



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 9: 13-41

Fall 2022

"Here I Stand"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth. LORD willing, we're finishing John 9 this morning, which is a lengthy passage because we're going to read from verse 13 down to verse 41. Jesus has healed the blind man and his neighbors were amazed. They debated whether he was the blind man or not for he looked different, as you can imagine he would. His face has brightened up; he's walking without uncertainty and they've asked him how that he received his sight. And he explained that Jesus told him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash the mud from his eyes—and he did and he sees. So they bring him before the Pharisees. They go to the synagogue, and we read in verse 13,

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. , *(I think that was maybe a subtle statement that John was making here, ('It was the Sabbath'), that sets us up for what is coming; 'and Jesus made the clay and He opened the eyes...')*, ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." ¹⁶Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. ¹⁷So they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews then did not believe *it* of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, ¹⁹ and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. ²³ For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴ So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear *it* again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" ²⁸ They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." ³⁰ The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and *yet* He opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. ³² Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." ³⁸ And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. ³⁹ And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these

things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

John 9: 13-41

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the privilege of just being able to gather together and read it together, to consider the great words that are present in this text. Yet we now can spend the remaining time thinking about these things; considering what the Lord did, what the Lord said, and know that they're true—that these things happened. They reveal Your greatness, the greatness of the power of the Triune God. And we know what You can do—there's nothing You cannot do.

So what a blessing to know that we can know You and that we can be Your friends—and better, Your sons and daughters and be a part of Your family through faith in the Person and work of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Glorify Yourself in the things that we have read. Help us to know You better and have greater confidence in You. Build us up in the faith. Make us more like Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a great privilege to be able to come before You and just give You praise for who You are.

Bless all of us, LORD. We thank You for the health that You've given us and we recognize that we can lose that. Within Your providence and Your will we can suffer difficulties, and we do, but we know that You're always in control and that You're a good and loving God. We see that in the miracles that Your Son performed and yet we pray for those who are in difficulty that You would encourage them and strengthen them and enable them to endure whatever it is, that Your will is for them. We know that Your will is that we glorify You, and that we learn of You, and we be refreshed from Your Word—so we pray for that now, LORD, in this hour. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) In May 1521 the emperor summoned Martin Luther to the city of Worms to defend his evangelical views. He was promised safe conduct. So was John Huss a century earlier—and he was burned at the stake. Luther knew the danger but went and made his defense of the faith. When told to recant his beliefs he refused. With his books stacked on a table next to him, he gave his famous reply, "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me."

That took courage. He stood alone against the powers of Europe, of both church and state—but often that's the saint's lot in life. Our faith is put on trial by the world and then it's put in the fire.

It happened to the blind man Jesus healed in John 9. He was put on trial and told to recant his good confession of Christ. He refused and he gave a reply every bit as memorable as "Here I stand." His answer was the irrefutable testimony of a changed life: "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." (vs25). They couldn't argue against that.

But that too took courage. Up until now we have only known this man's circumstances; and we pitied him, blind from birth. But in the rest of the chapter we get to know him. We see his personality and we admire him. He was something of a character, a man with a keen mind and a sharp wit, a man who was grateful for grace and mercy, (just as that which we have sung about), and cared less about himself than he did about Christ and truth.

His healing was so extraordinary to his neighbors that they took him to the synagogue, to the Pharisees, to learn what they should make of it. But when the Pharisees learned that the miracle had been done on the Sabbath, 'He made clay, He opened the man's eyes', well, they were offended at that. They began to handle this healing as a violation of the Law. No Law has been broken; only Jewish tradition, but because the rabbi's considered healing on the Sabbath to be a violation of the Mosaic Law, they began an intense interrogation of this man. So what should have been an occasion of celebration became, instead, one of heated debate.

After hearing the man's story, (How Jesus applied clay to his eyes and he washed in the pool of Siloam), the authorities became divided in their opinion. Some declared that, 'Jesus was a sinner.' In their estimation, making mud and applying it to the eyes was doing the work of a physician and so it was a violation of the Sabbath. From that they concluded he was not from God; 'He's a sinner.'

Others were not so quick to condemn and said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" (vs16b). So they were divided. Both groups were looking at things from different perspectives. One group based its decision about Christ on its view of the Law; the other by considering His works. —It's the same today. People make decisions about Christ based on their assumptions. It may not be assumptions about the Law of Moses but assumptions about nature and reality.

