

We were all Born Blind*

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By Glen A Busby

*When I say we are all born blind, I am referring to our lack of hindsight from day one to our lack of insight on the days that follow our birth. We all have lived in darkness, until we see the light of the Lord (call this paragraph, a prelude to the light in God's world).

Ephesians 5:8-10: ⁸You used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people, you are in the light. So, you must live like people who belong to the light, ⁹for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth. ¹⁰ Try to learn what pleases the Lord.

"T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed"

It is a scientific fact that it takes sunlight to bring a rich harvest. It's my faith belief in God's creation of the world that sun light also brings goodness. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day (Genesis 1:3-5, NRSV). Since we were born in God's image – ²⁷ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27, NRSV). I believe this means I have within me the capability to do goodness (i.e. kindness), when I let the image of God emit sunshine from my body, heart, mind and soul. But to have the ability within me, doesn't necessarily enable me to let God's light shine through me. To be a lighthouse for the goodness of God – 1 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (title) This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine. 2 Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine. Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine. Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine. 3 Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine. Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine. Jesus gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine. (author, Harry Dixon Loes) – I have to let it shine. It is by the grace of God that I have been able to climb over the wall of darkness to let goodness and kindness shine.

Goodness – What does the Lord require of us? To be as well balanced physically and mentally, as we possibly can be. Being well balanced physically and mentally is a good catalyst for doing good works and good works should be the rich harvest we strive for!

The world we live in has always had a cornucopia of distractions. Now the corona virus has appeared in our world with unnerving power. Its power seems to overshadow the multitude past interferences that have stood in the way of our connection to God, the world and each other. A rich harvest is not possible if all the connections are disconnected. The sunlight must be there, the seeds must be planted and the crops must be cared for or there will be no harvest. It requires being right (being connected spiritually) with God, but God also expects us to be right with the world and with each other. Repeatedly, we see in the New Testament, where the Pharisees thought by following their religious laws they were automatically right with God and never realized that their actions were separating them from God, the people and the world they lived in. If you are disconnected from the world and the people God created for your life environment, then how can you believe you are connected to the world's Creator? The spirit of togetherness is vital for a harvest of the "seeds we sow."

Righteousness – What does the Lord require of us? To be as well balanced spiritually as we possibly can be. Being well balanced spiritually is a good catalyst for being righteous and it is our connection to God that brings the good (goodness, kindness) light to shine for harvest day.

The news is out, according to the European Union is that Russia is now spreading fake news about the corona virus – fake news used to be called propaganda, misinformation or disinformation. We can always blame the Russians or the Chinese for all the false truths that circulate. I remind you that I served in the Navy for the majority of years we called the Cold War. I can assure you I have many stories that will help you understand that the truth about the 50's through the 90's was not about a "Cold War," but was really about missiles aimed at us (see my attachment poem "Four O'clock World – We walk our way unbroken – ignoring the missile cone aimed at our brains). So, we can blame fake news on others, but we are also responsible for disseminating untruths. We live with indoctrination every day. We call it brainwashing and we do our fair share. Untruths or fake news are like the locusts that mowed down the plants before they are ripe for the harvest. The only truth that is not tainted by our own disconnects is the truth we receive from the Holy Spirit.

Revelation comes through the Spirit and is not “Good News” that we should hoard or falsely disseminate. The Spirit of Jesus Christ gives us the “Good News” to share – it is the fertilizer God gives us to spread, because it is that is needed for a rich harvest. Therefore, whose fault is it, when we aren’t perfect physical or mental examples of humanity? To be honest – it is “us” we should blame. Whose fault is it, when we aren’t perfect examples of spiritually connected examples of humanity? To be honest – it is “us” we should blame.

Truth – What does the Lord require of us? To be as well balanced “in the image of God,” as we possibly can be. Being well balanced “in the image of God” is a good catalyst for discovering the truth.

Yes, we were all “blind” at birth, but don’t let darkness keep you blind for the rest of your life. In Ephesians 5, Paul is trying to give us the tools we need to see the light. In in the Gospel of John, the Apostle is telling us a story (I suspect it was a story by the Sea of Galilee – a sea story) of a man blind from birth who now proclaims, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” The blind beggar answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.”

