

De Ja Vu

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[0 : 00] Well if you could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if you could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in John chapter 9, John chapter 9, and if you read again at verse 13.

John chapter 9 at verse 13, they brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight and he said to them, he put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see.

Have you ever had deja vu? Have you ever had deja vu? You know that strange feeling where you walk into a room or you're part of a conversation or you're midway through a conversation or you see something specific and you think that you've somehow seen it before even though you know that you haven't.

You know it's a very strange experience, it's almost an eerie feeling to have deja vu because logically you know that you haven't experienced that moment before but your brain is telling you otherwise.

[1 : 18] It's as if you know what's going to happen because it feels all too familiar. It's as if you've been there before or you've seen it all before in a dream.

Having deja vu, it's one of the strangest experiences. Deja vu is actually a French phrase which means already seen. So deja vu, already seen and it relates to the feeling of experiencing something or seeing something that has already happened.

But apparently that feeling of deja vu, it's a sign of your brain checking its memory. Some even say that it happens as a result of stress or fatigue but there's no conclusive evidence for that.

And yet it's something many of us are familiar with. That strange feeling of deja vu, of seeing it all before. Seeing it all before.

And you know when we come to this passage in John's Gospel, it's just like an experience of deja vu. It's like something we've already seen and that we need to check our memories because it seems that what takes place in this passage has already happened in John's Gospel where Jesus, he attends the feast of tabernacles, he heals someone on the Sabbath and the religious leaders are up in arms.

[2 : 46] It's like deja vu because this is what we saw taking place actually a year earlier in John chapter 5. Jesus in John chapter 5, he was at the feast of tabernacles and he healed a man on the Sabbath.

He healed a man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath and the religious leaders, they were up in arms. It's like deja vu. In fact that was, it was actually in John chapter 5.

That was the point where the Jews wanted to kill Jesus. But now a year later, the Jews still haven't killed Jesus. But here is Jesus again in John chapter 9, he's at the feast of tabernacles.

He has healed a man who was born blind and he healed him on the Sabbath and once again the religious leaders are up in arms. It's like deja vu.

It's something we've already seen. But you know the irony of this passage is that the man who was born blind, he can now see, but the religious leaders are still blind.

[3 : 52] The Jews were blind to the blind man. They were blind to the blind man. But as we saw last week, chapter 9 of John's Gospel, it's all about seeing.

And that's what we see this morning because there are three things to see in this passage. Three things to see. They're seeing on the Sabbath, seeing the sinner and seeing the Savior.

So seeing the Sabbath, seeing the sinner and seeing the Savior. Three things to see. So first of all, seeing the Sabbath.

Seeing the Sabbath. Look again at verse 13. We're told that they brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight and he sent to them. He put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see.

[4 : 54] So the man who had been born blind, he had only been able to see for the first time for the best part of an hour. And yet what's remarkable is that he's already experiencing déjà vu.

He's already seeing something he has seen before because what he sees is the irritation of the Jews over the identity of Jesus. And what he also sees is the interrogation of the Jews as they investigate what happened to him, to this blind man.

Because you know, we see that the Jews bring this healed man to the Pharisees and the Pharisees ask him the same questions others have already asked him.

How were your eyes opened? And the man answered, he answered the same question with the same answer. It was just like déjà vu. He said the man called Jesus, he made mud and he anointed my eyes and he sent to me, go to Siloam and wash.

So I went and I washed and I received my sight. And you know, the issue which the Pharisees had, it wasn't so much that the blind man could now see.

[6 : 05] The issue was that he was enabled to see on the Sabbath. Because the Pharisees, they respond to this blind man and what he said, they respond by saying about Jesus, this man isn't from God because he doesn't keep the Sabbath.

And you can almost sense the frustration and the fierce anger of the Pharisees against Jesus that when they discover Jesus has healed someone on the Sabbath again, they're getting angry, they're getting frustrated.

There's this fierce anger building up within them because Jesus has done it again. And you know, what's remarkable is that this event in John 9, it's a year to the day since Jesus healed the paralysed man in John 5.

Because as we've said on many occasions, the Feast of Tabernacles, it was an annual festival that was held each year during the month of September or October.

But in John 5, which was a year earlier, Jesus was at the same feast. He was at the Feast of Tabernacles. And a year ago, Jesus met the man at the pool of Bethesda.

[7 : 21] He had been lying there for 38 years. And you'll remember that the paralysed man, he was at the pool of Bethesda with lots of other people.

