



## GLIMPSES OF GLORY



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John 9:1-41

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Like you, I'm often asked what I do for a living. Most believers in Jesus usually don't have to identify themselves as such when someone asks, "What do you do?" However, when I, as a pastor, answer the vocational question, I more or less give myself away.

Then again, there's Ron Ritchie, a former pastor of our church, who, when asked the vocational question, would on occasion answer, "I'm a teacher." His answer, though, would often generate a series of follow-up questions. Question: "What do you teach?" Answer: "I teach literature." Question: "What kind of literature?" Answer: "Ancient literature." Question: "What kind of ancient literature?" At that point, Ron would fess up to teaching ancient *biblical* literature, and he was found out. Ron used this approach not because he feared being identified as a believer but because he was concerned that being identified as a pastor would be off-putting and actually hinder his efforts to share the gospel.

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, how do you feel about being identified as such? What kind of consequences might you face for standing up for what you believe? On the other hand, are there any rewards for standing up for what you believe? In John 9, we meet a man who stands up for what he believes, faces the consequences, and is rewarded for doing so.

In John 8, Jesus proclaimed himself to be the light of the world. Yes, but what does it look like when we are exposed to his light? What does it all look like in a life? A blind man will show us.

### A blind man sees

John 9:1-12:

**As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one**

**can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup>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 <sup>7</sup>and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.**

**<sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup>Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." <sup>10</sup>So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup>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." <sup>12</sup>They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."**

The disciples falsely assume that the man's blindness is invariably attributable to sin—either his or his parents'. In a general sense, disabilities such as blindness are attributable to sin, inasmuch as sin has invaded God's good creation. God didn't make a world in which people are born blind, but sin, for the moment, wrecks the world. Although some disabilities are directly attributable to particular sinful choices (think crack babies), by no means can all disabilities be laid at the feet of particular sinful choices. When Moses complained about his poor speaking ability, the Lord answered, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?" (Exodus 4:11)

John reports that Jesus "saw" the blind man. Seeing a man who could not see, Jesus sees the deeper purposes of God. Jesus lays the man's disability not at the feet of the man, not at the feet of his parents, not at the feet of sin, but at the feet of God. Jesus says that the man was born blind in order to display the works of God at this particular time, while it is day, while Jesus is "in the world," before the night closes in, when Jesus leaves the world. From Jesus' perspective, the display of the works of God trumps whatever difficulties the man has endured from years of blindness.

Jesus, just as he did in John 8:12, proclaims himself to be the “light of the world.” As the light of the world, Jesus enables us to see reality: the reality of God as he really is, the reality of the world as it really is—not, of course, with our eyes but with our hearts and minds. Jesus “gives light to everyone,” not simply blind people (John 1:9).

So why does Jesus spit on the ground in order to make mud for the sake of applying it to the man’s eyes? At least in one case, the saliva of the first creation was considered unclean (Leviticus 15:8), but Jesus is doing something new. Out of chaos and darkness, God created the world, and he created humans from the dust of the ground, but sin, invading the world, plunged it back into chaos and darkness. When the earth was without form and void, when darkness was over the face of the deep, God said, “Let there be light.” The blind man is caught up in God’s work, through Jesus, the light of the world, to create a new world and a new humanity. God will use—in fact, he is now using—the impurity, chaos, darkness, and dust of this world, and the misery of those who inhabit it, to create a new world and a new humanity.

Mud that covers the eyes symbolizes the man’s condition. Even if he could see, so long as his eyes are covered with mud, he wouldn’t be able to use his eyes. The Lord “smeared over” the eyes of idolaters, confirming their spiritually blind condition, because they rejected the truth (Isaiah 44:18). Now, Jesus smears over the eyes of a blind man not because he has sinned and certainly not to prevent him from seeing (he’s blind already) but to display the works of him who “sent” him. Jesus instructs the man to wash the mud from his eyes in a pool that has a name which means “Sent.” The very name of the pool evokes Jesus’ derivation and mission. The blind man washes in the pool of Siloam, and he is blind no more. Jesus is the light of the world.

Those who know the man question whether he is, in fact, the man they know, but the man insists that he is and tells them what Jesus did. “Where is he?” they ask the man. The man who received his sight doesn’t know. Good question: Where is Jesus? Keep asking that questions, and eventually you’ll find him.

