



# Christian Report

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## Lessons From A Blind Man — by Dan Cartwright

It's a familiar story found in John, Chapter 9. It was a Sabbath Day in Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples were walking the city streets when Jesus noticed a Jewish beggar who had been blind from birth, which set off an interesting chain of events.

Relying on Jewish tradition, the disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus told them that no one's sin caused the blindness and that the poor man was blind so that the works of God could be made manifest.

Jesus healed the man's blind eyes by anointing them with mud and spit and telling him to go and wash in the nearby Pool of Siloam. The beggar went, washed, and returned with his sight completely restored! Neighbors and others who knew the man were divided as to whether this was the blind beggar, or just someone who looked like him. When they asked him how he received his sight he simply told him the story of what had happened.

The man was hauled off to the Pharisees in the synagogue (it being the Sabbath and all), where he received the third degree from the religious leaders who were conflicted about the matter. Some said the man who had healed the blind man had violated the Sabbath while others were puzzled how such an obvious 'sinner' could have performed such a miracle! After all, working on the Sabbath was a sin and therefore, the man who had performed the healing had to be a sinner. They asked the blind man what he thought about the man who healed him and he answered "He is a prophet."

The angry and still-confused Pharisees had the man's parents brought in and asked them if the formerly-blind man was their son. They admitted that he was, but were too scared to admit to a possible miracle and played the "We know nothing, ask him!" card

like Sgt Schultz (Hogan's Heroes). So the Pharisees questioned him again, reminding him that Jesus was a 'sinner' (sinners don't go around healing people) and asking him how his eyes were really opened.

Then came the classic response, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that **though I was blind, now I see.**"

That was the last straw, and the man was angrily ejected from the synagogue (excommunicated), the worst thing that can happen to a practicing Jew! What happened next was the most wonderful and astonishing climax to a long day:

**"Jesus heard that they 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 worshipped him." (John 9:36 – 38)**

What can we learn from the events of that long ago Sabbath Day? Trust me, there is much we can, and have learned through the years. But as Alistair Begg commented in a sermon about the events that day, "Not only do we have here an illustration (the blind beggar) of saving faith, and not only do we have here the impact of saving faith in a life in that he worships, we have an example of what we may do endeavoring to lead men and women to faith in Jesus." (*From the sermon "Lord I Believe" & the Sermon Series "A Light in the Darkness" John 9:38 (Aug 27, 2006)*)

In the sermon, Alistair then tips his hat to Charles Spurgeon, who outlined the principles Jesus used in the healing of a blind Jewish beggar (*From the sermon "A Pressed Man Yielding to Christ", delivered October 12th, 1882 at The Metropolitan Tabernacle Evening Service*):

1. **"If you have a choice as to those to whom you go, seek out the oppressed."** Yes, we are commanded to go, "into all the world,

and preach the gospel to every creature"; but if we are able to pay particular attention to some more than others, "seek out the sick, the sad, the weary, the poor, the broken-down ones, and especially such as have been put out of the synagogue." Out of all the busy people in the streets Jesus noticed and singled out the blind beggar, first to bring healing and later to identify himself as the Son of God. The hurting and disenfranchised are "likely soil for the good seed of the kingdom to grow in, and bring forth fruit. Those whom nobody else wants, and nobody else will have, our blessed Lord and Master delights to receive."

2. **"Next, when you come to close quarters with them as Christ did, ask them questions."**

Jesus asked the blind beggar, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" It was a very pointed and personal question. As Spurgeon put it, the preacher in the pulpit can "fire the gospel gun, and the shot flies where God directs it," but the person in the pew (you) who loves the Lord, can, as it were, "hold a pistol close to the sinner's head." You can deal with the lost and hurting on a personal level, one by one, and call them to respond directly to a direct and very personal question. When the time is right, ask just like Jesus asked, "Do you believe?" That is the way to win souls, begin with a personal question.

3. **"Next, be ready to answer enquiries."** This is what Jesus did when he revealed himself to this man. When Jesus asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" the man 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." When you are asked a question tell them everything you know in answer to the question, and if can't tell them everything they want to know, take them to someone who is more advanced in spiritual matters, so that  
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**T**hese two words are often considered as synonyms, but the Scriptures make a distinction between them.

Biblical **HAPPINESS** is generally dependent upon the circumstances that one experiences. The law of Moses identifies **happiness** in marriage, "when a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give **happiness** to his wife whom he has taken" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

Another example, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, 'your God reigns'" (Isaiah 52:7).

In general, we are **happy** when life and things are going well, and we are **unhappy** when life and things are not going as well as we had hoped they would.

Biblical **JOY** is more of a state of being and is not dependent upon our circumstances. "The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exalt over you with joy, he will be quiet in his love, he will rejoice over you with shouts of joy" (Zephaniah 3:17).

Jeremiah the prophet discovered that ingesting God's word brought him great **joy**. "Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became for me a **joy** and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by your name O Lord of hosts (Jeremiah 15:16).

The apostle John gives a few quotes of Jesus **Who is our joy**, "These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your **joy** may be made full" (John 15:11). Jesus prays to his father, "But now I come to you; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have my **joy** made full in themselves" (John 17:13).

