



“The Sun Is Shining and I Am Blind”

Kevin Presley

Some time ago in a large southern city, a blind beggar was seen sitting on a little stool and leaning up against a building, when someone went up close to him to place some money in his cup. He saw a sign hanging around the homeless person’s neck that read, “The sun is shining and I am blind.” That struck the passerby with a great sense of sadness and pity. Here was a man who realized he was living in a world filled with beauty and brightness, but he couldn’t enjoy it because he couldn’t see it.

The apostle Paul spoke of a multitude of people in a far worse condition. People who are *spiritually* blind.

II Corinthians 4:3-4 “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”

I want to talk to you about the tragedy of spiritual blindness. It’s especially tragic because we live on the sunlit side of the cross. We have God’s full revelation, the Bible. We have 2,000 years of God’s purpose being revealed in His Son and in the Church, yet we are blind.

The Bible speaks of many people who were blind. Jesus met scores of them as He traveled the roads of Palestine. It seems He was always touched by their plight. Many times, He stopped and demonstrated His power and divinity by giving them their sight. In the same way, the Lord has done something marvelous for all of us when you stop and think about it. Since the very first time the gospel was preached to man, He has been in the business of opening up the eyes of those blinded by sin so that they might see the glory of God in salvation. Eyes that before were blinded by sin and by Satan. Our text tells us that Satan is *the god of this age*. He rules in the lives and hearts of all who live in sin and who live according to this world’s system and philosophy. That describes every man, woman, boy, and

girl who has never heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel. Whether they realize it or not, they live in the perpetual darkness of sin and evil.

Paul says that his work as an apostle was to penetrate the darkness of this world by shining the light of the gospel through preaching. He uses a metaphor to describe this in **verse 7**.

II Corinthians 4:7 “But we (the apostles) have this treasure (the gospel) in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”

The *earthen vessel* was a little lamp, I understand, made of clay with a small indentation in the top where oil would be poured, then the oil would be burned to dispense light. Paul is saying that the apostles were filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and their ministry was to dispense that gospel to the world, to make known the faith that would be once delivered to the saints. Before Christ came and before the gospel was made known, the world was steeped in blindness and darkness. Sin and depravity ruled the day, thus Satan is called *the god of this age*. He is still the god of those who reject the truth and who dwell in the darkness of sin. But the difference is now, Satan has no control over anybody that they don't give him. And sin's gloom has been lifted by the penetrating light of the glorious gospel in the world. Christ is revealed and the way of salvation is now revealed to all.

II Corinthians 4:6 “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Have you stopped to think about what a wonderful thing it is that we live on this side of Calvary? That we are afforded the grace to hear the great invitation to come out of darkness and dwell in the sunlight of God's will and Christ's salvation? But many people are still perishing. They're still blind, despite the easy access to the Bible, to gospel preaching, and all of the other things readily available in our world to point people to the truth of God's word and to salvation. Isn't it sad that multitudinous multitudes are stunningly unaware of what God has said and done on their behalf? The sun is shining, and we are blind! We live in the sunlight age of the gospel, yet untold millions are still stumbling in darkness. I want to talk about some things that Satan has very successfully blinded the world about—perhaps even you have been blinded by some of these things as well.

First, many are blinded to the goodness and blessings of God. Anyone who doesn't realize the goodness of God and the concern that He has for all of His creation is simply blind to everything that is about us. We live in a world that has rebelled against God, is steeped in sin, evil, and iniquity, is cursed by sin and The Fall, living under the curse of death. Whereas the holy and just God could have long ago destroyed the human race and everyone of us because we have sinned, He still showers untold, undeserved blessings on us all.

Lamentations 3:22-23 “Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

The world is filled with beauty for us to enjoy, filled with provision to allow us to live and survive. Every breath that we breathe, every morsel of food that we eat is given to us by the grace of God. We don't deserve that. Every single person listening today enjoys the blessings of God in their lives—even those who deny His very existence!

Matthew 5:45 “...for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Every one of us has been blessed in ways that we fail to stop and think about or recognize. Granted, we all have our problems and difficulties in life, some more than others. That’s because sin exists in the world. We live in a fallen and broken world because sin was brought into it, and despite the fact that this world is polluted by sin—sometimes even our own sin, our own foolish choices and rebellion that brings trouble into our lives—God STILL shows care for us and manifests His love for us. He cares enough for us that He showers us with physical blessings every day that we don’t deserve. Every morning we wake up, we are surrounded in so many ways by the goodness and love of God’s simple beauties that are reflections of His power and love. It is by His mercies that we are not consumed, as we read a moment ago. The Bible says that His word holds the creation together moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, and year by year.