## Exposed to the truth

Just as Jesus saw the man in his blindness, he sees us in our limitations. He not only sees us, he also sees deeper purposes for our limitations. He wants to work the works of God in us. Not only does he want to work the works of God, he also wants to put those works on display for others to see, including watching angels and demons. On

the one hand, such work may involve physical healing, as in the case of the blind man. On the other hand, it may not involve the healing we want, as in the case of the apostle Paul, who was told by the Lord, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). We might also remember, in our day, Joni Eareckson Tada, a strong believer and a quadriplegic, whom Jesus has not yet healed and who sang *Alone Yet Not Alone*, which, to the surprise of almost everyone, just received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song. In any event, we were born with limitations in order that Jesus might work the works of God in us, so that we might glorify God.

Whether or not the work of God involves healing here and now, it most assuredly involves spiritual enlightenment, for Jesus, the light of the world, opens the eyes of the blind man not simply to heal him but to show him the truth, as we shall see. In that regard, the very first thing Jesus does, when he sees us in our spiritually darkened state, is to open the eyes of our hearts to give us a glimpse of his glory so that we might begin a journey of enlightenment. Perhaps at some point, even very early on in your spiritual journey, the change effected by Jesus was so dramatic that others questioned whether you were the same person, so to speak, just as the people who knew the blind man questioned his identity.

Simone Weil, the French philosopher who was reared as an atheist, writes of discovering a poem called “Love” by George Herbert. She learned the poem by heart and, at the culminating point of one of her frequent and violent headaches, she would recite it:

*I used to think I was merely reciting it as a beautiful poem, but without my knowing it the recitation had the virtue of a prayer. It was during one of these recitations that Christ himself came down and took possession of me. In my arguments about the insolubility of the problem of God I had never foreseen the possibility of that, of a real contact, person to person, here below, between a human being and God.<sup>1</sup>*

Weil continued to struggle with health problems but continued to write of her encounters with Christ—her glimpses of glory—up until her death from tuberculosis in 1943 at age 34.

After Jesus touched him, the blind man no longer struggled with his health. However, life didn’t exactly get easier for him. Neither, after our encounters with Jesus, does life necessarily get easier for us.

## Before the Pharisees

John 9:13-17:

**They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>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.” <sup>16</sup>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?” And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup>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.”** Earlier, the disciples brought the blind man to Jesus’ attention for a ruling of sorts. Now those familiar with the man, seeking advice, drag him before the Pharisees for a ruling.

Jesus bumps up against the Sabbath again, just as he did in John 5:1-15. He must be trying to bump up against it. For the Pharisees, the Sabbath was not simply a day of rest; it was also intertwined with their national identity and hopes. Whether one kept the Sabbath or not—and how one kept it—was no small matter in Jesus’ day. For many, Sabbath practices determined whose side you were on, whether you accepted Roman occupation or whether you opposed it. For Pharisees, a popular pressure group, keeping the Sabbath according to their rulings was a sign of loyalty—to God, to Israel, and to national hopes for liberation. They were watchful for the emergence of movements that ignored or trivialized the Sabbath and thereby posed a threat to their hopes for the coming kingdom of God, which for them constituted liberation from Rome. Jesus, of course, didn’t share the Pharisees’ national hopes; in fact, he repudiated them.

The Sabbath also foreshadowed the final day of rest, when God’s people would be made whole in his new world. Therefore, a healing by the Son of God on the Sabbath signifies the in-breaking of God’s great day of rest. If God, through Jesus, is creating a new world, then the Sabbath is a fine day for healing. Jesus gave the man rest from his blindness, anticipating the day when all the blind will see, all the deaf will hear, and all the lame will jump for joy.

The Pharisees, of course, don’t see it that way. To them, making mud and healing a blind man constituted work. In their view, Jesus violated the Sabbath, challenging

their national hopes, and therefore couldn’t be from God. Others, however, can’t understand how Jesus could heal a blind man if he weren’t from God.

What sayeth the man who sees? Earlier, he identified Jesus as “the man called Jesus.” Upon further reflection, he offers, “He is a prophet.” The man’s sight is improving.

## Parents fear consequences

John 9:18-23:

**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 <sup>19</sup>and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. <sup>21</sup>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.” <sup>22</sup>(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.) <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”**

Because the Jews (in this case, the Pharisees) can’t believe that Jesus is from God, they can’t believe that he healed a blind man. Seeking to discredit Jesus, and to unify ranks, because some are wondering whether Jesus is from God, they call in the man’s parents. The parents verify that their son was born blind and now sees, but fear prevents them from crediting Jesus. The Pharisees, like so many, hold onto their worldview, which has them at the center of it, through intimidation, threatening to remove from the synagogue anyone who confesses Jesus to be the Christ, the ultimate Jewish king. To be put out of the synagogue meant much more than being put out of a church means today. It meant being put out of the community and having to fend for oneself.