The place was crowded with paralysed people because there were people there who were blind were told. There were some people there who were lame and others who were paralysed and they were all there and were told in John 5 that they were all waiting for the angel of the Lord to stir the waters of the pool of Bethesda so that they could be healed.

But because of their paralysis, they often missed their opportunity. But you know, when Jesus passed by in John 5, the man who had been paralysed for 38 years, he was finally healed.

And you know, my friend, I'd be tempted to say that the man who was born blind whom we see in John chapter 9, I'd be tempted to say that he was probably there himself.

He was probably at the pool of Bethesda in John 5, a year earlier when Jesus healed the paralysed man. He was probably there. He was probably in close proximity to Jesus.

[8 : 36] Maybe he even heard Jesus speaking to the paralysed man when Jesus passed by a year earlier. But could we say that back then the blind man missed his opportunity to be healed?

Maybe he missed his opportunity to cry out to Jesus for help. Maybe he missed his opportunity to see. Maybe he missed his opportunity to see.

He missed his opportunity a year earlier. And you know, my friend, it's almost a year since we first started living in this lockdown.

A year has gone by in our lives and there have been lots of changes. Lots and lots of changes. But you know, the question which concerns me and a question which should concern you is have you changed?

There have been lots of changes but have you changed? Has this past year of living in lockdown and coping with COVID and dealing with all this death that is around us, has it had any impact upon you?

[9 : 49] Has it caused you to see your need of Jesus? My Christian friend, has it caused you to love Jesus and listen to Jesus and look to Jesus and even live every day for Jesus?

My unconverted friend, has this past year caused you to see the reality that life is uncertain, death is sure, sin is the cause but Christ is the cure?

And you know, my friend, this may seem like *deja vu* to you. Listening to me again on a Sunday morning and I'm saying the same thing to you. I was saying probably last week and even last year. Like you know, Jesus is passing by again this morning and you're being given the same offer and the same opportunity to experience salvation on the Sabbath.

You're being given the same offer and the same opportunity to experience salvation on this Sabbath. So don't waste another opportunity.

[10 : 56] Please don't waste another opportunity. So what we see here is that the Pharisees, they could only see salvation on the Sabbath as an obstacle rather than an opportunity because the Pharisees, they're frustrated, they're fiercely angry with Jesus for healing on the Sabbath and as Pharisees, their greater concern was not the opportunity on the Sabbath but their obedience to the Sabbath.

In fact, in order to preserve and protect the Sabbath, the Pharisees had implemented 39 additional laws as an appendix to the fourth commandment.

And you know, you can almost imagine the Pharisees, they're wandering around Jerusalem with these pocket-sized booklets, pocket-sized booklets and the booklet is called 39 Ways to Catch Sabbath Breakers.

And when this man who was born blind, when he's brought to them, the Pharisees would have immediately looked up their little book and they would have seen that on page 15, section 4, subsection C, sub-subsection 2, it reads right there, Thou shalt not make mud on the Sabbath. And you know, it's almost laughable. Although the intention of the Pharisees was honourable, they wanted to protect and preserve the Sabbath and yet by implementing all these laws, these additional laws of Sabbath keeping, you know, they were making them a bind and a burden on the people.

[12 : 37] The Pharisees had made the Sabbath day a day of restraint and restriction. The Sabbath had become all about the law and not about the Lord.

It had become all about the law of the Sabbath and not about the Lord of the Sabbath. And you know, we have to be very careful. We have to be very careful that we don't become like the Pharisees, especially when it comes to inventing and implementing laws in order to try and protect and preserve the fourth commandment.

But you know, keeping the Sabbath and upholding the fourth commandment, we have to do it because it's a creation ordinance. It's something that God ordained at creation.

Therefore it's binding upon all mankind. And because it's binding upon us, it's actually a benefit and a blessing to us. You know, Jesus affirmed that when he said, the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.

Therefore the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. And Jesus also said, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

[13 : 56] Jesus healed on the Sabbath, even though it wasn't an urgent case, but it was a work of necessity and mercy. And you know, to make this relevant to us, of Jesus healing on the Sabbath, you know, there's nothing wrong with receiving your COVID vaccine on the Sabbath.

That was a discussion that was part of a few weeks ago. People were discussing whether it's right or wrong to have your COVID vaccine on the Sabbath.

But the need for vaccination against this virus is obvious to everyone. And vaccination clinics on the Lord's Day is what Jesus meant.

