

Amazing Grace

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning and welcome to our service this morning. We welcome you as we do every Lord's Day. We welcome you in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. I'm glad you could join with us this morning as we come on this Lord's Day morning around God's Word and to consider what the Lord is saying to us even as we go into a new week.

Now there are a few things I want to highlight to both the Barvis congregation and also the Carlaway congregation this morning. So please bear with me just a few intimations. As you know, first of all the Sunday School meets at three o'clock today. We'll be meeting via Zoom and then this evening at half past seven there'll be a youth fellowship and we have Gordon MacLeod who's the youth and discipleship worker for the Presbytery. He's going to be sharing his testimony. So all young people are invited to join with us this evening as Gordon shares his testimony. Also just to highlight to the Barvis congregation the Free Will offering envelopes. There was a recent meeting of the Deacons Court and we wanted to give opportunity to the congregation to deposit any Free Will offering envelopes that may have accumulated during this period of lockdown. And so on Saturday the 13th of March from 2pm to 4pm. So on Saturday the 13th of March the church here will be open from 2pm to 4pm. On the Deacons Court they also wish to express their heartfelt thanks to you as a congregation for your continued support over the past year. Also in relation to the envelopes and the open day on the Saturday there will be an opportunity to donate to support the work of the Bethesda Home and Hospice. So the church as I mentioned it will be open on Saturday the 13th of March from 2pm to 4pm. And if you wish to donate to

Bethesda you can put an envelope through to the church with Bethesda written on it. A marked envelope. Although if you don't want to donate by coming to the church you're also able to donate via bank transfer. If you don't have the details please just get in touch and we'll pass them on to you. Also to highlight to you as well that at a recent meeting of the Deacons Court we agreed to begin much needed decorative works within the sanctuary.

There were many water stains because of the leaks that were in the roof. We fixed the roof as you know a few years ago and since then we haven't decorated the church. So God willing on Monday the 8th of March the decorative works will begin. And the Deacons Court they've also looked into considering the possibility of upgrading the seating, the carpeting and also the heating system in the church. And in a few weeks time God willing we'll give you more of an update on that. So that's for the Barvis congregation.

This is for the Carlaway congregation and I'm glad you were able to join with us this morning. This is an edict that's to be read. It's in reference to calling a minister that's to be read to the congregation. So in the name and by appointment of the free Presbytery of the Western Isles I hereby intimate that in consequence of an application from this congregation Carlaway Free Church the said Presbytery agree to meet with the congregation of Carlaway Free Church of Scotland on Thursday the 11th of March 2021 at 7.30pm using Zoom Audiovisual Technology for the purpose of moderating in a closed call to Reverend Thomas Davis Assistant Minister of St Columbus Free Church of Scotland Edinburgh to be Minister of this congregation and the Reverend David McLeod who is currently the moderator of Presbytery he will preach and preside. So these are all the intimations and they're all of course God willing. And we're going to begin our service this morning. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 45. That's Psalm 45 in the Scottish Salter. It's in the second version of the Psalm and we're singing from the beginning. Psalm 45 it's the short meter version and it's a

[4 : 25] Psalm 45 it's a love song but the opening verses of Psalm 45 they describe Jesus, Jesus as our King and in many ways this love song it's praising Jesus for who he is. He is a man as the Psalm psalmist reminds us he is a man whose lips are full of grace and it's his voice we need to hear this morning as we come around God's word. So Psalm 45 from the beginning. My heart in dieting is good matter in a song. I speak the things that I have made which to the King belong. My tongue shall be as quick his honor to indict as is the pen of any scribe that uses fast to write. The word fairest of all men grace in my lip in my lips doth flow and therefore blessings evermore on thee doth God bestow. So we'll sing Psalm 45 from the beginning to God's praise.

The things that I have made which to the King belong.

The gifts of all men grace in my lips doth flow and therefore blessings evermore on thee.

And therefore blessings evermore on me doth flowd me through.

Thy sword geared on night-time, Thy light I close so wide, a brilliant, deathful majesty, and in Thy glory bright, poor meekness, truth, and pride.

[7 : 37] Thine cross was made, and Thy right hand shall teach to me things dead above and gray. Thy shaft shall pierce their hearts, Thy pros are to the King, whereby in chess subjection the people now shall pray.

