**I AM the Light of the World**

September 20, 2015

John 9:1-12

Key Verse 9:5 “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

We are studying “I AM” series in John’s gospel. When Jesus says, “I AM,” he is presenting himself as God in human flesh. He is presenting himself as the Messiah, the Savior of the world, God incarnate. The author is presenting the deity of Jesus Christ. On every page, it is Christ is God, Christ is God, Christ is God, relentlessly, tirelessly, and constantly. Today, we study “I AM the light of the world.” Today many young people are in darkness of fatalism. According to a survey of young people, children are often happier with their online lives than they are with reality. They say they can be exactly who they want to be – and as soon as something is no longer fun, they can simply hit the quit button. Around 47 per cent of children said they behaved differently online than they did in their normal lives. Often they lie about their appearance, age and background. One person said, “It’s easier to be who you want to be, because nobody knows you and if you don’t like the situation, you can just exit and it is over.” Another said: “You can say anything online. You can talk to people that you don’t normally speak to and you can edit your pictures so you look better. It is as if you are a completely different person.” This shows that they are in the darkness. One person said, “Our character is what we do when we think no one is looking.” In the darkness of internet where no one is looking, many young people do all kinds of wicked things. They should come out of darkness and live in real world.

In today’s passage, Jesus heals a man born blind. Through this event Jesus teaches us how to overcome our fatalistic view of man. No one is happy as long as he has a fatalistic view of man. Jesus teaches us how to cope with man’s fatalistic view of life. We also learn Jesus’ shepherd heart to heal a man born blind. Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world.”

**First**, the very fatalistic disciples (1-2). One day as Jesus went along with his disciples, he saw a man born blind. The Old Testament suggests that parents’ sin results in the suffering of their children (Ex 20:5; 34:7; Ps 79:8; Isa 65:6,7). There was a traditional thought in the Jewish world that a blind man was cursed by God. When the disciples saw the man, many questions bubbled up in their minds (1,2). They questioned first to themselves, and next to Jesus, “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” They didn’t say, “Or is it God’s mistake?” But they obviously questioned God’s love and providence. The content of their question was not at all optimistic; it was very fatalistic.

Their thinking structure was based on cause and effect. When something goes wrong, people try to find someone to blame. Who is the cause of all these troubles? If they could not find any answer, either they blame themselves or feel miserable. Many blame their parents for the cause of their problems. They said, “Who sinned? My parents sinned. My father’s abusive life style was the cause of all my problems. My parents’ divorce was the source of all my problems.” This kind of view of life causes people to suffer endlessly. They cannot find the meaning of life and become unforgiving and live in sorrow and despair. Job’s three friends suggested that all of Job’s miseries were caused by his sin. Our fundamental question is “Why do men suffer? Why do many tragedies happen? Why did God allow 9-11 happen? Who is fault for my endless suffering?” Many say, “I got an accident because I sinned before God. God is punishing my children due to my sins.” This kind of fatalistic view of life causes us to become a child of sorrow and bitterness. Fatalism causes men to become a prisoner of darkness and negative thinking. Many people think, “My life is God’s mistake. I am here by accident.” Jesus’ disciples became very sorrowful when they saw the blind man's fatalistic elements of life.

**Second**, this happened to display God’s work (3-5). How did Jesus answer their question? Look at verse 3. “‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.’” Jesus here tells them that man’s life purpose is not to feel miserable because of one’s human condition, but, whatever the situation might be, to display God’s glory. Jesus told the same story in John chapter 11. There were two beautiful sisters, Martha and Mary. Their parents died when they were very young. These two sisters had a sickly brother, Lazarus. One day Lazarus was at the brink of death. Martha and Mary sent for Jesus to come. A messenger came and said to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory, so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” Here we learn that man, whether he is a gorgeous man or a blind beggar, is made to live for the glory of God.

According to Jesus’ words, human conditions or circumstances do not make men miserable at all. At the same time, whatever situation we may be in or whatever kind of person we may be, we must not sit down and complain and be miserable. We must find the way to display the glory of God. We must find the work of God in all situations. We should not think that God failed us or made us miserable when we face many difficult human situations. Rather, we must find the way to render glory to God. Then God will bless us beyond our imagination. This is God’s truth for mankind. We cannot explain the reason for our suffering, but our attitude can determine the outcome of the suffering. Jesus says that the cause of misery is not in the past but in the future. Today’s suffering is not the result of past sins, but the seed of future hope.

The world famous Tenor, Andrea Bocelli, lost his sight at the age of 12, following an accident during a soccer game. He was hit in the eye playing goalkeeper during a match and suffered a brain hemorrhage. He studied the law and became a lawyer. But his dream was to become an opera singer. So he studied singing in late age, and he became world famous tenor. He said, “One hour is enough to feel sorry for my blindness, and one week is enough to get adjusted in a new environment.”