It's what Jesus meant by doing good on the Sabbath. It's a work of necessity and mercy. Of course, works of necessity and mercy, they don't include filling your car with fuel or shopping or grabbing a coffee or going out for lunch or traveling unnecessarily on the Lord's Day.

That's not using or seeing the Sabbath day for what it was ordained to be. By the way, my friend, the Sabbath, we're to see the Sabbath as a gift, not a grudge.

[15 : 13] We're to see the Sabbath as a delight, not a threat. We're to see the Sabbath as a benefit, not a bind. We're to see the Sabbath as a blessing, not a burden.

We're to see the Sabbath as a day of rest, not a day of restraint. We're to see the Sabbath as a day of reflection upon God's Word. Not a day of restriction where we can't do this or we can't do that. to see the Sabbath for what it is and what it was meant to be. A day of joy, not a day of judgement. The Sabbath is a gift my friend. So let's enjoy today. Let's enjoy the Sabbath for what it was meant to be for. God created the Sabbath. He gave us the Sabbath so that it would be a delight. So let's see the Sabbath for what it was meant to be for. And so in this passage we're seeing the Sabbath but secondly we're seeing the sinner. So seeing the Sabbath and seeing the sinner. Seeing the sinner. Look at verse 16. We read some of the Pharisees said this man is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath but others said how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? [16:34] And there was a division among them so they said again to the blind man what do you say about him since he has opened your eyes. He said he is a prophet. Now on two occasions during the Feast of Tabernacles John records that Jesus declared and disclosed his identity as the light of the world.

We saw in chapter 8 that during the evening lighting ritual where the lamps in the temple courtyard were all lit it was then that Jesus stood up and said I am the light of the world whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. And then at the beginning of this chapter in verse 5 Jesus reminded his disciples he said as long as I am in the world I am the light of the world. So Jesus he asserted and affirmed that he's the only one who is able to dispel and disperse the darkness in our life. Jesus is the only one who's able to bring the soul of a sinner from darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. Jesus is the only one who's able to give us clarity and enable us to give that confession of the Christian. I once was blind but now I see. But you know I believe that John draws attention to these two occasions when

Jesus discloses and declares his identity as the light of the world. He draws our attention to these statements because as John said about Jesus in the prologue of his gospel he said in him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shined in the darkness and the darkness could not overcome it. I hear what John is actually showing us here in John 9 is that there is a whole series of interviews and interrogations of this man who had encountered the light of the world Jesus Christ and he has been brought from darkness to light from blindness to sight and you know every one of these interviews and interrogations of this man who has experienced the light of the world and there are four of them four interrogations with each one we see the darkness is trying to overcome the light of Jesus. They interrogate and they investigate this man who was born blind and they're acting like darkness trying to overcome the light but as

John said the light has shined in the darkness the darkness cannot overcome it. And you know we see that in the first interview the interrogation of this man we saw it last week actually we looked at it briefly last Lord's Day where the neighbours they began to talk about this man who had been born blind. As soon as the man's eyes were opened the neighbours were talking about what had happened he had hardly returned from the pool of Siloam when his neighbours were all discussing and gossiping about what had happened in the life of this blind man but the change and transformation in his life was so different and so dramatic that the neighbours they questioned if it really was him that's the darkness coming over the light trying to overcome they said is this not the man who used to sit and beg some said it is others said nobody is like him and the man he kept saying it is me

I am the man I am the man who was once blind but now I see and it was remarkable about this man who was born blind is that he's not afraid to speak he's not afraid to speak about the source of light that has come into his life because when he's asked what happened to you how were your eyes opened he just tells them plainly tells them directly the man called Jesus he made mud he anointed my eyes he said to me go to Siloam and wash I went and washed and I received my sight but they were blind to the blind man they couldn't see what Jesus has done so the neighbours they rushed this man off to the Pharisees and then the Pharisees asked him the same questions what happened to you how were your eyes opened and he gives the same answer the man called Jesus put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see and like the neighbours the Pharisees they're blind to the blind man they're in darkness the darkness is trying to overcome the light but the light is out shining the darkness and the Pharisees they're blind to the blind man they can't see what Jesus has done in fact the