Well, if I could for a short moment, if I could just speak to the children, it's always good to have an opportunity to speak to them, although they're not able to talk to me.

Well boys and girls, I hope you're well, and I hope some of you enjoyed your first week back at school. I'm sure it was great to see your friends, and I'm sure for those who didn't get to go to school this week, I'm sure hopefully it won't be too long until you're able to see your friends in school again.

But this morning, I took with me, I took with me, I don't know if you can see this quite well, this is a bottle of syrup, it's a bottle of syrup. And that's because a couple of weeks ago, it was Pancake Day.

[9 : 45] I'm sure you've heard of Pancake Day before. Well in our house, the boys in our house, David, Finlay and Daniel, they were baking lots and lots of pancakes.

And they made the pancake mixture and they poured the pancake mixture onto the pan, and then they would flip over the pancakes and make really nice pancakes. But as you might expect, I wasn't allowed to make any pancakes, and I certainly wasn't allowed to flip any pancakes, because I'm always told that all I do in the kitchen is make a mess, so I was told to stay away.

But you know, I wasn't allowed to, I didn't have to stay away when it came to eating them. I love eating pancakes, and I was more than happy to eat the pancakes that the boys had made.

But when the boys made the pancakes, there were three toppings that they were going to put on, not on the same pancake, but on different ones. They put butter on one of them, and then they put chocolate spread on some of the other pancakes, and then they also put syrup on some of the other pancakes.

And you know, this is special syrup, not only because it's really sweet and it's really yummy, I'm sure you've tried it before, but this is special syrup because it has a Bible verse on it.

[11 : 02] It's special syrup because it has a Bible verse on it. And there's a Bible verse on this syrup, because the man who first made this syrup, he was a Christian.

He was a Christian man called Abram Lyle, and he lived in Greenock, the town of Greenock, which is just west of Glasgow, but on the west coast of Scotland.

And Abram Lyle, Lyle, he loved Jesus, and he wanted people to know Jesus. He wanted people to follow Jesus. And Abram Lyle, he put a verse on his syrup, and maybe you can see it.

I'm not sure if you can see it quite well, but if you can see it, it is a picture of a lion and some bees, and underneath is the words of the verse. If you can't see it, well, maybe you can go rummaging through your cupboards later on and find some syrup, and have a look at the label that's on it.

Because on the label of this syrup, there's a picture of a lion and some bees, and then the verse. The verse says, out of the strong came forth sweetness. Out of the strong came forth sweetness.

[12 : 10] And that Bible verse, it's taken from the book of Judges in chapter 14, where Samson, you'll have heard of Samson, he was a very strong man, and one day Samson was attacked by a lion.

But Samson, because he was attacked, he had to kill the lion. And so he killed this lion with his hands, he killed this lion. But then we're told that a few days later, Samson passed by that lion that he had killed.

What he saw was that there were bees, there was bees inside the cactus of the lion. And that's what the picture is showing there. And it's later, a few days later after that, that Samson turned the bees and the lion, he turned them into a riddle.

And the riddle was, as it is in Judges 14, out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. So out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.

And it was a riddle, Samson's riddle was given to the people in Samson's day. But the Samson's riddle was also written on this label. And that's what's written on the Syrups here, Samson's riddle.

[13 : 25] And so boys and girls, whenever you see Syrup, whenever you see this Syrup, or maybe you put it on pancakes, or when you're using it, when you're baking, remember that the man who made Syrup, this man called Abraham Lyle, remember that he was a Christian.

This man was a Christian, and he loved Jesus, and he followed Jesus. But he put a Bible verse on the Syrup, because he wanted you and me to follow Jesus too.

He wanted everyone to love Jesus and follow Jesus. And I want you to love Jesus and follow Jesus, because Jesus, as you know, he is the most important person in all the world.

So you remember that when you see Syrup next time. You remember that the man who made Syrup, he wanted you to love Jesus and follow Jesus. Well, thank you for listening.

And we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together, so let's clasp our hands and close our eyes and we'll say the Lord's Prayer together. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[14 : 37] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Well, boys and girls, thank you very much for listening this morning.

We're now going to read the Word of God as we find it in the Gospel according to John 9. John 9, and we're going to read from the beginning of John 9, and we're going to read down to the verse Mark 12.