In much of the world today people are rationalists, people are naturalists—they don't believe in the supernatural. 'The universe is only material.' 'If there is a God, it's not the God of the Bible; and if there is a god, it is a god that's completely irrelevant to life.' So accounts of Jesus healing the sick and being resurrected are dismissed as absurd because 'Miracles don't happen.'

False assumptions blind people to the truth and prevent faith. Naturalism in our day, secularism in our day—and a false view of the Law in the Lord's day, blinded these Pharisees to the truth about Christ. Only the grace of God can break through the errors that control the minds of men. And it seems grace may have been at work in some involved in this discussion because they couldn't ignore the evidence; "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?", they asked. (vs16b). —Well, right! Good observation!

Maybe Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were among this group. Nicodemus, you remember back in chapter three, said to Jesus the night that they first met, "No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."; in fact, he said, "We know this." (Jn 3:2). So there was even then, earlier among the Pharisees, a division and some were saying 'This man must be from God.'

Here we have this division again; and so, to settle the dispute, they question the man again: "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" The man didn't hesitate to respond—and he was emphatic; "He is a prophet.", he said. (vs17). 'There is no doubt about it!'; that's the idea in his statement. 'What else could He be?'

It was the prophets who did miracles in the Old Testament. Moses did wonders in Egypt. Elijah and Elisha performed miracles. And they were all agents of God. So from the evidence of his own experience, the fact that he had been miraculously healed, led to one conclusion: 'Jesus was a man of God.'

Which shows progression in his understanding. When his neighbors first asked him who healed him he replied, "The man who is called Jesus." (vs11). Now, He's not just a man but a prophet. And as more facts are revealed about the Lord he would progress even further in his understanding. He responds to the revelation that's given positively all along the way.

But calling Jesus a prophet was more than the Pharisees wanted to hear. They had rejected Jesus and now rejected the man—even questioned that a miracle had happened and that he was even the blind man. Maybe the neighbors had misidentified him and he wasn't the blind man at all. So to settle the dispute they called his parents to testify and identify him. They would know.

They came, but they were uncomfortable with the line of reasoning and questioning that was taking place. When asked if the man was their son and told to give an explanation for how he came to see, they were very careful about their answers. It was plain to them that their son was in trouble with the authorities and so to avoid getting mixed up in all of this they remained noncommittal, (at least as noncommittal as they could be). They answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." (vs20-21).

Now in the face of it, that might seem like an honest answer—but it was a failure of courage. That's how John explains it in verse 22 and verse 23, where he says that they

were afraid of being excommunicated, being “put out of the synagogue.” They knew that the Jewish authorities had already decreed that anyone who confessed that Jesus is the Christ, he or she was to be put out of the synagogue—and they were very much afraid of that. For this reason, John wrote that his parents said, ‘He is of age; ask him.’

Now that doesn't speak well of his parents, that they would abandon their son—but it does indicate the power of the Pharisees and the importance of the synagogue. Excommunication would have meant that they were cut off from Jewish society; that they would be social and spiritual outcasts. That explains their fear.

But it also highlights their son's courage. He now stood all alone against the powers of Jewish society—but he didn't wilt. Leon Morris called this, “The most spirited part of the chapter.” He stood firm when pressed to deny Christ. “Give glory to God;” they said, “...we know that this man is a sinner.” (vs24). In other words, ‘Admit the truth, agree with us, and deny Christ.’

But he would not do that. He knew the facts; so in a careful, straight forward way, he said, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." (vs25). He knew very little about Christ. He'd never even seen Him. When he came back from that long walk down to the pool of Siloam and that long walk back from Siloam with his new sight, Jesus was gone.

Even so, he knew what had happened. He knew that he was a different person. He knew he was a new man, that he had been miraculously changed. Nothing they said could take that away; and nothing they said could convince him that Jesus was a sinner. ‘Here are the facts;’ he says, ‘Here I stand; I was blind, now I see.’

And his words have been repeated many times by men and women who have found in them the means of communicating their own experience. And there are many challenges to the faith that many of us really don't have the knowledge, expertise, or sophistication to answer. The skeptics of the world, or the critics of unbelief, (or who are in unbelief), are often very smart people with crafty questions. And some of them are very studied in the policy of attacking the faith.