[21:33] Pharisees thought it was all a hoax they didn't believe that the blind man was actually blind in the first place and so the Pharisees they take things a step further by calling the man's

parents look at verse 18 the 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 and asked them is this your son who you say was born blind how then does he now see and of course this man's parents they had seen their son before they brought him up they had taken care of him as a blind man but what's remarkable is that this man had never seen his parents before he was blind from birth he had never looked upon his mother he had never seen his father he had never laid eyes on his parents he didn't know what they looked like or or how they would even react to him being healed but the Pharisees they take them they take the parents and you know what they did was actually unforgivable they interview the parents they they intimidate the parents they interrogate the parents of the blind man you know how subtle and how sinister the Pharisees were that they would try and take this blind man down by using the people he loves but that's the darkness isn't it that's how the kingdom of darkness operates it tries to bring the darkness and division and disunity and disruption into families and among friends the darkness always tries to overcome the light but it can't it cannot overcome the light and his parents they respond in verse 23 to the Pharisees his parents answered we know that this is our son and that he was born blind but how he now sees we do not know nor do we know who opened his eyes ask him he is of age he will speak for himself his parents said these things because they feared the Jews for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be

Christ he was to be put out of the synagogue therefore his parents said he is of age ask him and you know we have to remember that by this time the religious establishment these religious leaders the Pharisees they want to get Jesus Jesus is becoming the the most wanted man in Israel because they they believe that he's guilty of religious extremism and political terrorism and the tension between the Jews and Jesus it's mounting all the time and they're afraid that if they don't get rid of Jesus he's going to cause a religious revolution and so it was well known in Jerusalem that if you confess Jesus as Lord or that if you committed your life to Jesus Christ you would be excommunicated you would lose everything you'd be thrown out which is why the parents of the blind man they avoid the questions they avoid the investigation they avoid the interrogation they say to the Pharisees he is of age you ask him you ask him and so they do they ask him we're told in verse 24 so for the second time they came to the man who had been blind and sent to him give glory to God we know that this man is a sinner he answered whether he is a sinner I do not know one thing I do know that though I was blind now I see and you know it's like deja vu isn't it it's like deja vu because this poor man who was blind he had never read a jot or a tittle of Hebrew and yet he's dragged in again before all these Pharisees he's dragged in before them but this time the Pharisees they're not only frustrated they're furious with him and with all their pomp and their piety and their pharisaical garb they all demand and declare they say to the man give God the glory give God the glory they demand and declare that the man who was born blind they tell him to proclaim glory to God and pronounce Jesus as a sinner they demand and declare to the blind man to proclaim glory to God and pronounce Jesus as a sinner but you know what we read is that he won't do it he won't do it he won't deny Jesus because he knows that if he proclaims Jesus as Lord he knows that he'll be thrown out of the synagogue he knows that he'll be excommunicated he knows that he'll be stripped of everything he has ever known as a Jew he knows that if he proclaims Jesus as Lord his parents will have to disown him he knows that he'll lose absolutely everything but you know in the words of the apostle Paul this man this once blind man he counted everything as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord and he refused to deny Jesus as his Lord he refused to deny Jesus and we read in verse 25 he answered whether he is a sinner I do not know one thing I do know that though he was blind I now see they said to him what did he do to you he how did he open your eyes he answered them I have told you already and you would not listen why do you want to hear it again do you also want to become one of his disciples you know it's like deja vu again the Pharisees are asking for the third time what happened to you how were your eyes opened what did Jesus do to you and you're my friend what this passage is teaching us what it's teaching us is the importance of proclaiming and professing Jesus Christ as Lord this passage is teaching us that Jesus not only opens blind eyes he also opens closed hearts he opens deaf ears and he opens sealed lips and you know when Jesus does that when Jesus works his amazing grace in our lives we are to proclaim and profess his amazing grace because that's what this man did he didn't deny Jesus but every time he was asked what happened to him he willingly and he openly confessed Jesus as Lord

you know my Christian friend whenever you're asked to share your testimony don't say no don't say no yes you might be afraid everyone's afraid everyone's afraid to stand up and speak out for on behalf of Jesus that's part of the territory of being a Christian but don't say no to telling your testimony you're you're to proclaim and profess your Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ and you know that I hear it so often there's there's no such thing as a boring testimony I don't like it when people say that they have a boring testimony they're every child of God is a trophy of grace every Christian is a demonstration of Christ's love every sinner every saved sinner is a miracle therefore you know my friend was it boring to send the Son of God from the crown of glory to the cradle in Bethlehem all the way down to the cross of Calvary was that boring was it boring for God the Father to raise Jesus from the dead and give to you the promise of eternal life was that boring that's not boring therefore there's no such thing as a boring testimony in fact what this passage is teaching us is that we're to pray for opportunities to witness for Jesus and speak for Jesus we're to pray for opportunities whether in our home or among our family or in our workplace or in the shop or at school we're to pray for opportunities to witness for Jesus because as Jesus said you are my witnesses you are my witnesses and as his witnesses we must always be ready to give an answer for the reason for the hope that is within us and we have a great hope we must always be ready to give an answer for the reason for the hope that is within us we are to witness for Jesus so that others will be seeing the Savior we are to witness for Jesus so that others will be seeing the Savior seeing the