And I have to be honest, I did consider taking a break from John's Gospel for a few weeks. But the more I thought about it, the more I realised that, well, who better to preach about than Jesus?

Who better to present to sinners and to those who are saved than the one who is the lover of our soul? And so I decided, with the Lord's grace and help, to continue this study.

[15 : 44] We'll continue until we reach the end of chapter 11. So we'll continue till about the Easter holidays. And so this morning we're looking at John 9, and we're reading from the beginning.

So let us hear the Word of God. As he that is Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, it was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day.

Night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 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 and said to him, go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent. So he went and washed and came back seeing.

[16 : 48] 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? Some said, it is he. Others said, nobody is like him.

He kept saying, I am the man. So they said to him, then how were your eyes opened? 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. They said to him, where is he? And he said, I do not know. I do not know.

Amen. May the Lord bless that reading of his own holy word. But before we consider that passage this morning, let's come before the Lord and pray. Let's pray together.

Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, help us to echo the words of the psalmist this morning in saying how sweet unto my taste, O Lord, are all thy words of truth.

[17 : 59] Ye, I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth. And Lord, we give thanks to thee for even that reminder in the children's talk, that there were a God who has given to us sweet things, a God who has given to us the sweetness of thy word, and even the sweetness of thy Son, and that even this morning as we come to thy word, that we would come and taste and see that they were good, and trust in thee and be blessed, that we would realize that we are a privileged people, that we are those who have received much from thine hand, and that the warning is that to whom much has been given, much will be required of us.

Help us then, we pray, to come humbly before thee this morning, seeking thy face, that we would seek to worship thee in spirit and in truth, that we would seek to bring glory to thy name, that although we are not able to meet in thy house, although we are not able to gather as a congregation, we give thanks to thee that we are still able to meet in spirit, and that we are able to worship in spirit and in truth, that thou wouldst hear our worship this morning, that thou wouldst accept of our worship, our worship to a God who sustains us, and who upholds us, and who keeps us, and who blesses us, with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

We give thanks, Lord, even for the Psalm that we were singing this morning, a Psalm that reminds us that our Saviour is one who has grace upon his lips, and he is a triumphant King with a sword upon his thigh, that he rides out victoriously, and he fires the arrows from his bow.

And Lord, we pray even this morning that the arrows from the King, as they are sent out, that they would go out with power, that they would convict and convert, that they would encourage and equip, that they would cause thy people who are maybe downcast and despondent to be uplifted and to be upheld, to know that thou art the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, that Jesus is enthroned on high, that he is continually working all things together for good, to those who are the called according to thy own purpose.

And Lord, we pray for thy own purposes, even at present. We pray, Lord, for our situation, that we are all confined to our homes, where we are all living in lockdown. We pray, Lord, that thou wouldst continue to minister to us, as we are separated from one another, maybe separated from families and from friends.

[20 : 37] And yet, Lord, we pray that in our isolation and maybe even in our loneliness, that thou wouldst comfort us and remind us that thou art the one who will never leave and who will never forsake.

We think this morning, Lord, of those who are laid aside, those who are struggling, those who are receiving treatment, and those, Lord, who are awaiting results of scans and all these different medical issues. Lord, we pray that thou wouldst help.

All, Lord, we know that without thee we can do nothing, but that with thee all things are possible. Bind up the brokenhearted, strengthen those who are weak, encourage those who are downcast, lift up those, Lord, who are struggling, all that they would know thy presence and thy blessing as they begin a new week in life's journey.

And we give thanks, Lord, that this is where we are found. We are found praising the one who is the resurrection and the life, that the Lord's day is a wonderful reminder to us that we do not worship a Saviour who is dead, but one who is risen, one who is triumphant, who has defeated death, who has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Bless, Lord, thy truth to us this morning, that thou wouldst encourage us, that thou wouldst strengthen us through it, that thy word would be meat and drink to our souls, that would guide us even into a new week, that whatever is before us, that thou wouldst be our sure portion.

[22 : 09] And, Lord, we pray also for the congregation in Carloway. We give thanks, Lord, that steps are being made to fill the vacancy. And we do pray that thy will would be done, as we have been praying already, that it would be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And, Lord, our prayer is that everything that is done, that it would be to thy glory, to the furtherance of thy kingdom. We pray for Thomas and the family, that thou wouldst give them guidance and wisdom.