The Apostle Paul adds, "You also become imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the **joy** of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

"Therefore since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of

God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Jesus Christ endured the cross expressly for the **joy** of bringing you into his eternal kingdom.

### The Angelic Announcement to Shepherds

"There were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And the angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:8 – 11).

### The Shepherds Terror Changed to Great Joy

"When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to the Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us... So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as he lay in the manger. When they had seen this, **[with great joy]** they made known the statement which has been told them about this child" (Luke 2:15-27).

### The Magi's Long Journey Brought Them Great Joy

"After coming into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they **[with great joy]** fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:1).

"Now when they had gone, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up!" Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the child to destroy Him. So Joseph got up and took the child and his mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt" (Matthew 2:13-14).

God's plan probably did not make Joseph very **happy**, but he had **great joy** since God must have provided the Magi's gifts to finance their trip and time in Egypt.

### Today

It is quite possible that the uncertainty of the

world's chaos and current circumstances that you face today may produce in your heart and mind a **lack of happiness**.

Nevertheless, Jesus who is our **everlasting joy**, assures us, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

However, let's remember what the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of **GREAT JOY** which will be for all the people" (Luke 2:11).

Our prayer is that we together with you will remember and celebrate **Jesus** and His many blessings to us with **GREAT JOY!**

### About the Author:

Pastor Bingham is the founder of CUPbearers, and was a missionary with Cadence International and the Pastor of Rocky Mountain Evangelical Free Church. He also served on the CMF Board of Directors for several years.

CUPbearers is a discipleship ministry centered on the Lord Jesus Christ and located in Englewood,

Colorado. CUPbearers holds that the transformation of the natural and /or fleshly person into a mature spiritual Christian is a supernatural process. This transformation cannot be accomplished through education and self-effort alone, or by trying to improve the old nature through some system or discipline. It is achieved through the ministry and work of God's indwelling Holy Spirit in agreement with the Word of God and the active and willing cooperation of the individual, conforming each one to the very image of Jesus Christ (John. 15:5). Therefore, according to God's design, Jesus Christ is enabled to function in, through and with the participating Christian as one's full and abundant life (John. 10:10).

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**"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."—1 Corinthians 9:22.**

**I**t is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master-passion. Such a man is sure to be strong, and if the master-principle be excellent, he is sure to be excellent, too. The man of one object is a man indeed. Lives with many aims are like water trickling through innumerable streams, none of which are wide enough or deep enough to float the merest cockleshell of a boat; but a life with one object is like a mighty river flowing between its banks, bearing to the ocean a multitude of ships, and spreading fertility on either side. Give me a man not only with a great object in his soul, but thoroughly possessed by it, his powers all concentrated, and himself on fire with vehement zeal for his supreme object, and you have put before me one of the greatest sources of power which the world can produce. Give me a man engrossed with holy love as to his heart, and filled with some masterly celestial thought as to his brain, and such a man will be known wherever his lot may be cast, and I venture to prophesy that his name will be remembered long after the place of his sepulchre shall be forgotten.

Such a man was Paul. I am not about to set him upon a pedestal, that you may look at

him and wonder, much less that you may kneel down and worship him as a saint. I mention Paul, because what he was we ought every one of us to be; and though we cannot share in his office, not being apostles; though we cannot share in his talents or in his inspiration, yet we ought to be possessed by the same spirit which actuated him, and let me also add we ought to be possessed by it in the same degree. Do you demur to that? I ask you what there was in Paul, by the grace of God, which may not be in you, and what had Jesus done for Paul more than for you? He was divinely changed; and so have you been if you have passed from darkness into marvelous light. He had much forgiven; and so have you also been freely pardoned. He was redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; and so have you been,—at least, so you profess to have been. He was filled with the Spirit of God; and so are you, if you are truly such as your Christian profession makes you out to be. Owing, then, your salvation to Christ, being debtors to the precious blood of Jesus, and being quickened by the Holy Spirit, I ask you why there should not be the same fruit from the same sowing? Why not the same effect from the same cause? Do not tell me that the apostle was an exception, and cannot be set up as a rule or model for commoner folk, for I shall have to tell you that we must be such as Paul was if we hope to be where Paul is. Paul did not think that he had attained, neither that he was already perfect. Shall we think him to be so—so think him to be so as to regard him as inimitable, and so be content to fall short of what he was? Nay, verily, but let it be our incessant prayer, as believers in Christ, that we may be followers of him so far as he followed Christ, and wherein he failed to set his feet in his Lord's footprints may we

even outstrip him, and be more zealous, more devoted to Christ than even the apostle of the Gentiles was. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would bring us to be like our Lord Jesus Himself!

.....