I can see Clearly Now

John 9:1-23: ¹ As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸The 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 ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

The truth revealed is that the Pharisees could not accept that Jesus had healed a man blind from birth, much less the fact the he did the healing on the Sabbath. Physically and mentally, the act of healing Jesus performed could not be possible in the Pharisee’s world. The Pharisees believed the world revolved around them, so Jesus could not possibly have the “authority” given to them by God, as they were the rightful religious leaders. There is a cornucopia (a symbol of plenty consisting of a goat’s horn [basket, today] overflowing with flowers, fruit, and corn) filled with the wrong ways of the world that can blind us from the plenty of our Creator. We can be blinded by our lack of self-worth (“That saved a wretch like me”), we can be blinded by our fear of the unknown (“that taught my heart to fear”) and we can be blinded by our insecurities (“Through many dangers, toils and snares”). John Newton was pressed (enslaved) into the Royal Navy and was blinded by all the dangers, toils and snares. Ironically, he became a slave-trading Captain of his own ship. In a storm off the coast of Ireland “Jesus made mud, spread it on John Newton’s eyes, and as the Apostle’s sea story goes, “T’was blind but now I see.” None of that would have mattered except John Newton accepted physically, mentally and spiritually, that his life could change if he Just believed, “How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.” What isn’t often told with the sea story is the part that probably matters the most! After the hour John Newton first believed there were many years of transformation from who he was to who he would become. The violent storm was in 1748 and it was 1764 after studying Christian Theology, that John Newton was ordained into the Church of England.

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found

T'was blind but now I see

It takes the "Amazing Grace" of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to help us find our way in the world.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear

And Grace, my fears relieved

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed

It takes the "Amazing Grace" of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to relieve our fears with the hour of our belief.

Through many dangers, toils and snares

We have already come.

T'was grace that brought us safe thus far

And grace will lead us home,

And grace will lead us home

It takes the "Amazing Grace" of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to keep us safely in His loving arms to lead us home.

It was the reforming of my life by the Holy Spirit (Reformed Theology) that led me home to Branford and High Springs. It took years from 1973 until 1990 for me to start discovering the "homes," I was called to care for. Like my story and John Newton's story, both mirror another story that required transformation by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul was on the Damascus Road, years after his story began as a Rabbi and a Roman Citizen:

Acts 9:3-19: ³ As Saul was coming near the city of Damascus, suddenly a light from the sky flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" he asked. "I am Jesus, whom you persecute," the voice said. ⁶ "But get up and go into the city, where you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with Saul had stopped, not saying a word; they heard the voice but could not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes but could not see a thing. So, they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was not able to see, and during that time he did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁰ There was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. He had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, "Ananias!" "Here I am, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Get ready and go to Straight Street, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying, ¹² and in a vision, he has seen a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him so that he might see again." ¹³ Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man and about all the terrible things he has done to your people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who worship you." ¹⁵ The Lord said to him, "Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ And I myself will show him all that he must suffer for my sake." ¹⁷ So Ananias went, entered the house where Saul was, and placed his hands on him. "Brother Saul," he said, "the Lord has sent me—Jesus himself, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He sent me so that you might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ At once something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he was able to see again. He stood up and was baptized; ¹⁹ and after he had eaten, his strength came back.

The song "I can see clearly now," by Johnny Nash was popular, when I accepted the call from Jesus to become a minister. It has taken years, but I am starting to see clearly now. Today, I was working on this sermon, when I received a response from my brother, Jack, about last week's sermon, "Glen, I would shudder to have the responsibility you have. It is so deeply engrained in us to believe we are somehow earning our salvation. Isn't that what Jesus is warning against in Matthew 7:21-23? That is clearly someone who considers himself a Christian doing good works." My response back to Jack was, "Jack, why am I still working? My works are not for my salvation, nor can I save you by being a good example or by being a good mentor. Salvation comes from God through Jesus Christ. So why do I even bother? I can't begin to describe the blessings I have received daily because of Christ's presence in my life, moment by moment – like this one with you! Love, Glen" ... and like the ones with each of you, as you read this sermon in the midst of turmoil!

Not only were we all born blind, but most of us have also been blinded by the ways of the world and by the ways of our neighbors. Some of us have even been blinded by what we perceived were the ways of God. Of course, that is why God sent Jesus to save us from our "blind" selves. This current traumatic time we are in today in the 21st century could become a time of blindness for us all. I am praying, we don't give up as Christians, but that we discover the truth that the Spirit of Jesus Christ sends us moment by moment – What does the Lord require of us? God requires us to be as well balanced "in the image of God," as we possibly can be. Being well balanced "in the image of God" is a good catalyst for discovering the truth. I believe the truth is that God will never release us from Christ's loving arms.

Songwriter: Johnny Nash and Singer

**I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
Oh, yes I can make it now the pain is gone
All of the bad feelings have disappeared
Here is that rainbow I've been praying for
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
Look all around, there's nothing but blue skies
Look straight ahead, there's nothing but blue skies
I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Here is that rainbow I've been praying for
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
Bright (bright) bright (bright)
Bright sunshiny day
It's going to be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day
It's gonna be a bright (bright)
Bright (bright) sunshiny day**



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