And we pray for us, as a Kirk Session in Carloway, we ask that thou wouldst give us wisdom and guidance, and that thou wouldst help us to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, that we would do everything to thy glory, or that we would seek to fulfill our chief end, that is, to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Bless us, Lord, we pray, encourage us in our own homes and in our own families, that thou wouldst enable us to look to Jesus, to set our affection on things above, where He is today, continually making intercession for us.

Or go before us, then we pray, open our eyes, Lord, this morning, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law, that we would be fed from the Master's table. Go before us, then we ask, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously for Jesus' sake.

[23 : 32] Amen. Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to John, John chapter 9, and if we read again at verse 10.

John chapter 9 at verse 10, so they, that is the neighbours and the crowds, they said to Him, that was the man who was born blind, then how were your eyes opened?

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. The man called Jesus said to me, go and wash.

Now I don't know about you, but whenever I read this passage, I'm always reminded of the lyrics of one of the most famous hymns in modern history, the hymn, Amazing Grace.

[24 : 39] As you know, it was a hymn that was penned by the once captain of slaves who became a cleric of salvation. He was called John Newton. And John Newton, he spent much of his life abusing African slaves as they were being trafficked from the coast of Africa, all the way to the sugar cane fields of the Caribbean.

But not only that, Newton, he lived a rebellious and hardened lifestyle, constantly drinking and constantly blaspheming the name of God. And he lived like that until John Newton was faced with a reality of death, where he was confronted with eternity.

And you know, it's amazing how eternity always makes us think about our soul, because one night in his ship, John Newton, he encountered a violent storm where the boat began filling with water.

And while trying to pump out some of the water, Newton said, if this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us. And it was in that moment that John Newton, he knew that he needed the grace of God in his life.

But it was during those hours of trouble, of trying to bail out the water out of his boat, Newton spent time thinking back over his life.

[25 : 58] And he thought about the amount of time that he had wasted seeking after the pleasures of this world. And when John Newton, when he later recorded his own thoughts of that experience on the boat that night, he said, I stood in need of an almighty saviour.

And such a one I found described in the New Testament. The Lord brought a marvellous thing. I was no longer an infidel. I heartily renounced my former profanities.

I was sorry for my misspent life. I sought immediate reformation. I was freed from my swearing habit. And to all appearances, I was a new man.

And there was no wonder that when John Newton looked back over his life, he was led to write those beautiful words in that hymn.

Amazing grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.

[27 : 02] That was John Newton's confession of faith. And it's also the confession of faith for every Christian. And it's also the confession of faith of this man here in John 9, who was born blind.

In fact, the man who was born blind here in this chapter, he is the greatest illustration of someone who's unconverted.

And what Jesus wants to remind our unconverted friends this morning, he wants to remind you, my unconverted friend, that you will remain blind and you will remain in your spiritual darkness unless you come face to face with the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

Because you know, that's what it means to be a Christian. It's to be brought from darkness to light, from blindness to sight. And so what we learned from the opening verses of John 9 is that Jesus is about his father's business.

Jesus is about his father's business because Jesus is in the business of working, washing, and witnessing. Jesus is in the business of working, washing, and witnessing.

[28 : 20] And there are three headings this morning, working, washing, and witnessing. So first of all, working. Jesus is in the business of working. We're told in verse 1, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.

And as disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, it was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. Now as you know, chapter 7, 8 and 9 of John's Gospel, they form one scene.

And the scene is the Feast of Tabernacles. And as we've seen over the past number of weeks, the Feast of Tabernacles was a Jewish festival which commemorated and celebrated the Lord's provision and protection of the children of Israel during the 40 years in the wilderness.

But it was while attending the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem that Jesus, he declared and disclosed his identity as the Christ. Because you remember that it was during the morning water ritual that Jesus, he stood up and he spoke into the silence and he said, if anyone thirsts, let him come unto me and drink.

[29 : 48] And then during the evening lighting ritual, Jesus declared to the crowds, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

And then as we saw last week in the second half of John 8, we saw that Jesus taught that in order to live like Abraham, in order to be righteous before God, you need faith.

You need to live by faith because if you have faith in the Son of God, if you have faith in the Saviour of Sinners, Jesus Christ, then you'll be free. You'll live like a son and not like a slave.

