



By Mrs. Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION

A famous eye surgeon was walking down the street of a large city when he noticed a man sitting on the walk at the busy intersection. The man held a cup and some pencils, and there was a sign indicating that he was blind. The surgeon stopped, went over to the man, and introduced himself. "Maybe you can be cured," he said. "I'd like to examine your eyes."

The man was startled, but he submitted to the examination. "I'll need to run some more tests," the surgeon said, "but I'm happy to say it looks like your blindness can be cured. Can you come to my office tomorrow?"

The man seemed shocked at first and then said, "No, I won't come."

"But, man," argued the surgeon, "just think. You'll be able to see. And don't worry about the cost. It won't cost you anything."

"No," came the final answer, "I feel safer the way I am."

The blessings of sight are so great that few of us ever think of preferring blindness. But what of spiritual blindness? We don't have to look far to find persons who prefer the security of their spiritual darkness to the tremendous blessings offered by truth. In fact, most of us don't have to look any farther than into our own hearts.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Last week's lesson dealt with the bitter controversy Jesus carried on with the religious leaders at the time of the feast of Tabernacles. The Jews were so antagonistic that they sought to stone Him. Several days after this, Jesus met the blind man in our text today. The Pharisees questioned the blind man who explained what happened. Some of the Pharisees tried to make a big thing of the fact that Jesus worked the miracle on the Sabbath. They said this proved that He was not God.

Those Pharisees who refused to believe that a miracle had occurred called the man's parents. If they denied that he was their son or that he had not been blind from birth, that would prove fraud. The parents were intimidated by the religious leaders, but they still acknowledged that he was their son who had been blind but was now able to see. It is obvious, however, that they feared being expelled from the synagogue, and did not want to get involved any further. And so they said, "He is of age; ask him."

Today's lesson begins at this point.

A second time they called back the man who had been born blind, and said to him, "Promise before God that you will tell the truth! We know that this man who cured you is a sinner." "I do not know if he is a sinner or not," the man replied. "One thing I do know; I was blind and now I see." "What did he do to you?" they asked. "How did he cure you of your blindness?"

"I have already told you," he answered, "and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Maybe you, too, would like to be his disciples?" They insulted him and said, "You are that fellow's disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for that fellow, however, we do not even know where he comes from." The man answered, "What a strange thing that is! You do not know where he comes from, but he cured me of my blindness. We know that God does not listen to sinners; he does listen to people who respect him and do what he wants them to do. Since the beginning of the world nobody has ever heard of anyone giving sight to a blind person. Unless this man came from God, he would not be able to do this thing." They answered, "You were born and brought up in sin - and you are trying to teach us?" And they expelled him from the synagogue (John 9:24-34).

The man, unlettered beggar though he was, would not be bullied. He first acknowledged, perhaps with a touch of irony, that he was no theologian and therefore as not qualified to pass on whether Jesus was a sinner or not. In any event, that was not the real issue. The real issue was what had happened to him, and in that area he was an expert. Better than anyone else, he knew that he had been blind all his life and now he could see.

We would do well to follow this man's example when our faith is under attack. We may sometimes feel threatened by the clever and scholarly arguments against our faith by sophisticated unbelievers. When such an attack occurs, we should avoid the areas where we are ignorant and instead affirm the things we know for certain. Better than anyone else in the world, we know what our Lord has done for us.

Not only was the man not intimidated by their efforts, he even assumed the offensive. He reminded them that he had already gone over the details of the healing, but they did not hear - that is, they had not listened. He followed this with a thrust that was tinged with sarcasm: Will you be his disciples?

This simple and unlearned beggar saw what they were up to, and, unlike his parents, refused to cringe before them. With each exchange, he seemed to be more sure of himself, and step by step his faith in Christ grew.

The theme of light is a prominent one in the Gospel of John. Physical light is a positive thing. Darkness, which is nothing more than the absence of light, cannot exist wherever there is light. Yet the mere existence of light does not mean that it automatically benefits man. For man to realize the blessings of light, he must have eyes capable of seeing and he must be willing to open his eyes and use them.

In their efforts to silence the man born blind, the religious authorities used against him the strongest weapon they had short of physical violence. By casting him out of the synagogue they hoped to accomplish two things: First, they hoped to isolate him from others so that he would not infect them with his heresy. Second, they hoped that he would be so intimidated that he would submit to them. Excommunication would cut him off socially from his family and his friends. But the man's rejection proved in the end to be not a disaster but a blessing. He had not been rejected; he remained in the synagogue, the chances are good that he would have been persuaded eventually to forget about Jesus.



Toni L. Henry
.....Talented actress



Sharon Y. Harrison
.....Enjoys reading



Ashly D. Harden
....."Miss Upward Bound"



Lorraine D. Hall
.....Latin Club member

Feelings Pang Of "Excitement" As Annual Cotillion Ball Draws Closer

As the days wind down, the 41 young ladies who make up the debutantes of the 1985 Delta Sigma Theta's Annual Cotillion Ball are no doubt feeling pangs of excitement.