The parents know that something miraculous has happened to their son. They probably know that Jesus is responsible for the miracle. It’s hard to believe that they would know that their son sees without also knowing who opened his eyes. At the very least, a little inquiry on their part would uncover the truth. The truth, however, is not as dear to them as their sense of security, so they retreat from it and throw their son under the bus. Perhaps they think: better to have only one of us thrown out of the synagogue than all three of us.

## Before the Pharisees again

John 9:24-34:

**So for the 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.”** <sup>25</sup>He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” <sup>26</sup>They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup>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 his disciples?” <sup>28</sup>And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup>The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” <sup>34</sup>They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

The evidence is mounting. The man claims that Jesus healed him. The man’s parents confirm that he was born blind. The Pharisees recall the man, put the screws to him, and go over the same ground again, hoping to uncover something they’ve missed.

They challenge the man to “give glory to God,” which essentially means “tell the truth” (Joshua 7:19). Well, up to this point, the man has been telling the truth—and giving glory to God—by speaking of what Jesus has done for him and calling him a prophet. The Pharisees tell the man that they “know” Jesus is a sinner, a flagrant lawbreaker. They’re asking the man, “What is it you’re not telling us?”

The man, however, takes issue with what the Pharisees supposedly “know.” If the Pharisees know that Jesus is a sinner, the man knows nothing of the sort. He pleads ignorance. After all, he knows nothing of Jesus’ history; he just met the man. He can’t speak to what he doesn’t know; he can only speak to what he does know, and he knows this: “though I was blind, now I see.”

For the third time, the man is asked how Jesus opened

his eyes. Who wants to be asked the same question over and over again? What more can the man say? By this time, he becomes aware that the Pharisees are interested in his testimony only insofar as it discredits Jesus. Courageously, and sardonically, he turns the tables on the Pharisees and puts them on the stand, telling them, in so many words, “Oh, if you keep asking the same question about Jesus, I assume you must be so interested in him that you want to become his disciples.”

The Pharisees come unglued. They’re disciples of Moses, who gave them the law. Ah, but John has already told us that Moses was an earlier part of a story that Jesus brings to a climax (John 1:17, 5:39). The Pharisees again speak of what they know (they “know” God has spoken to Moses) but finally acknowledge something they don’t know: they “do not know” where Jesus comes from. If they don’t know where Jesus comes from, how can they know that he doesn’t come from God? They can’t conceive of anyone who does not agree with their worldview as being from God.

The man, having displayed a propensity for sarcasm, throws caution to the wind and skewers the Pharisees. The Pharisees brag about what they know, but they don’t know where Jesus came from! And someone they don’t know performed a miracle without their permission! Although the man’s theological assertions leave something to be desired (“We know that God does not listen to sinners,” “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing”), his spiritual sensitivities ring true. If the Pharisees don’t know where Jesus comes from, the man asserts in verse 33 that he is “from God.”

How can the Pharisees assert that the man was “born in utter sin”? Because they believe what the disciples believed: that someone’s sin, either that of the man or that of his parents, was responsible for his blindness. Inadvertently, they undercut their case against Jesus. Earlier, they did not believe that the man had been born blind (verse 18). But now, asserting that the man was born in utter sin (that he was born blind because of sin), they acknowledge that he was born blind. That the man now sees they cannot deny. Then Jesus must have opened the eyes of a man born blind!

This man supposedly born in utter sin has the temerity to teach the Pharisees, steeped in knowledge as they are? Well, yes, and he *is* teaching them. His eyes have been opened in more ways than one. He sees that Jesus is from God. If the Pharisees would listen to him, they could learn from him.

The man’s parents retreated from the truth for fear of being booted from the synagogue. The man himself shows no such reticence, and the Pharisees reward him for his

truthfulness by showing him the door.

## Standing up for the truth

At some point in our journey of enlightenment, the tough questions and the accusations come, perhaps right after we've been touched by Jesus, as in the case of the blind man, or perhaps at some later point. Or, perhaps the questions and accusations come and go. Or, perhaps they never go away. The questions and accusations come from those who deem us foolish for believing or from those who feel threatened by faith in Jesus. Or, they simply come from society at large: they are in the air of post-Christian America, no more so than in the Bay Area.

Like the formerly blind man, you may be reviled for believing in Jesus, or you may be ridiculed for knowing so little while supposing that you have something instructive to say. Like the man, you may be excluded in some way, or doors may close to you. In some cases, if we believe in Jesus, even those we would otherwise have counted on may refuse to stand up for us, just as the parents of the formerly blind man refused to stand up for him. We may face none of this overtly, but just knowing of the anti-evangelical bias around here is enough to make you want to keep faith in the closet. In any event, the pressure to pull back from faith in Jesus can be enormous.