I would like to press the enquiry upon you who are saved,—How many others have you brought to Christ? You cannot do it by yourself, I know; but I mean, how many has the Spirit of God brought by you? How many, did I say? Is it quite certain that you have led any to Jesus? Can you not recollect one? I pity you, then! The Lord said to Jeremiah, concerning Coniah, "Write ye this man childless." That was considered to be a fearful curse. Shall I write you childless, my beloved friends? Your children are not saved, your wife is not saved, and you are spiritually childless. Can you bear this thought? I pray you, wake from your slumbering, and ask the Master to make you useful. "I wish the saints cared for us sinners," said a young man. "They do care for you," answered one, "they care very much for you." "Why don't they show it, then?" said he, "I have often wished to have a talk about good things, but my friend, who is a member of the church, never broaches the subject, and seems to study how to keep clear of it when I am with him." Do not let them say so. Do tell them about Christ and things divine and make this your resolve, every one of you, that if men perish they shall not perish for want of your prayers, nor for want of your earnest and loving instructions. God give you grace, each one of you, to resolve by all means to save some, and then to carry out your resolution!

*Extract from a sermon delivered by C.H. Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England—Public Domain*

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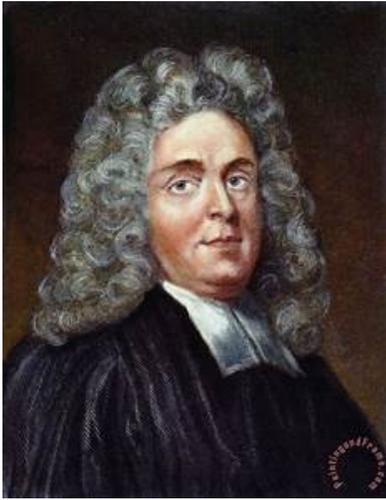
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<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. <sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If in Christ we have hope<sup>[b]</sup> in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Cor 15:12-19)

**H**aving shown that Christ was risen, the apostle answers those who said there would be no resurrection. There had been no justification,

or salvation, if Christ had not risen. And must not faith in Christ be vain, and of no use, if he is still among the dead? The proof of the resurrection of the body is the resurrection of our Lord. Even those who died in the faith, had perished in their sins, if Christ had not risen. All who believe in Christ, have hope in him, as a Redeemer; hope for redemption and salvation by him; but if there is no resurrection, or future recompense, their hope in him can only be as to this life. And they must be in a worse condition than the rest of mankind, especially at the time, and under the circumstances, in which the apostles wrote; for then Christians were hated and persecuted by all men. But it is not so; they, of all men, enjoy solid comforts amidst all their difficulties and trials, even in the times of the sharpest persecution.—*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*.

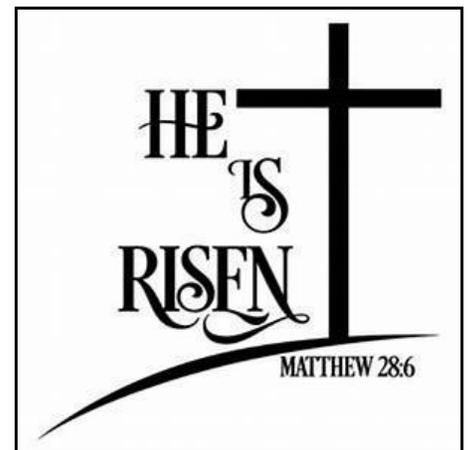
Matthew Henry was born near Wales on October 18, 1662.

Henry was primarily home-educated by his father, Rev. Philip Henry, and also at the Thomas Doolittle academy from 1680-1682. Henry first started studying law in 1686, but instead of pursuing a career in law he began to preach in his neighborhood.

After the declaration of liberty of conscience by James II in 1687, he was privately ordained in London, and on June 2, 1687, he began his regular ministry as non-conformist pastor of a Presbyterian congregation at Chester. He remained in this position for 25 years. After declining several

times offers from London congregations, he finally accepted a call to Hackney, London, and began his ministry there May 18, 1712, shortly before his death.

Henry's reputation rests upon his renowned commentary, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (1708-10, known also as **Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible**). He lived to complete it only as far as to the end of the Acts, but after his death other like-minded authors prepared the remainder from Henry's manuscripts. This work was long celebrated as the best English commentary for devotional purposes and the expanded edition was initially published in 1896. Instead of critical exposition, Henry focuses on practical suggestion, and his commentaries contains rich stores of truths. There is also a smaller devotional commentary on the Bible from Henry known as *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*.



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with prayer, patience and loving instruction, they can be lead to Christ.

4. **“Next, pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal himself to them, for that is the way faith comes. We cannot speak of Christ as He should be spoken of; but, when He reveals himself, then the sinners see him.”** All of the mere words we speak in leading someone to Christ will be fruitless unless accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit himself working in the heart of the hearer.

“All the portraits of a beauty never touch the heart like one glance from her eyes; and all the portraits of Christ, that ever were painted by his most admiring disciples, never make such an impression on the heart of man as when once he says, as he said to this man, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” None but Christ himself can preach Christ to the full. He must reveal himself, or the Spirit must reveal him, or else men do not see him.”

5. **Finally, glorify Christ by your personal**

**testimony.”** Remember Jesus’ high priestly prayer, in which he said, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,” meaning the word of his disciples through all the ages of history. Even though it is the word of Christ we speak, when it comes from deep in our own hearts, from our own experience, it is also our word bringing salvation to the lost and dying. ✠