Savior and that's what I want us to see lastly and briefly seeing the Savior so we've seen seeing the Sabbath seeing the sinner and lastly seeing the Savior seeing the Savior if you look at verse 35 Jesus heard that they had had cast him out and having found him he said do you believe in the Son of Man he answered and who is he sir that I may believe in him Jesus said to him you have seen him and it is he who is speaking to you he said Lord I believe and he worshiped him do you know when the man born blind proclaimed that Jesus was a Savior and not a sinner the Pharisees they they excommunicated him they got rid of him they just threw him out but you know I love what we read there that Jesus when Jesus heard that they had cast him out he went to find him he went to find him when Jesus heard about the man he had healed

[32 : 08] Jesus thought I must search for him I must find him I must go to him I must embrace him I must reassure him and he went to find him you know they're beautiful words he went to find him words that remind us about the love of Christ for lost sinners and you know when Jesus finds this man Jesus says to him do you believe in the Son of Man do you believe in the one who has come to seek and to save the lost do you believe in God's Son who came to be the Savior of sinners do you believe in the Son of Man and the man asks who is he that I might believe in him and Jesus says he says to him with so much love and so much affection and compassion for this man who had been born blind Jesus says you have seen him you have seen him and it is he who is speaking to you I am he and you're in that moment for this man the penny drops and his eyes are opened even more fully his eyes are open to the full realization as to who Jesus is and the man says Lord I believe

Lord I believe Lord I believe and we're told he worshiped him he worshiped him he surrendered and submitted his life to the Lord Jesus Christ he came to Jesus he committed his life to Jesus and he confessed Jesus as Lord and you know my unconverted friend that's all that's required of you this morning that's all that's required of you to come to Jesus just as you are just where you are come to Jesus just as you are and commit to Jesus by surrendering your life submitting your will to his will and then confessing to Jesus Lord I believe Lord I believe and my unconverted friend I want to say to you that if Jesus has opened your eyes and you have still not confessed that to anyone then tell someone about it tell someone about it say to someone you know maybe someone in your home maybe someone even sitting beside you this morning say to them confess to them with your mouth I once was blind but now I see they will know what you mean but confess to them believe in your heart confess with your mouth I once was blind but now I see and you know it was this man who gave John Newton the inspiration to write those famous words amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was blind

I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see and you know even that that him itself there are many people who sing those words there are many people who have sung the words amazing grace but they don't have grace there are many people who have said those words I once was lost but now I'm found and they're still lost there are many people who have said I once was

blind but now I see and they're still blind but my friend I'm asking you this morning do you see do you see do you see can you say this morning I once was blind but now I see I'll may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for the Sabbath day a day that reminds us that we have an opportunity to rest to rest not only our bodies but to rest our souls in Jesus and we give thanks for the gospel that calls us to come and rest and to find rest in Jesus to know that he is the one who is able to open our blind eyes and open our deaf ears and allow our mouth even to sing praise to him all that we would do as this blind man that we would come and say Lord I believe and worship him that our belief in Jesus that it would have a transforming effect in our life that we would commit and confess Jesus as Lord and as we go into a new week that we would begin it with a new beginning a new experience where we would be born again of the spirit of God that we would experience that new life in Christ and go into this week confessing I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength Lord bless us we pray in the week that lies ahead go before us in all things and keep us on the way for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake

Amen We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing the words of Sam 40 Sam 40 and the Scottish Salta were singing from the beginning down to the varsh mark 4 and as you know Sam 40 is it's a well-known Sam but it's also the testimony of every Christian it's the testimony of everyone who has had their eyes opened to see the amazing grace of Jesus and every time I come to Sam 40 I'm always left with a question the question I need to ask you is this your testimony can you say with the Sammet he took me from a fearful pit and from the mirey clay and on a rock he set my feet establishing my way can you in your heart this morning truly worship Jesus because he has put that new song in your mouth so we'll sing these verses of Sam 40 verses one to four to God's praise you