There’s an old gospel song that says, *Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

That’s a very good habit to get into, because if we really did that, it wouldn’t take long to see just how blessed we really are. Think about it: do you have life? According to God’s word, we all deserve death. Yet He gives us a time to live and prepare for eternity. Do you have food to eat? Most of us have more than we need. Many people to whom God gives those provisions never even stop to bow their heads and thank Him for it. Do you have a roof over your head? Many of us live in what people in other countries would think of as mansions. Do you have clothes on your back? The majority of Americans have so many clothes, they won’t even fit in our closets. Do you have a car to drive? Some measure of health? It’s very hard to imagine someone living in modern society without at least some of those things, if not a good number or ALL of those things. Well, those are all blessings of God given to us—not because we deserved them, but solely by His grace.

Fanny Crosby was one of the most prolific poets in the history of sacred music. She wrote hundreds and hundreds of beautiful hymns, like Blessed Assurance. We still sing them more than a hundred years later. You may know that she was blind from childhood. She lived to be 95 years old. When she was only 8 years old and stricken with blindness, she penned a little poem that says,

*Oh, what a happy soul am I
Although I cannot see.
I am resolved that in this world
contented I will be.
How many blessings I enjoy
that other people don’t.
To weep and sigh because I’m blind,
I cannot and I won’t.*

There’s a woman who couldn’t see with her physical eyes, but she had great spiritual perception. She could see a great spiritual truth. It is beyond tragic that there are so many millions of people who have their physical eyesight but are so spiritually blind to what God has done for them, continues to do for

them, and wants to do for them. They are blind to the blessings of God in their lives. The Bible teaches that the blessings and goodness of God towards us should drive us to our knees in gratitude, repentance, and obedience.

Romans 2:4 “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

That was the problem of the ancient Gentile world Paul mentioned in **Romans 1**. They were not thankful for the blessings of God.

Romans 1:21 “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

They didn't thank God for His care, for life, for the many things that He had given to them and done for them. Because of their lack of gratitude, they rejected Him. God has mercifully stayed His hand of judgment that we deserve. He has shown us in innumerable ways how He cares for us. Are you blind? Do you stop and thank Him, love Him, obey Him, and serve Him?

Secondly, many people are blind to their true spiritual condition. Self-awareness is a valuable thing in life. You can get so wrapped up into worrying about self-image that it's unhealthy, but it is valuable to have a healthy self-awareness. It's a pitiful thing to see when a person has no idea how they appear to others. How their attitude, behavior, perhaps their unkempt appearance comes across to others—they're oblivious, just strolling through life with a very distorted self-image. I think many of us have been guilty of that in one way or another. There are things in our lives that we really ought to work on. Maybe in certain ways, we come across as very harsh, and we don't stop to think about what we really appear to be to others. Often, we overlook the same faults in our own lives that we can readily see in someone else's. Many times, the image we have of ourselves is not the image others have of us.

But have you ever stopped to think about how God sees you? Have you ever compared how you see yourself or even how others might see you with how God sees you? In the grand scheme of things, it doesn't matter how a person looks to others, although we tend to worry a lot about that. We worry about the reflection of our lives upon the Lord and on His kingdom, but it really doesn't matter what other people think about you. What really matters is how we look to God. It's the difference between reputation and character, you see. A person may appear to himself or to others as wonderful, successful, achieving, kind, handsome...Maybe people admire you for your success or achievements, your career, your money, your social position, your good manners and social graces. That's how we define beauty and success and honor. We tend to look at someone who gets those things down pat in his life as being all right. Do you know what God sees? Despite all of that, God sees right through it. What God sees is a vile, wretched sinner.

Look at the many Hollywood stars who are worshipped by millions for their beauty, talent, wealth, and fame. People covet the things they have and the lives they live. In many cases, their lives are cesspools of iniquity, depression, and unhappiness. Many of them walk the red carpet only to die of drug overdoses or alcohol abuse. They died sad and unfulfilled, some by suicide. They lived lives of dissipation. How they appeared in the eyes of their fans wasn't at all how they looked in the eyes of God. They're just human beings like you and sinners in the eyes of God. But I have news for you: you may not be famous or have a lot of money. But you may live what you think is a respectable life,

however, God looks at you as a sinner just like they are. He sees a world condemned without His Son Jesus. It doesn't matter how moral and upright you are or how successful of a life you live.

I Samuel 16:7 "But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

What does God see when He sees a sinner? Again, I'm not necessarily talking about some immoral person who lives a scandalous life. I just mean someone who's not a Christian, someone outside of Christ, someone who's never been baptized to wash their sins away. How does God see them? How does God see you if you're not living as part of His Church? You may think, *I'm not so bad. I live a pretty clean life. I try to treat others right. I pay my bills. I mind my own business. I don't cheat on my spouse. I'm well thought of by my community.* That's all well and good, but is that how God sees you? Let me tell you how God looks at the sinner outside of Christ.

