

Sent Ones
John 9:6-41

By Dave Urbanski

On Sunday, Pastor Scott talked to us about our Christian testimonies.

The great thing about a testimony or conversion experience is that it requires no theological education, no expertise in apologetics, no facility in making an argument or getting your point across or thinking quickly on your feet.

All it requires is you telling your story.

Listeners who don't buy into what you're saying can try to refute your testimony, but it's not possible: What happened to you as Jesus came into your life is what happened to you. It can't be refuted. That's why Pastor Scott called it a powerful tool we can use to spread our faith.

In John 9, the blind man healed by Jesus also had a testimony — and Pastor Scott led us through the man's transformation, not only physically but also spiritually and even personally, as he seemed to realize that not even the powerful, learned Pharisees could refute his experience.

The beginnings of his transformation come when Jesus heals him in verse 7. Now he can see for the first time in his life! Imagine what that must have felt like: He only imagined and dreamed about connecting images to the voices he'd been hearing all his life — and suddenly it happened. It must have been overwhelming. (If you've ever seen videos of people who see color for the first time with special glasses, it's quite emotional — and those folks already had sight!)

Pastor Scott noted that we as believers can relate to the blind man's excitement in regard to what happened in our hearts after Jesus came to dwell in our them. Miraculously we began to see the world differently, to look at life differently — because the Lord gave us new spiritual eyes to see him.

In John 9, the pool of Siloam — where the blind man washed his eyes after Jesus touched them with mud created from dirt and his saliva — is called "sent," and indeed that's exactly what happened: The man born blind could now see, and it's as though he's shot out of a cannon! He naturally wants to tell everybody. How could he not?

We need to remember that even after the excitement of our salvation has faded, we still are sent like the man who was born blind. We all have testimonies we can share with others, because ultimately our salvation isn't just for us. It's to be shared so others may come to believe in Jesus, too.

Check out what happens next in verses 8 through 12: "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?' Some said, 'It is he.' Others said, 'No, but he is like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'"

The man born blind started off by simply giving his testimony: Jesus healed me, now I can see. That can be our first step, too. Often fear convinces us to be quiet about what Jesus has done in our lives, as perhaps we won't have answers to many challenging questions. But it doesn't matter. People can't tell you that what happened to you didn't happen. So let's put our testimonies to use!

In the next five verses, the man born blind comes face to face with the Pharisees, who once again totally miss the point. Rather than being excited about this healing, they ignore that and instead make a case that Jesus broke the law by healing the man on Sabbath. Pastor Scott shared with us that Jesus actually performed miracles on the Sabbath seven times! Thing is, Jesus had no problem creating controversies that forced others to get to the spiritual heart of the matter, whether they end up believing or not.

In fact, Jesus came to create division. He said so! "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household." (Matthew 10:34-36)

In the same way, we shouldn't be afraid of controversy as we bring God's truth to the world. It's not up to us to get others to believe; that's the Lord's job. He's simply invites us to participate in the salvation process by sharing his Good News. And sometimes when we give our testimonies, those to whom we're speaking will walk away — but take heart: we don't know if those people will think about what we said at a later date ... or if those engaged in an argument or disagreement about what we share — or who are simply listening in like a fly on a wall — will be affected by our words. We just need to speak them.

Let's also get over the fear of rejection. In verses 18 through 23, the parents of the man born blind are asked about the truth of their son's testimony — and they said as little as possible about this miracle. Why? Well, John explains in verse 22 that they "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." Fear limits us and limits our impact.

What's more, you don't need to have all the answers in order to have confidence in your testimony. The man who was born blind, a beggar now healed by Jesus, begins to grow an immense backbone, barking back at the Pharisees who continue to quiz him in verse 27, "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?" He even stood up for Jesus to them in verses 30-33: "Why, this is an

amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 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. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

With that, the Pharisees cast him out. It seems bold truth-telling to those with hardened hearts results in actions like that — therefore we ought to expect the same thing, and we need not be afraid of such treatment.

The best part of the passage is when the man born blind finally meets Jesus, who asks him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” The man born blind replies, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus answers, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” The man born blind — faced with this universe-altering revelation — says, “Lord, I believe,” and then worships Jesus.

The Pharisees overhear Jesus saying, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind,” and ask him, “Are we also blind?” They just don't get it. Jesus tells them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

Are you willing to take some risks? Risks of causing controversy, risks of being rejected, risks of feeling inadequate because you don't have all the answers? We all have testimonies to share that are irrefutable — like the man born blind, all we need to do is tell others what Jesus has done for us. No one but the Lord knows how others will react; some will respond, but others won't. It doesn't matter; just by sharing our testimonies, others will be forced to choose where they stand with Jesus.