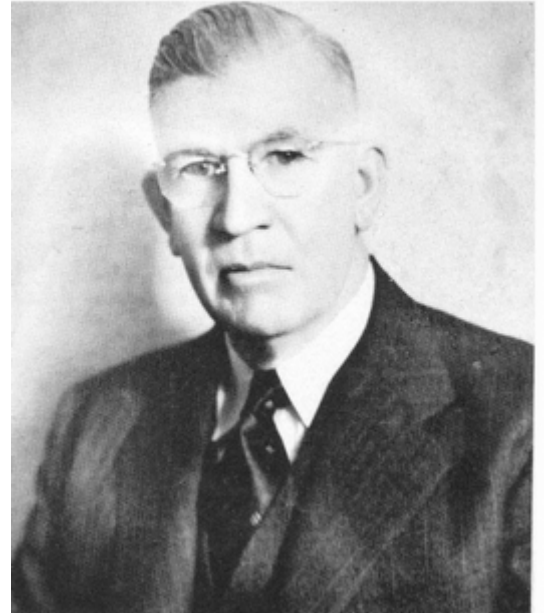


Sight for the Spiritually Blind

By
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"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

"And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

"And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:17-21).

HE said, "Deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind." Blindness is the great malady of the human race today. Jesus said here, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Six hundred years before, the power of God came upon the Prophet Isaiah, and he began to prophesy. His prophecy was written on parchment and then it was sent forth. I suppose down through those years people wondered what this Scripture meant — until the day that Jesus came to His home down in Nazareth and took the Book out of the preacher's hand and opened it and read these passages of Scripture, and then said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

All eyes were upon Him for the great things that He had said. We thank God, that is what He came for — to bind up the brokenhearted, the bruised, and to recover sight to the blind. Isaiah in another place prophesies, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." That is the promise of God to every blind man. God says He will bring the blind by a way that they knew not.

The world of sinners, the blind, do not know the way of God; they do not know the way of righteousness and peace and joy and salvation. But the Lord Jesus Christ came to lead the blind in a new way. It was David who said, in the 23rd Psalm: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

We thank God that we have a Leader instead of a driver. We all know who the driver was, for we were all under his bondage and iron heel and we couldn't say our soul was our own. He was our master; no matter what good intentions we had, he always overthrew them somehow. I know that I made thousands of resolutions and I broke them all. I meant to keep them, and so does every one else; but there is something wrong with us. That wrong is that we are on the wrong side; we have the wrong master. And instead of leading us into green pastures and by the still waters, he is driving us and putting a goad in us and making us go so far downward that we haven't time even to turn around and stop long enough to figure out what it is all about.

But, we thank God, this Savior came to lead the blind in the way that they knew not. We did not know this way until Jesus came. No. We might have heard of it, but it was all Greek to us. It was all kind of mysterious and fantastic; but, thank God, He touched our blinded eyes and opened them. And when He did we were like Bartimaeus: we saw Jesus and we began to follow Him,. When we have Him on our side we have a wonderful Savior. He says that He will lead us. I am going to read that so we will get it straight. "My



sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

What do you think of that? His sheep know His voice and He knows them.

It is written in another place: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." He says that He knows His sheep and they follow Him. That *is* the wonderful part about these sheep: they follow Jesus and He leads them. He is not behind them, driving them. You notice, He says they follow Him and He leads them into green pastures and by the still waters. He says that He holds them in His hand and no man can pluck them out of His hand.

That is the hand I want to be in — the nail-pierced hand of Jesus —and to hold fast to that hand. If we are in His hand, He will hold fast to us, and we know that no man can pluck us out of His hand. It is a mighty safe place to be in; and it is eternal security, the right kind of eternal security. It is not the head business — the kind that permits people to sin and live ungodly lives and yet claim to be secure in God's hand. You are in the hollow of His hand; you are kept by the power of God through faith, so long as your life is clean and holy. That is this marvelous salvation! We have the greatest thing in the world, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the power of God through faith, ready to be revealed in the last days. It is the Gospel of Christ Jesus, the power of God unto salvation to every man who believes.

When it says "power" it means power — power enough to keep us and preserve us. That is what God said, that He would keep us — preserve us — unto the day of the redemption of our bodies. There is a lot of difference in being preserved and being pickled. The devil pickles his crowd and sours them; but God preserves His people and sweetens them. And if you stay in the hollow of His hand you are feeding on the finest of the wheat and living in the land of milk and honey. Honey is sweet, and if you get that kind of food you are going to be sweet yourself. You are not going to be an old "sour puss" either, going around looking as if you had been camping near a vinegar factory somewhere.

This is a wonderful salvation. That is what Isaiah said way back there, hundreds of years before Jesus was born: "His name shall be called Wonderful." A brother here *says* sometimes — and many of us have said the same thing — that when God saved his soul he went around for days saying, "It's wonderful! It's wonderful!" Yes, it is wonderful! It is so wonderful that we never could tell it if we lived a thousand years. We could not touch the fringes. It is salvation from sin, salvation from the grip of the devil, loosened from bondage, with a living hope in our heart that is an anchor to our soul, steadfast and sure. Our anchor isn't slipping every time some wind of doctrine comes along. We have an anchor that holds, and we are proud of that.