So we're often times met with people that are far more skilled in things than we are; but one response we can give, (and one that should be seen; a response that should be seen of us by others), is the irrefutable witness of a changed life. How can you explain the man who had been the slave of drugs or liquor becoming a new man—a man who was a difficult husband and a hard father becoming loving and caring? How do you explain those kinds of miracles that changed lives? This is what people often use, (and should use), as the great testimony. It's an irrefutable defense. How do you argue against that?

It was John Newton's testimony. We're all familiar with his story, (I won't go through it today), just let me sum it up: It was a life lived in deep darkness and depravity. This is a man who was raised by a Godly mother who taught him Scripture, taught him catechism—but lived a despicable life. He found the best description of his former life, and the miraculous change, right here in this text. He put it in his hymn: "I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see." That truly is *Amazing Grace*. It's true of all of us who have been found We didn't find Christ; we weren't looking for Him...and we would never have looked for Him. He found us—He took the initiative.

Well, "Facts are stubborn things", as John Adams said. As much as they wanted to, the Pharisees could not deny this man's sight. So they decided to go over old ground and review the case again in an attempt to discover some inconsistency in his story; some error in his story. So they asked him, "What did He do to you?" (vs26).

Now here again, 'Things get spirited', as Morris said. The man had been genuinely cooperative, assuming the best about his inquisitors: These are Pharisees; these are men of the synagogue; these are Godly men you would think. So he's cooperated up to this point.

But now he's seeing through them and losing patience. With some sarcasm he answered their question with a question of his own: "Why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" (vs27). It was a response that showed some hutzpah, some boldness, self-confidence, for he wasn't intimidated.

These authorities took offense at that very fact: They were Pharisees; 'Who was this unlearned, blind beggar to talk to them like that?' So John said, "They reviled him and said, 'You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.' " (vs28). They said, 'Why, we don't even know where He's from.' (vs29).

That was the wrong thing to say, and the man seized on it. "Well," he answered, "...here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes."(vs30). There was a miracle worker in the land doing good and these so-called, 'Shepherds of Israel', professed ignorance of Him. They even seemed to boast about it. It was either willful neglect or carelessness; and probably the former. Either way, they were guilty—they had as much as admitted to it.

What it was really, was an admission to their own blindness, a greater blindness than this man had been delivered of. Their prejudice, their hate, blinded them to the obvious facts. Dr. Johnson would often quote the political pundit, Irving Kristol, who said, (and by now you know I do too), "When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there is nothing so mystifying as the obvious."

That was the Pharisees. They didn't see things as they really are because they lack the will to see them. They didn't want to see them. Their failure was so big, so inexcusable, and so willful that the blind man called it "an amazing thing". (vs30). It was mystifying to him. —What a rebuke!

He may have been a beggar all of his life who hadn't been trained in their schools of higher education; Harvard and Yale weren't on his resume. But he could recognize the obvious, so he gave them a lesson from simple common sense. He began with what he said, "We (*all*) know that God does not hear sinners." (vs31). No debate there. God doesn't honor the prayers of sinners, of unbelievers, of men who are not of Him.

The second thing they all "know", (that naturally followed from this is), "...if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him." (vs31b). No one would disagree with that.

Which brings him to his third point in versus 32 and 33. "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone open the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." (vs32-33).

But He did do something; something great, something that had never been done before. So obviously God had heard Jesus. Obviously, He was not a sinner and in fact was from God. Again, "When people lack the will to see things as they really are", facts and logic count for very little.

And that's when people resort to personal attacks—which these Pharisees did, " 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?' So they put him out." (of the synagogue.) (vs34).

When Luther came out of the Diet of Worms he was exhausted—but greeted by a crowd of admirers. An old German Duke gave him a silver tankard of beer, which he drank down. It was a moment of triumph.

But when this young man came out of the synagogue, (every bit a defender of a faith that he had not yet fully embraced), no one was there for him. He was rejected by his pastors, his parents, and friends. That's sometimes what happens when a person stands firmly in the truth, refuses to yield to the world's pressure, the pressure of family or friends—and stays true to Christ. He or she often stands alone. Identification with Christ causes separation from the world.

But that's not bad. What did this man really lose as a result of meeting Christ? Well, he lost his blindness and what else? He lost his seat in a synagogue full of blindness. Yes, he lost contact with old friends and he felt alone for a moment; maybe even a little discouraged, maybe a bit uncertain about the future—but he was really in the very best place he could be.