What do we do in the face of such pressure? What did the man who was touched by Jesus do? Like the man, you don't know everything, but you know some things. Like him, speak of what you know. Answer whatever questions that come your way according to what you know. The man didn't have all the answers, he was fine with it, and he was fine with saying what he didn't know. He was truthful. Be truthful.

Mostly, the man spoke of what Jesus had done for him. He knew what Jesus had done for him, he spoke of what Jesus had done for him, and he stuck to his story. If you have begun the journey of enlightenment, something has happened to you also. Jesus has opened your eyes. It's the truth. Stand up for the truth, especially the truth of what Jesus has done for you. You may not know everything, but you are the foremost authority on one thing: your own life. When given the opportunity, tell your story and stick to it.

Speak what you know, come what may.

Jan English Lueck, a professor of anthropology at San Jose State University, says that "getting the job done" is paramount in Silicon Valley, so believers often keep quiet about their faith in public forums for fear of alienating

co-workers or customers. *The Financial Times* quoted her as saying, "Dogmatic faith would get in the way of good work relationships, and that is the true sin in Silicon Valley."<sup>2</sup> Interesting: faith is being defined as sin, even "the true sin."

Faith doesn't get in the way of good work relationships for me. Of course, if I didn't have faith, I wouldn't have my current job. The price I pay is outside the walls of the church, and that price (minimal, I know) is being labeled. When I was a journalist, I enjoyed being asked what I do, because people didn't know many journalists and in some cases they didn't know any at all. People tended to be intrigued, and a door for conversation would often swing open. When I tell people I'm a pastor of a church, well, let's just say the door usually doesn't open as wide. I can just see the wheels turning and assume that the questioner is thinking, "Oh, one of those! And a leader of one of those!" Sometimes, I'll get the follow-up question: "What kind of church?" I'll usually say something like, "We're followers of Jesus." That usually, but not always, puts an end to the conversation. If I'm going down, I'm going down with Jesus, as one of his followers.

Because my wife Karen was a Stanford graduate student during the beginning of our marriage, I was able to play the Stanford golf course at student rates. When I played, I would usually be grouped with random people. One time, when I was warming up on the putting game, I heard over the loudspeaker, "Shumway threesome, Grant single." As I made my way to the first tee, I thought to myself, "There's something about that name Shumway." I had a vague recollection that a famous Stanford heart surgeon had a name like that. When I arrived at the first tee, before the Shumway threesome, the starter said to me, "Well, if you have a heart attack out there today, it shouldn't be a problem."

After we all hit our tee shots, I was walking down the first fairway and said to my playing partner, "So, I understand you are *the* Dr. Shumway." He said, "Well, I'm one of them." He said he had a daughter who was also a surgeon. Turns out I was playing with Dr. Norman Shumway, the father of heart transplantation, who performed the first successful heart transplant in the United States, in 1968. When I met him, he was in his seventies and a professor emeritus at the medical school. He graciously asked me what I did, I told him that I was a pastor, and the conversation didn't go anywhere after that—until the back nine.

As we were walking together up one of the fairways, I asked him if he missed surgery. He said (again, very graciously), "Well, I wouldn't tell this to anyone but my

pastor, but I miss it every day. When I was in surgery, I'd look up at the clock and eight or ten hours would go by but it felt like only a minute." Clearly, he lamented that surgery was no longer a part of his life. The conversation didn't go any further in a spiritual direction, but identifying myself as a pastor did seem to open up a window.

Standing up for the truth may cost you, as it cost the man in John 9 who was booted from the synagogue. But standing up for the truth also comes with a reward.

## Jesus finds the man

John 9:35-41:

**Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"** <sup>36</sup>He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." <sup>38</sup>He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.

The man is cast out of the synagogue but into the arms of Jesus. Jesus, knowing that the man had been booted for telling the truth, comes looking for him, just as he came looking for the man he healed by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:14). When Jesus found the man by the pool, it became clear that Jesus healed him not simply to heal him but for the sake of his faith. Likewise, when Jesus finds the man born blind, he asks him a question about faith: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The Son of Man, in Daniel 7, is a figure who sums up the people of God, ascends to God, and reigns over the world forever (Daniel 7:13-14).

