

## A summary of John 9:1-13

- 1. The *rhema* word to us must be lived out. Otherwise we may be more blind than before (9:6-7):** Like the blind man, we are those that are born blind. In contrast with the case of the paralysed man in John 5, and the sinful woman in chapter 8, the blind man in chapter 9 is not guilty of “sinful behavior.” However, he is still a sinner and thus, like us, cannot see God. Jesus anoints His eyes with His spittle (His word), mingled with the dirt from the ground, which may signify the world, to form a clay which may represent His speaking. Each time we hear the Lord’s speaking through His word, or through the brothers and sisters, or through His servants, and are touched, the words become *rhema* to us. However, Jesus did not stop there. He charged the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam (v.7), which means “sent.” When we hear His speaking, that speaking must be obeyed and lived out from us. For example, we may hear a word concerning preaching the gospel. If we do not actually practice or live out what we heard and were touched by, that very word may cause us to be more blind than before, because the mud on our eyes remains. We may think we understand, and admire the rich speaking, and rave about how wonderful a certain conference or message was, and think we see, but if we do not preach the gospel, we have no further revelation, and our blindness remains. Unfortunately, our heart may become harder to resist the preaching of the gospel. Yes, we may have had revelation before, but we may block ourselves from having more. The hearing of the word must be accompanied by a submission to it, and a “sending” (the Greek word denotes being sent on a mission, like a soldier). It is only when we “wash away” or obey the *rhema* word that the Lord can give us further revelation.
- 2. Do we leave people to be beggars in the church life? (9:8).** The blind man was a beggar. He had parents (v.2, 18-23). But his parents liked to stay in the temple (a type of the church life), and surprisingly allowed their son to beg. Are we like the parents? If we do not take care of people, or raise up “spiritual children,” there will be many beggars in the church life, lacking spiritual food and nourishment, and not having their human needs met. This is a sober warning to us. We cannot expect people to automatically grow, or say that God will take care of everything. Yes, God will take care of everything, but through the brothers and sisters. If we do not preach the gospel, contact people, and take care of new ones, one by one, with companions and as a team, many people will fall away through our neglect.
- 3. Do we know the brothers and sisters around us? (9:8-10).** Ironically, some of the blind man’s neighbors had a hard time recognizing him, even though they had seen him, presumably every day, for a long time! They had seen him but had not really paid attention to him and noticed him! Isn’t this our case sometimes? We come to the church gatherings on Sunday morning, every week, or fairly regularly, and “see” so many brothers and sisters. Do we know them? Do we know whether they love God or not? Do we even know their names? Do we open our homes to them to get to know them? We can be around so many people, and think we know them because we see them so often, but who among them are our spiritual children? Do we know if they are growing?
- 4. How can we have further revelation from the Lord? (9:1).** Jesus knew the blind man, who he was and what his heart was like. In verse 1, the Greek word for “see” actually denotes “to know.” This means that Jesus knows us, and knows our heart. According to the condition of our heart, He will further open our eyes and reveal Himself to us. Yes, Jesus loves the world (signified by His spitting on the ground). But why did He “speak” to this man in particular? Because He knew this man’s heart, and He knows our heart. What kind of heart did this man have? Firstly, he was submissive (he obeyed Jesus and went to wash off the clay). Secondly, He became a disciple of Jesus (v.27). Thirdly, he knew the word a little (v.31). Fourthly, his heart was

pure (v.36). Even though He did not know Jesus as the Son of God, he called Him “Lord” and expressed a desire to believe in Him. Therefore, the Lord “passed by” (v.1) and found him. The Lord does not arbitrarily open people’s eyes. Yes, He loves every person unconditionally and without exception. But He will only open our eyes if our heart is pure and willing to know Him. For example, if we do not open our homes, or contact brothers and sisters, or preach the gospel, how can the Lord grant us more revelation? Indeed, we may have had revelation last year. But what about now? If we do not love the Lord more this year than last year, our eyes may remain closed in a particular area, and we will be frustrated in receiving more revelation from the Lord. In a sense, and here we have to be careful how we phrase it, we need to “earn” further revelation from Christ. But isn’t salvation not based on our works, but on faith alone in Christ? No doubt, and yet how much more faith do I have this year than last year? Of course, this is relative, depending on our level of divine life. The Lord will only reveal to us what we are able to receive, according to our heart and our willingness to obey that revelation.

5. **We must treasure every day the Lord gives to us (9:4).** Jesus treasured every day the Father gave to Him. He realized that there would come a time when it would no longer be possible to “work.” Do we have the same realization? Do we submit to His *rhema* word, so that the saints (the brothers and sisters around us) may not become “beggars?” Are we desperate to take advantage of the day, that is every window of opportunity the Lord gives us to spend time with people? For example, on Sunday morning, we see so many people (“neighbors” – 9:8). That is actually a window of opportunity to talk to at least one person whom we do not know. Are we also desperate that the saints around us may also have such a caring heart to reach out to and accompany a few people so that more and more would be rich in knowing and loving and pursuing Christ?
6. **What are the works of God? (9:3).** Jesus says that the works of God should be manifest in the blind man (us). What are the works of God? We may say that firstly, the work of God in us is our hearing of Jesus’ speaking. We are blind, but we may have a pure heart, a heart that wants to seek Him. Secondly, the work of God in us is our obeying, submitting to, and living out the word that is spoken to us. Thirdly, the work of God in us is our testimony and growth in the divine life. The blind man’s parents did not dare to confess that Jesus was Christ because they were afraid of being ejected from the synagogue by the Pharisees (v.22). They were reluctant to tangle with the Pharisees, and perhaps preferred their comfortable, childless, routine church life. However, the blind man (no longer blind) was not afraid to take on the Pharisees in a spirited manner. His level of life was higher than that of his parents. Sometimes, the newer ones may have a higher level of life than the older ones who invited them to the church life! Do we have such a desire, to testify Christ regardless of the consequences?
7. **When we do testify, how do we testify? (9:9-12).** The blind man, having recovered his sight, testifies according to his experience, no more and no less. For example, in v.9, he answers the neighbors’ question accurately, identifying himself as one who had sat and begged. He does not try to defend or justify himself. In v. 11, he simply states the facts. He does not preach or tell his neighbors what they should do. In v.12, he honestly tells them he does not know where Jesus is. How do we testify? Sometimes, we like to explain things, or talk about things that we don’t really know, or that are not our experience. In our speaking, we should first have the Lord’s instant speaking (something that touched us) from a verse or verses in the Bible. secondly, we should try to know our audience (the ones we are speaking to), and thirdly have an example or an experience in the church life to back up our testimony. If we are asked to explain or expound something in the Bible that we have no experience of, it is better to say “I know not.” If we try to explain without experience, that word may become head knowledge and may eventually frustrate us from receiving more revelation from the Lord.