We don't read about him sitting around and weeping. We don't read about him feeling sorry for himself. The next thing we read in verse 35 is that "Jesus heard" what had happened to him and went looking for him. That's Christ; He is the good shepherd

who goes out and finds His lost sheep. Those who trust in Him may be rejected by men but they will never be rejected by Him. So we're never alone...not really. He may have sat there wondering, 'What now?', and not realizing that in that moment of uncertainty Christ was on His way, coming to him. It's the promise of Psalm 27 that begins, "The LORD is *my light* and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" Now that puts that Psalm, Psalm 27, right here in John chapters 8 and 9 where Jesus declared Himself to be "the Light of the world." "The LORD is *my light* and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" (vs1). Then in the middle of the Psalm David wrote, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up." (vs10).

We're not guaranteed an easy, strife free life. Not guaranteed that—just the opposite. That's suggested by the Psalm. The LORD allows us to go through great difficulty. He allows us to be forsaken by those closest to us. He allows us to have trials. One reason is, it is then when we most feel forsaken that He 'takes us up' to demonstrate that we're never forsaken—He's with us.

And He demonstrated that here: At the right time when the man felt the most alone, the 'Lord took him up.' Now, for the first time, he sees Jesus who immediately asked him the most important question of all, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (vs35). That's a Messianic title that is taken from the book of Daniel 7:13.

The emphasis on the question is on the word "you." "Do you"—"Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Because faith is an essentially personal thing, your mother and your father can't believe for you. Your grandparents can't pass that on to you as well. It is for you to do—and only you can do it.

From the beginning the man believed and obeyed according to the knowledge that he had. I mentioned this earlier and we see that here: He went to the pool and washed his eyes; that's what Jesus told him to do. He didn't hesitate and it was a long way down to that pool, a treacherous walk down and back—certainly for a blind man. He responded immediately. He obeyed. He believed that Jesus was a good man and he responded to the character that had been revealed about Him just from this miracle.

Then as he was pressed by the Pharisees, his theology was refined—and he had to conclude that Jesus was more than a man or a ‘good’ man—rather that He was a prophet. He was a man from God.

Now the Lord led him even further to the ultimate object of faith: Did he believe Him to be the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of Man—and more. Did he believe in Him? In other words, ‘Did he believe the full revelation of who Jesus is? Did he actually put his trust in Him as the Messiah, as the King, as the Savior?’

The man asked, "Who is He...that I may believe in Him?" (vs36). After all, if Jesus were a prophet, (as he had concluded that he was), then maybe He was the one who would point him to the Man – the one who is the Savior. But when Jesus answered, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." (vs37). The man immediately responded, (as he had all along the way), in faith: " Lord, I believe." (vs38).

And we're left without doubt that he did because he called Jesus, “Lord”, “God”, “And he worshiped Him.” (vs38). This is the only place in the Gospel of John where anyone is said to have “worshiped” Jesus. In chapter 4, verse 24, a reference is made to ‘worshiping God’ when Jesus has his conversation with the woman at the well, the woman of Samaria and the Samaritans. So worship is talked about—and only God is worthy of worship. So it is significant here that Jesus is worshiped. He's God, God the Son, the Light of the world.

In verse 39 He summarized His ministry as the Light and the effect that it has on mankind. Verse 39, "And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.’ "

Now if you've been a good student of the Gospel of John you may remember back in chapter three that Jesus made a statement that this might seem to conflict with. There He said in verse 17, “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him”.

Doesn't seem to fit with this but there is no conflict between the two. Christ came to save; that was His mission. But the result of that is division among mankind

according to the way people respond to Him—according to the way they respond to the revelation that's given, the Light that's given. And that response has been illustrated by the effect that sunlight has in nature. Where there is light, there is warmth; there's vitamin D; there's photosynthesis: the grass grows; the birds sing—there's life.

But some plants grow in the dark. They don't respond to light. Some creatures flee from the light. Bats live in caves. Bugs live under rocks. So light divides the natural creation.

And it's the same with the spiritual Light of Christ when it shines in the world. People respond to His work of salvation in one of two ways: They are either drawn to its warmth; or recoil from it. Light is either illuminating or blinding. The Pharisees, (who thought they had no need for enlightenment, who believe that they see), were brought into the Light and shown not to be seeing men but blind men—"lacking the will to see things as they really are." By turning away from Him as they did here in the face of all of the facts, they actually moved deeper into darkness and their blindness became even greater blindness.