We thank God that we are in this straight and narrow way and have a Captain who never lost a battle anywhere. If we have Him on our side we have something genuine. I would rather have God on my side than to have all the standing armies in the world with me and have God against me. We can make up our mind that if we have God on our side we are winners in this great conflict. We are in a warfare — and a fierce one. This didn't start five years ago, either. This started way back in the beginning, when man was created on the earth and the devil started his diabolical business and caused trouble. God declared war right then, on Satan and on all his angels. He put enmity between the seed of the woman and the devil, and that enmity is still there.

The war is on. If the war is on, then the fight is on; and if there is a fight on, God wants soldiers to fight this fight. A real soldier can endure hardship and hardness, take the heavy end, and fight the good fight of faith. A soldier isn't always on dress parade. God calls His soldiers, He drills them, and then He equips them for service, puts the armor on them, and tells them to go out and fight.

God has the kind of soldiers today who can fight this fight, and they always win out because they know what side they are on and who is on their side, just like those worthies of old. I have thought of those men of David's who went down there alone to fight the Philistines, or whoever the enemy might have been. They had no fear; they just went into that battle and God was always with them. He gave them the victory.

That is like the fight of faith that we are fighting today. Our warfare is not with flesh and blood. But our warfare is against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, the unseen powers of darkness on every hand. We have to watch our step and be diligent, as God says, for Satan goes around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He has his mouth wide open to devour everything he can. We



must be diligent in this warfare, and watch and pray and fight, and run this race with patience, looking unto Jesus.

That is where we want to look. We do not want to look at the fight that is on, or the high walls or the giants. We want to keep our eyes on Jesus and fight this fight of faith, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He put that faith in us and He is going to finish that faith. And we are going to finish it in Glory if we just hold our integrity, look to God, keep our eyes on Jesus and off everything earthly. That is the way to get this thing and go Home to the Lord in the end.

I am glad that we have contact with something that is alive. The Gospel is alive. I remember a brother who used to get up in this place and say, "I am alive, my bones are alive!" That is the resurrection power of Christ when God comes into your life and fills you with the Holy Ghost. There is life in you, power in your life.

"If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies" (Romans 8:11). When that great day comes, when the Lord steps down from His mediatorial throne, and that voice of the archangel sounds, and the trumpet of God begins to sound around the caverns of this world, those tombs will topple over; those graves will be opened; and the sleeping saints will come out victorious — not in the vile bodies they were buried in but with glorified bodies, united to their redeemed souls, to meet the Lord in the air.

That is my hope today. We thank God that we can look a long way beyond the cemetery. We are looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. We thank God that if we have that faith we have eternal life; and all that the Father has given Him He shall raise up in the last day. Don't you thank God for Him who said that? Jesus said it, and He is the way, the truth, and the life; He is the Creator of earth and Heaven, and He came forth from the grave, triumphant, with the keys of death and hell in His hand. He said that all power was given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. He has the power in both places.

That is the reason I take hope and know that I am serving a living, resurrected, conquering Christ who came forth from the dead and said that He had power over all the earth. If you have that Christ on your side you have everything. You do not have to go around bowed down like a bulrush. You can stand on your two feet and say, "I am a son of God, born by the Spirit, and I have a hope in my soul that God is taking care of me for I am in the hollow of His hand." The devil cannot take you out if you walk in the light.

No wonder Isaiah said, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Better enlist on His side! God wants soldiers, and He wants them now. He doesn't want draftees or conscripts, but volunteer men and women who will say, "I will go all the way and enlist under His banner and take what comes with it." Is there anyone here who has not yet enlisted in this army of volunteers for Jesus but will say, "I am a candidate tonight"? Walk up to the recruiting station, get on your two knees, and say to God, "Here I am, body, soul, mind, and spirit; I will give You everything I have, everything I ever expect to have. And on top of it all here is the man; take it all." God can do something with a man like that. It stirs your soul in these last days when you see all the powers of hell settling down, and the apostasy of this world today, the false religion and the spirit of iniquity on every hand, the earth filled with violence.

You need something that is real and genuine that you can stand on, and know where you stand and what you stand for. The devil has more false prophets and crooked doctrine in this world than he ever had in all the history of the world. If you haven't a foundation, if you haven't the love of God in your soul and the whole armor on, you can make up your mind that the devil is going to put one over on you. But you don't have to let him do it. If you are true and honest, if you are not holding out on God but are paying the whole price, and are holding up the standard, you will be ready when the trumpet sounds.

We are right down to the last mile of the way, and the fight is getting fiercer. We do not know how soon it is going to break; and we may be standing out alone for this true Gospel. There are plenty who are against it; but we are going to stand, by the grace of God. The martyrs did. They faced the fire; they faced the guillotine and the torture room; but they would not recant. Millions went to the cross, to the guillotine, to the stake, for God's blessed Word. Do you have it in you to say "Yes" to the Lord? God will put it in you if you seek Him with all your heart.