But you know, as we come to this chapter, chapter 9, John is actually bringing all of it together. He's bringing all that we've learned about the Feast of Tabernacles over the past few weeks and he's saying to us, this is what it means to follow Jesus.

This is what it means to follow Jesus. Because in the experience of this man who was born blind, we're being told the truth of the Gospel, that a sinner is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

[31 : 03] Therefore, what John is telling us this morning is that the only way to experience light and life, instead of darkness and death, is to come face to face with the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

And that's what's happened to this man who was born blind. Because with the religious leaders about to stone Jesus, Jesus left the temple with his disciples.

And we're told in verse 1, as he passed by, he saw a blind man from birth. Now let's just linger there for a moment, because that's a beautiful verse, isn't it?

As he passed by, as Jesus passed by. You know my friend, that's what Jesus does every time you open your Bible.

Jesus passes by. When you open the Word of God, or when you sit under the preaching of the Word of God, Jesus passes by.

[32 : 09] And you know, the wonder is that Jesus comes to you, he comes to you in the darkness of your sin. He comes to you in the distress of your sickness.

He comes to you in the disappointment of your suffering. Jesus comes to you in the depths of your sorrow, and he passes by in the gospel. And you know, the wonder of wonders is that this Jesus, he's ready to heal you.

And he's ready to help you. And he's ready to even hold you this morning. This Jesus is more than willing to meet you at your point of need, if you will only ask him.

Jesus is passing by. He's passing by this morning. He's passing by your home this morning.

Now you know, the reason the blind man was at the temple was to beg for money. Because as a blind man, his only source of income was the freewill offerings of the worshipers who were going to the temple.

[33 : 14] But as Jesus and his disciples, as they passed by, were told in verse two, his disciples asked him, they said, Rabbi, who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?

And you know, it's an interesting question, isn't it? But it's the wrong question, because the question is based upon the wrong assumption. Who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?

You know, the disciples, they wrongly assume that the reason the man was born blind was because he or his parents had committed some sort of sin.

It was a common thought among the Jews in that day that if someone in your family was born with a disability, or if they experienced disease, or if they encountered death prematurely, it was because they had done wrong.

Or that they had sinned against God. That's God judging them and punishing them. And it's someone's fault, someone's to blame. You know, in many ways it was a theory of cause and effect.

[34 : 21] Or most of us, or people nowadays would call it karma, where good things only happen to good people. And bad things happen only to bad people.

It's a common thought among many people today. But what often throws people is when bad things happen to good people.

And they question how can bad things happen to good people? How can a good God allow bad things, terrible things, awful things? How can He allow these things to happen to innocent people?

But like the disciples, people often start with the wrong question. They start with the wrong assumption because they assume that either someone is getting what they deserve or God is to blame.

And you know my friend, this is a 21st century question. Because the disciples, they're asking Jesus, whose fault is this? Who's responsible for this?

[35 : 23] Who can we point the finger at and blame for this man? And you know, that's what we're still doing. You know, with all the problems and the bad things that happen in life, we want to blame something or someone.

You know what Jesus says to the disciples? And even what he reminds us this morning is that it's not about blaming. It's about blessing.

It's not about guilt. It's about glory. Look at verse 3, Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Jesus says that the providence of this man's blindness is about giving God the glory. It's not about guilt.

It's about glory. And you know, what Jesus is reminding us with this man who couldn't see, what Jesus is reminding us is that we are to see every providence in our lives as working together for our good and ultimately for God's glory.

[36 : 36] And I know, my friend, I know that that's easier for me to say than it is for you to see it or to understand it. Especially when I know that some of you have providences in your life that you never thought they could be what they are or ever thought that they would be what they are.

But you know, that's the perspective on providence which Jesus wants us to have. That's the perspective this wonderful Savior wants us to have because Jesus wants to assert and affirm and assure you this morning that even though you may not understand, what He's doing in your life and in your experience and in your home and in your family, even though you may not understand the sin or the sickness or the suffering or the sorrows that you encounter or experience in your life, He is working in them and through each and every one of them.

And He's working it all for your good and ultimately for His glory. He's working it all for your good and His glory.

And you know, my friend, whenever I think of the providence of God in our lives, I'm always brought back to that precious poem, The Divine Weaver.

You know, we recently had Donna Jam next door to the church. She has Butterfly and Wren and we had her make a plaque with The Divine Weaver written on it.