Finally, someone asks the man a question that isn't related to how he was healed of his blindness. The man has already determined that Jesus is a prophet who speaks for God, so he is eager to believe in the Son of Man, whoever he is. When Jesus answers, "You have seen him," it can't be lost on the man that until recently he hasn't been able to see anything and that he is speaking with the one who has enabled him to see. Who is the Son of Man? Why, it is Jesus himself, "he who is speaking to you." The man not only believes in Jesus, he also worships him. Whether or not the man worshiped Jesus as God at this point, John

has clearly identified Jesus as God incarnate, who is worthy of worship (John 1:1).

As the Son of Man, destined to rule the world, Jesus comes into the world to judge the world. His purpose is not to condemn but to save, but in order to save, he must also judge, and those who do not welcome his judgment will invariably face condemnation (John 3:17, 12:47). Therefore, when he judges, a division takes place. When Jesus comes, those who know they dwell in spiritual darkness and recognize their need for light "see" that he is from God, but those who dwell in spiritual darkness and see no need for light "become blind," failing to see that he is from God.

The listening Pharisees, grasping the meaning of Jesus' words, dismiss him with a mocking question, "Are we also blind?" How could they be blind, they who know so much? They *are* blind; they just don't know it. In John 8, Jesus showed them that they were slaves who think they're free. Now, he shows them that they are blind men who think they see. They can't see that they can't see. Their guilt remains.

The man blind born blind has come a long way in a short time, first identifying the one who he healed him as "the man called Jesus," second hailing him as a prophet, third discerning that he is "from God," fourth believing in him as the Son of Man, and finally worshipping him. On the other hand, the Pharisees stay where they are.

John 9 began with physical blindness; it ends with spiritual blindness. It began with physical blindness based on presumed sin; it ends with spiritual blindness based on actual sin. Jesus is the light of the world. The man born blind sees the light; the Pharisees are blind to the light.

## Getting more truth

Jesus knew what happened to the man he had healed; he also knows what happens to us. He knows about all the difficulties, all the confrontations, all the rejections. We, then, should know this: if we are rejected for standing up for Jesus, Jesus will come looking for us. If we are cast out, so to speak, we are cast into the arms of Jesus.

What does Jesus do when he finds us? If we stand up for him, what does he do for us? What does he give us? More truth! He gives us more to believe, or he gives us a greater appreciation for what we already believe. You get truth you're ready to embrace, truth you need for the next step, and maybe for the rest of your life; healing truth; truth that leads you, as it led the man, into worship. Mostly,

he gives us a better vision of himself, not simply that we might know more truth or know more about him but also, and especially, that we might embrace the truth of who he is and be transformed by it. He leads us forward on the journey of enlightenment. As Jesus says in Mark 4:25, “For to the one who has, more will be given.”

No one gets all of who Jesus is in one shot. Emily Dickinson wrote, “The Truth must dazzle gradually / Or every man be blind.” Jesus is too dazzling for us to grasp all of who he is. We learn of him incrementally, in glimpses of glory, until the day when we’re ready to see him as he is, when he returns to consummate the kingdom of God as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in dazzling splendor. For a preview, look at Jesus in Revelation 1:9-18, where John was given a glimpse of glory and fell at the feet of Jesus like a dead man. Scholar N.T. Wright writes,

*When surrounded by fear and anger, the only way through is to glimpse whatever we can see of Jesus and follow him out of the dark and into the light<sup>3</sup>*

Increasingly, I’m more aware of—and grieved by—the degree of lostness I see in the faces around me. Increasingly, I’m more appreciative that Jesus has found me. Increasingly, I want to stand up for Jesus, who seeks and saves the lost.

## **Be strong and courageous**

Some of us fear sharing Christ with others because we feel we’re ineffective evangelists. We don’t know what to say or how to say it to lead someone to Christ. Note, however, that as it concerns leading people to Christ, the formerly blind man is completely ineffective. He shares Jesus with the Pharisees, and they become not more open to Jesus but more resistant to him. Nevertheless, Jesus rewards the man, not for convincing anyone of the truth but for standing up for the truth. In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul observes, in the wake of his imprisonment, that many followers of Jesus had become emboldened to share the gospel with others, but he says nothing about their effectiveness. He rejoices simply that “Christ is proclaimed,” regardless of whether Christ is believed (Philippians 1:12-18). Proclaim Christ and rejoice.

Be strong and courageous, Peninsula Bible Church: stand up for the truth, especially the truth of what Jesus

has done for you, to get more truth, especially a deeper appreciation of Jesus. The Lord your God is with you wherever you go. “For my father and mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in” (Psalm 27:10).

## **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Dean L. Overman, *A Case for the Existence of God*: Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009, 135.

<sup>2</sup> April Dembosky, “Valley of God” (*The Financial Times*, August 10, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> N.T. Wright, *John for Everyone: Part One*: Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, 139.