Let’s not blame today’s suffering for past sins. Someone wronged in the past. Nothing will change that. Of course, we need to look back the past and review our past mistakes in order not to repeat the mistakes. But we should not dwell in the past. We should entrust our past mistakes in God’s hands, and see today’s sufferings as seeds of future hope. There is a very interesting study done on why old couples argue and fight. It is because they remember bad things the other did and harbor those feelings. I pray that God may give you eyes to see today’s sufferings as opportunities to display God’s glory.

**Third**, the time to work for God (4,5). Look at verses 4 and 5. “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” In this allegorical expression “day” refers to “lifetime,” “Night” refers to “after death.” Jesus is telling us that God gives man his lifetime to work hard to display God’s glory, not to grieve over his miserable human destiny. The night of darkness is coming, when no one can work. How tragic it is for a man to discover that he wasted all his time in miserable feelings.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” When any person accepts Jesus in his heart, Jesus drives out all the dark and dead things in him and fills him with the Holy Spirit. So the author said in his prologue, “The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world” (1:9). The blind man was in utter darkness. But when he accepted Jesus into his heart, he could see the light. Those who have accepted Jesus have the light of life. They know what they are doing, and they are happy in Jesus.

According to a census, Canadians are becoming more secular. 5 million people said that they had no religion. 20,000 people said that their religion is Jedi from Star Wars. This shows that they are in the darkness of sins. If people don’t have God, they would believe in anything. The power of darkness seems overwhelming. But Jesus is the light of the world who can defeat the power of darkness. We pray that God help us to bring the light of the world, Jesus to many University of Toronto students through one to one Bible study. I was in darkness before I knew Jesus Christ. I was in despair because I was not smart like Einstein. I thought that I was miserable because I was not smart like him. I did not know what to do after graduating from the university. I was accepted into a graduate school in the USA but I was very fearful because of my poor English. Because of despair, I used to go to a comic bookstore, and read comic books all day long. At that time my friend invited me to UBF summer Bible conference. I never read the Bible before but I was moved somehow by the light of the world, Jesus. God gave me the clear direction for my life to be a Bible teacher for North American students.

**Fourth**, Jesus opens the blind man’s eyes (6-7). Jesus taught his disciples how to overcome the fatalistic way of thinking in their hearts. Here, Jesus teaches how to put what we know into practice. In chapter 6 we learned that Jesus fed the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish. So, he could have opened this blind man's eyes with one word. But Jesus wanted to teach his disciples how to overcome the fatalistic elements of life practically.

Look at verse 6. “Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.” When he had no water, he used his saliva as water. When he had no medical instrument, he used mud on the ground as medicine. He spit on the ground, made some mud, and put it in the man’s eyes. In this way Jesus found the way to heal the man. When we see Jesus’ way of healing the man born blind, it looks very funny. Jesus might have been accused of medical malpractice. But this is the expression of divine love; it is the expression of God’s shepherd heart for mankind. This shows that those who have a shepherd heart can open even a blind man’s eyes. We must learn the shepherd heart of Jesus for the man born blind and practice it. Surely God will bless this country as a shepherd nation. Objectively speaking, we are not well equipped to do the work of God. Most of us have full-time jobs and no professional training as Bible teachers. But our shepherd hearts for students can open the eyes of many students. May God help us to learn from Jesus how to overcome our fatalistic way of life.

In our situation, using mud and saliva means to pray. When we pray hard, spits come out and open their eyes.

What was the blind man’s response? The blind man had already suffered enough during his short lifetime due to his sensitivity as a blind man. He must have been too sensitive to bear anyone’s hassling. But Jesus put mud mixed with saliva on his eyes and told him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” The man born blind could have become very rebellious and cried with a loud voice, “You also despise me! Take your hands off of my eyes!” But the blind man obeyed. He was not upset because he trusted Jesus. Here we learn that Jesus made sure that this blind man would first trust him before he would receive his sight. They say that the path the blind man had to walk was filled with rocks and crevices. Not an easy path for anyone without sight. He would have to ask for directions and for help. The blind man might easily fall into some of the crevices alongside the road on the way down to the pool of Siloam. It was a difficult journey Jesus sent the blind man on, but it didn’t really matter. The blind man was willing to do whatever Jesus told him to do. And when he found his way to the pool, whose meaning is “Sent,” then his eyes would be opened and he would be washed and cleansed. Likewise Jesus may have a difficult path for us to walk in before we are going to get what we so desperately need.

Today Jesus declares, “I am the light of the world.” May God help us to see today’s sufferings as opportunities to display the glory of God, rather than blaming somebody for past mistakes. I pray that you may see God being glorified through today’s sufferings.