[38 : 15] My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me. I cannot choose the colors He worketh steadily. Sometimes He weaves with sorrow and I in foolish pride forget that He sees the upper and I the underside and not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why the dark threads are as needful in the weaver's skillful hand as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.

My friend Jesus, He is about His father's business because Jesus, He is in the business of working and He's working all things together for your good and ultimately for His glory.

Jesus is in the business of working but He's also in the business of washing and that's what we see secondly, washing. So working and washing.

Now look at verse 5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. And 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 and sent to Him, go wash in the pool of Siloam which means sent. So He went and washed and came back, seen.

[39 : 43] You know when John introduced us to Jesus at the outset of his Gospel, He said to us that Jesus is the Word of God. And John, He began his Gospel by echoing the words of Genesis 1 verse 1 which says, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And then John wrote in his Gospel, John 1 verse 1, in the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through Him and without Him there was not anything made that was made. And you know from the outset of his Gospel, John has asserted and affirmed and assured to us that Jesus is God and that it's through Him that the whole creation came into being.

John said to us, In Him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shined in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

And then you think back to God's first act of creation. What did God do? He spoke into the darkness and He said, Let there be light.

[40 : 58] And from that moment the darkness could not dispel or disperse the light. And John is now saying to us, He's telling us that Jesus who is the Word of God, who became flesh and dwelt among us.

He's not only the Son of God through whom everything was created but John is telling us that He is the light of the world who has come into this world in order to dispel and disperse the darkness of sin and the darkness of sickness and the darkness of suffering and the darkness of sorrow and even the darkness of Satan.

Jesus is the one who has declared to us on the pages of Scripture, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

And now Jesus says verse 5, He says, As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. But you know, then we're told something very, very unusual that Jesus stooped down and He spat on the ground and with His finger He mixed the mud and His saliva and He made this muddy saliva paste.

And then Jesus, He took the muddy saliva paste and He anointed the eyes of the man who was born blind. And you know, we might be tempted to think that what Jesus did was a bit disgusting with muddy saliva paste and putting it on someone's eyes.

[42 : 30] But you know, as we sang in Psalm 45, the mouth of Jesus is full of grace. The mouth of Jesus is full of grace.

And yet, you know, in almost parabolic fashion, John is describing the actions of Jesus as that of a Creator. Because you remember that on the sixth day of creation, God created Adam from the dust of the ground.

God stooped down to the dust of the ground and He created Adam. He formed him and fashioned him and God breathed life into Adam through the breath of His nostrils.

And you know, here is Jesus, the one through whom all things were created. And He's stooping down to the dust of the ground and He's creating this muddy saliva paste and He's anointing the eyes of the man who was born blind.

And you know, my friend, Jesus was going to do in this man's life what he did at the very beginning of creation. He was going to dispel and disperse the darkness over this man's eyes by bringing life and light.

[43 : 42] You know, it's a wonderful act of recreation. It's an act of regeneration. Because as Jesus said to Nicodemus, unless you're born again, unless you become a new creation, you can never enter or see the kingdom of God.

And with that, Jesus says to the blind man, he says to him, go, go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And notice that John tells us the name of Siloam.

He explains that it means scent. Go to the scent pool, he says. And you know, it was called the scent pool because during the reign of King Hezekiah, the Jews, they built this water duct, diverting the fresh water from the Gihon Spring, which was outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

And they redirected this spring and sent it into the city of Jerusalem. They sent it under the city wall and enabled it to gather in this artificial pool called the scent pool, the pool of Siloam.

And the Jews, they referred to the water in the pool of Siloam. They called it living water. You remember, we touched on this when we were looking at the morning ritual during the Feast of Tabernacles in chapter seven.

[45 : 01] Because it was during the morning ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles that the priests would go down to this pool, the pool of Siloam. And they would throw out that living water and they would take it up to the sacrifice in the temple and they would pour the water on the sacrifice.

And you remember, it was at that point that Jesus stood up and he spoke into the crowds and he said to them, if anyone thirsts, let them come unto me and drink.

But now John is telling us, here is the Creator and here is the Saviour of Sinners. And here he is saying to this blind man, go, go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

And you know, we're told he simply went and washed and came back seeing. He went and washed and came back seeing.