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

This is our condition outside of Christ. God sees the heart of the supposed respectable sinner as corrupt.

Romans 3:12 "They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

Man is a sinner. He is condemned. He is spiritually dead though he physically lives.

I Timothy 5:6 "But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives."

The wrath of God abides on those outside of Christ. Such a person is headed for Hell.

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

II Thessalonians 1:8 "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Do you realize that if you're not living for Christ, that's what God sees when He looks at you? Most sinners today are painfully oblivious to their condition in the sight of God. They're busy comparing themselves to other people or to their own standard instead of to the holiness of God. That's why they don't get too worked up about doing something about it. They think that as long as they're having a good time in this life and getting along down here, everything will be fine up there. But they're blind. One of the main reasons we have such a hard time getting people to obey the gospel and be saved today is that so many refuse to accept the fact that they are lost to begin with. People don't like to hear preachers preach about hell fire and brimstone or sin. They say, *why do you have to be so negative all the time?* Let me tell you, you can't point people to Jesus for salvation until they see a need for salvation. They won't see a need for salvation until they realize that they are lost. If people had the slightest idea of what it really means to be lost, they wouldn't remain in that condition for five minutes longer.

On the other hand, what does the Bible say about the man who comes to Christ in obedience to the gospel? How does God see a person who turns to Jesus in faith, turns away from sin, goes down into that baptismal water and plunges beneath the crimson stream of Christ's cleansing and atoning blood? God sees him as clean, justified, a new creation, his sins forgiven. There is now no condemnation. God counts him as righteous, as though he never sinned. God sees him as living with Him forever in Heaven. How is it with you? God's word is a mirror. It not only shows us what we should be; it shows us what we are right now.

Thirdly, many are blind to the privileges and joys of the Christian life. Many are convinced it is simply a life of deprivation, drudgery, and depression. The devil has succeeded in getting this all messed up and reversed in their minds. Some people think that to be a Christian means to miss out on the best of life, thus allowing the devil to cheat them out of what every person seems to really want out of life: happiness, joy, peace, fulfillment, stability, hope.

It is said that a man once lived in the slums of a great city. Every day, he looked out at the poverty and despair around him. He looked around his old broken-down home with crumbling walls, frayed curtains, and tattered furniture. He looked out the window and all he could see was dingy walls and a run-down neighborhood. Often in his despondency, he closed his eyes and daydreamed. He pictured himself in a big, fine home with beautiful rugs on the floor, fine art on the walls, and new ornate furniture in every room. The house was surrounded by trees and flowers and he had everything his heart desired, but it was only a dream. One day, he received an official-looking letter from an attorney informing him that a long forgotten relative had died and left him a huge fortune. He couldn't believe it. He hadn't seen or heard from that relative in years and he thought it was a mistake or a cruel joke. He tore the letter and threw it in the fire. He treated it like a scam and lived the rest of his life in poverty in the slums. There are plenty of men and women like that today. They've let the devil blind them to the joys of the Christian life. Like the elder brother of the prodigal son, who saw his life at home with his father as a life of drudgery. He was jealous of the life of his younger brother who had gone to the far country to live in sin. When the son returned, his father threw a great celebration in his honor and the elder son complained and said that he had never left home, but his father had never honored him like that. His father patiently reminded him:

Luke 15:31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.'"

In other words, *those things were here for you all along. The sun was shining and you were blind.* Are you making the same mistake? The sun is shining, and it reveals that the way of the transgressor is hard (**Proverbs 13:15**). That truth is repeated in lives all around us every day if we will look. There is peace, contentment, joy, hope, and love in living for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I've stood by a few deathbeds throughout my ministry. I've listened to people speak their last words on this earth. I've never heard a person express a single regret for living and dying as a Christian. I've known plenty of people who've left this world with bitter regrets over the sinful and immoral lives they lived, for all the time they wasted in sin. But no one leaves this world regretting living their lives for Jesus. The sun is shining. Are you blind to the joys of an upright and godly life?

Finally, many are blind to the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death. We all know we're going to die one day; we just don't like to think about it. We push it out of our minds. The younger we are, the more we do that. Pick up your local paper and read the obituary column today and you'll see deaths of young and old. I can promise you that many of the people whose names and lives you read about had no

idea three days ago that they would be dead before the beginning of a new week. That's just the truth. You don't know but what there's a death shroud lying in an undertaker's hearse that won't cover your corpse next. You don't know that. Every moment we live is precious. Every breath we take is given to us by the grace of God. We need to use it very wisely. Every moment we live, another grain of sand falls through the hourglass of life and death gets closer. The sun is shining. Are you prepared?

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