there. We are not saying they are not there. We are confessing our blindness. If we are willing to accept our blindness, then we are not guilty of the sin of presumption. The Lord then brings sight so that we can confess our faults. This is part of recovery of sight to the blind. We can see it, so we can confess our faults. We will at the same time testify about the faith that we have received for reformation.

I will finish there. There is obviously more to look at; but just to finish to say that the Lord is wanting to minister this way to us. We do need to make an adequate and appropriate faith response to His ministry so that these outcomes are genuinely achieved in our lives.