We said earlier that the man who was born blind is the greatest illustration of someone who's unconverted. Because like him, my unconverted friend, you were born in the darkness of sin, unable to see the light of the Gospel.

[46 : 20] But as you come face to face with Jesus, who is the light of the world, as you come face to face with him this morning, you know, he's urging you. He's urging you this morning.

Go to the pool of Siloam. Go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Go and wash in the scent pool. Go and wash in the provision of salvation. Go and wash in the living water.

And you will receive your sight. And you know, John, as the Gospel writer, he's saying to us, Jesus is your pool of Siloam. Jesus is your scent pool. Jesus is your provision of salvation. Jesus is your living water.

Jesus is about his father's business this morning, and he has been sent to do the father's will. He is the remedy to your ruin. He is your only means of redemption.

And John is saying to us this morning, you must come to him. You must call upon him. You must commit your life to him. You must confess him as your Lord and Saviour, because no other pool will do.

[47 : 26] Accept this scent pool of salvation. No other pool will wash you. No other pool will cleanse you as white as snow. No other pool will deal with your sin. No other pool will remove the blindness of your sight.

No other pool will bring you from darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel. So my unconverted friend, you must go and you must wash in the pool of Siloam.

You must go and you must wash in this scent pool of salvation. You must go and you must wash in the Lord's provision of salvation.

You must go and you must wash this morning. You must cleanse yourself in the living water. And you'll come back seeing. You'll come back seeing.

You must go and you must wash. And you know, the thing about the blind man is that he was obedient to the voice of Jesus.

[48 : 35] I don't know how obedient you will be this morning. But this blind man, he submitted himself to the command of Jesus. He humbled himself under the authority of Jesus.

He committed everything he had into the care of Jesus. He didn't question Jesus. He didn't argue with Jesus. He didn't ignore Jesus. He didn't try and make himself to be a better person for Jesus.

He didn't try and work out everything before he came to Jesus. He didn't even wait until a more convenient time to come to Jesus. He just took Jesus at his word and he obediently willingly, humbly went and washed in the pool of Siloam.

And he came back seeing. And you know, my unconverted friend, in order to be saved, in order to be in order to see. That's all you need to do.

That's all you need to do. Go to Siloam. Go to the scent pool. Go to the Lord's provision of salvation. Go to the one who has made this living water possible for you.

[49 : 43] Go to Jesus because he is in the business of washing. And he will wash you and make you white in his own blood.

He is in the business of washing. My friend Jesus is about his father's business this morning. And he's in the business of working. He's in the business of washing.

And lastly, we see that Jesus is in the business of witnessing. Working, washing and witnessing. Look at verse 8.

We're told that the neighbors and those who had seen Jesus, seen the blind man before as a beggar, they were saying, is this not the man who used to sit and beg? Some said, it is he. Others said, no, but he is like him. He kept saying, I am the man.

So they said to him, then how were your eyes opened? 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.

[50 : 49] You know, as soon as this man's eyes were opened and his life was transformed by Jesus, the neighbors began to talk about it. He had hardly returned from the pool of Siloam when his neighbors were all discussing what had happened.

The news had spread and everyone had heard about the change that had taken place in his life. Because his neighbors would have known him. They would have known him as a child.

They would have seen him grow up. They would have known that he was born blind. They would have known his parents and maybe even his grandparents. And they would have seen him even begging at the temple as everybody went to worship the Lord.

But you know, the change in the transformation in this man's life, it was so different and so dramatic that they questioned if it really was him. They said, is this not the man who used to sit and beg?

And the man was saying, it is me. I am the man. And some were saying, well, he is like him. And he said, I am the man. And others said, no, but it must be him.

[51 : 53] And he kept saying, I am the man. I am the man who was born blind. And what we see is that this man, this man who was born blind, he was willing to witness for Jesus.

He was willing to witness for Jesus. You know, my friend, I sometimes wonder if this is the reason you hold back from committing and confessing Jesus as Lord.

Because you know, it's what held me back. It's what held me back. And maybe your greatest fear about becoming a Christian or confessing as a Christian, maybe your greatest worry is what other people will say.

Maybe you worry about what your neighbours will say or your family or your friends. These people who saw you grow up and they know you so well and they know your past, they know what you're like.