Listen, it is serious, very serious, to hear the Gospel because rejection of Christ can result in an insensitivity to Him and a person's need—and it can result in an absolute indifference to the Good News of salvation. It results in hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

But those who respond have sight and life like the blind man—who lacked all of the advantages of the Pharisees but who unhesitatingly believed and who was drawn to the Light.

The Lord's conversation with the man was very personal but it wasn't private. There were Pharisees there who heard everything and reacted.—And reacted indignantly, "... 'We are not blind too, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see.', your sin remains.' " (vs40-41).

If they had been truly ignorant in spiritual things with no understanding, their guilt would have been less severe because they acted out of ignorance.

But they had lots of Light; they knew the Scriptures and they knew the Messianic prophecies. They were students of the Law—and Moses wrote of Christ; all through the Old Testament Christ is there. They'd seen the Lord's miracles. They'd just been led through a clear lesson on the facts and logic by the man healed of blindness, (as no one else had ever been healed—a man healed of blindness from birth.) Still, they rejected the Lord and sinned against the Light. So their sin remains: Guilty.

And it's the same for people today who grow up in the glow of the Gospel in a Christian home and church—or who have the Good News given to them by a friend or evangelist and then turn from it. They then recede deeper into the darkness.

But those who receive the Light enter the Light. They see what others can't see. They are forgiven. They receive God's life, are received into God's family, and have life forever. They become children of Light in a world that is filled with, and ruled by, the sons of darkness whose god is the prince of this world and the prince of darkness who uses all of his powers, (his great powers), to destroy the church.

Don't be surprised by that—it's the nature of life in this fallen world. Protect yourself from it. Don't be surprised when you have conversations that turn hostile toward you, (like the one in this chapter). Don't be hurt by it. Equip yourself for it.

As Peter said, "Be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." (1Pe 3:15). "Fight the good fight of faith." (1Ti 6:12). Understand the world in which we live and then remember, as we all should remember, we are never alone in this world of hostility and darkness. The Lord is always there with us. Just as he found this man, He will find us, stand with us, and empower us.

It's not easy; the battle gets hot. The world can take everything that we own away from us. The world can do that—and it does that. It happened to the saints in the book of Hebrews. If you study through the book of Hebrews you know they had not yet suffered to the shedding of blood but they knew that might be on the horizon—and

many of them had all their possessions taken from them and been placed in prison for simply being men and women who had trusted in Christ.

So, that's the world we live in; that happens to the saints; it's happened to the saints down through history. And many, amazingly, because they knew that this was the nature of the world and that the Lord was with them, many rejoiced in that. They could even do that because, while they've lost the world and the possessions of the world, by the grace of God they've gained heaven—and that makes everything right; and puts everything into perspective. Those are saints who 'Set their mind on the things above, not on the things on earth'. —That's Colossians 3:2.

May we do that as well. May we set our minds on the things above and not this world. That's the way we prepare ourselves for the difficulties that we face in this life.

Well, is your mind set on the things of earth? If so, you should realize that is short sighted. You cannot keep this world. You cannot keep the things of this world for very long. Eventually we lose our place in this world and we lose everything that we have in this world and we go into eternity. Where will you spend it? Only those who turn from darkness and unbelief by believing in Christ will have the Light and the glory of life to come—and the kingdom to come.

So believe in the Savior if you have not. Trust in Christ who died for sinners and then by God's grace may we know the truth; and may we defend the truth; and may we have the courage to say, "Here I stand" —and stand firmly in it. And we'll do that by God's grace. Let's Pray

LORD, what a blessing and privilege it is to be able to sing "I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see." The whole universe has been opened up to us and we see things clearly by Your grace—and yet we know we see just a speck of what's to be seen and what's coming with a new heaven and a new earth. We will spend all eternity, not just "10,000 years", but time without end—existence without limits and without end, praising You and learning more and more of Your greatness.

And we thank You, LORD, that by Your grace You brought us into the Light and into Your family, made us sons and daughters of God, and given us a glorious life in the present. Yet it's just a down payment of what's to come. Thank you for that. We give you praise.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up his countenance on you and give you peace—peace in the Lord Jesus Christ who bought us for You, Lord God. He's given us eternal life and we thank You for that. And it's His name we pray. Amen.

(End of Audio)