Maybe you worry what they might say about you if you commit and confess Jesus as Lord. Maybe you worry that if you were to confess that you're a Christian and speak about Jesus and speak up for Jesus, that you'd be the talk of the village.

[53 : 04] Maybe you worry that if you become a Christian and confess Jesus to others, maybe you worry that you'll let the Lord down. You know, I hear so many people saying to me that they worry about committing and confessing because they fear that they're letting the Lord down.

But you know, my friend, you're already letting the Lord down by not committing and not confessing Him as your Lord. You're already letting Him down.

And sadly, I know that all too often the devil gets in and fear and worry, it takes over. The fear of what other people will say and the fear of what other people will think, it takes over and it becomes too much, too much to make a commitment to Jesus, too much to confess Jesus, too much to stand up for Jesus.

Well, we put it off until a later date, don't we? We put it off until later. But you know, I can't think of a better thing for neighbors and family and friends to say about you than to say that your life has been transformed and changed by Jesus Christ.

You know, what better compliment to receive than for people to know that you love Jesus and want to live for Jesus?

[54 : 27] What better witness to give? What better testimony to have than to say with this man, the man called Jesus, he anointed my eyes and he said to me, go to Siloam and wash.

So I went and I washed and I received my sight. My friend, when Jesus works in your heart and life, you're not to stay silent.

You're to speak. You know, we're to witness and testify to the amazing grace of God because it is amazing grace. We don't deserve it.

We can't earn it. We're not even worthy of it. Therefore, what we must see is that what Jesus has done in our lives is not an obstacle.

It's an opportunity to witness to the amazing grace of God. It's an opportunity because Jesus, my friend, he is in the business of witnessing.

[55 : 29] He's in the business of witnessing. But the thing is Jesus doesn't witness himself. His people witness on his behalf. His people witness on his behalf.

We are to witness and testify to the grace of God. Is that what Jesus said to the church? You shall be my witnesses from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth, which includes all the rural communities on the west side of the Isle of Lewis.

We're to be witnesses. And God willing, we'll see more of this next week when we look at the second half of chapter nine. But my friend, we are to be witnesses for Jesus.

We are to witness and testify to the grace of God in our lives. We're not to stay silent. We're to speak and we're to say with John Newton, amazing grace.

How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see.

[56 : 41] We're to be witnesses. My friend Jesus is passing by this morning. He's passing by in the gospel. And what we're seeing this morning is that Jesus is about his father's business, because Jesus is in the business of working.

He's in the business of washing. And he's in the business of witnessing. And he's calling you this morning. He's calling you to come to him, to come to him in all your need.

And to confess him as your Lord and as your Savior. Well, my friend, let us do as we have been invited and come to this Jesus.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray together. Oh Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the amazing grace that is seen in the gospel.

And we give thanks that we are saved by grace through faith. That it is a gift of God. It is not of works list any man should boast.

[57 : 55] And that we have no boast to make, except to boast that Jesus is Lord, that he is King, that he is the only one who is able to open the eyes of the blind, to unstop the years of the deaf, to cause those who are lame to walk, those who are mute to speak.

And Lord, we pray that all who are in those spiritual conditions this morning, that we would all sing praise to thy name and come and worship this Jesus, who is able to cleanse us and to make us his.

All bless this Lord, we pray, in the week that lies ahead, that whatever is before us, that we would know that the Lord, the God who is working in our lives, for our good and ultimately for thine own glory, keep us, we pray, go before us for Jesus' sake.

Amen. We are going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning. We are going to sing from Psalm 9. Psalm 9 in the Sing Psalms version, and we are going to sing from verse 7 down to the verse Mark 11.

So, Psalm 9 from verse 7, the Lord forever reigns on high, his throne for judgment stands, he'll judge the world in righteousness with justice, rule the lands.

[59 : 21] And down to the verse Mark 11, sing praises to the Lord, who sits in Zion on his throne, among the nations of the world proclaim what he has done.

We'll sing these verses of Psalm 9 to God's praise. The Lord forever reigns on high, his throne for judgment stands, he'll judge the world in righteousness with justice, rule the lands.

The Lord will be a fighting race for those who are oppressed, and he will be a strong defense for those who are distressed.

All those who know your name, O Lord, in you that trust will face, for you do not abandon those who seek your gracious aid.

Sing praises to the Lord, who sits in Zion on his throne, among the nations of the world proclaim what he has done.