Cotillion Coordinators, Royce E. Buck and Dorothy P. Johnson, have planned for the event carefully. The final details for the March 23rd affair are being analyzed and, of course, the young ladies are looking into several shops for just the right gown.

Each member of the Delta Sigma Theta Charlotte Alumnae Chapter takes pride in presenting the Cotillion. This year the event will be held at 9 p.m., March 23, at the Park Center.

The sorority is led by an illustrious group of women. Officers include Elaine T. Brown, president; Daisy Spears Stroud, vice president; Madge Hopkins, recording secretary; Michel Vaughn, corresponding secretary; Toni Freeman, financial secretary; and Kay Cunningham, treasurer.

Other officers include June Smith as historian; Linda Brown, journalist; Eunice Gist, chaplain; Natalie Holmes, custodian; Doris Johnson, parliamentarian; Rogerline Lee, sergeant at arms; and E. Virginia Shadd, chairman of membership.

These ladies along with the other members of the sorority are working hard to improve the community as a whole. The Cotillion is just one function the ladies sponsor to improve the self-actualization of youth.

This week, five more Delta Debutantes are featured. They are Regina D. Hairston, Lorraine Denise Hall, Ashly Dena Harden,



Regina D. Hairston
.....Honor student

Sharon Yvette Harrison, and Toni Lavon Henry.

Ms. Hairston is the daughter of Helen Hairston and the late Reginald D. Hairston. Her hobbies include music and sports. She is a member of West Charlotte High School's marching band, concert band, a member of the Order of the Lion, Ambassadors, the Spanish Club, and the track team.

She is also a member of the Annual Staff, a member of Junior Achievement and a Student Council Representative.

Her personal accomplishments include being elected as council representative, receiving the "Outstanding Student Award," the Track Award, being included in the National Junior Honor Society and the Order of the Lion.

Presbyterian Hospital Sets State Record For Hospital Births

Presbyterian Hospital delivered more babies in 1984 than any other hospital in the state.

Breaking its 1982 record of 4,787 births, Presbyterian delivered 4,830 babies last year (247 more than in 1983), edging past Winston-Salem's Forsyth Memorial Hospital's 4,791 total and topping Fayetteville's Cape Fear Valley Medical Center's 4,350 births. Forsyth held the 1983 record.

"Our family-centered maternity program is very popular with families," says Presbyterian President Byron L. Bullard. "We believe it's because we combine the latest in technology with a wide range of options helping the entire family feel a part of this special experience."

A new early discharge program, for example, allows the new mother to return home within four hours of giving birth if she and the baby are well and arrangements have been made with both her physician and

the baby's. Families also may select the birthing room, where in a home-style setting labor, delivery and bonding all take place in one room.

Before delivery, Presbyterian offers tours for expectant parents. For big brothers and sisters, the hospital conducts special sibling tours, including a peek at Mom's room, a visit to the nursery, and learning about caring for the new baby.

For high-risk newborns, two physicians specializing in newborn care and teams of skilled nurses staff a neonatal intensive care unit around the clock.

All of these and other maternity services will be enhanced and expanded this fall when a \$12.5 million three-story addition to Presbyterian is completed. All labor and delivery services will be consolidated on the sixth floor unit, offering 12 home-style birthing rooms and an expanded neonatal unit with 16 bassinets. The scheduled opening is October, 1985.

Non-Custodial

There is genuine trauma involved for a woman when she has to give up custody of her children after divorce. A six-week workshop for "Non-Custodial Mothers: Coping as a Non-Custodial" begins February 7 (Thursday) from 8:30-8:30 p.m. at the WomanReach Center. Terry Healy will facilitate this timely workshop.

For more information and to register call a WomanReach peer-counselor Monday-Saturday 10-4 p.m. at 334-3514.

All women are welcome at WomanReach, where all services are free, a United Way Agency. WomanReach facilities are handicapped accessible.



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Preparing For SAT

One of the most important pieces of information on any student's college application is his or her score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Therefore, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Office of Continuing Education and Extension will offer a three-day review session, "Preparing for the SAT," March 2, 9 and 16.

Both the verbal and mathematical sections of the SAT will be analyzed, and students will practice taking each part of the test. Verbal preparation will include work with antonyms, analogies, sentence completion, and reading comprehension. Mathematical preparation will consist of 12 hours of intensive practice designed to make the student aware of the degree of difficulty and the amount of calculation required in this section of the SAT.

Instructors for the review session are Dr. Evelyn Davis of the UNCC Counseling Center and Dr. Thom Clark, both of the UNCC College of Education and Allied Professions. Registration cost is \$80, which covers all materials including the textbook.

The session meets from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day. Both high school seniors and juniors are encouraged to attend. Upcoming SAT testing dates are March 23, May 4, and June 1.

Early registration is encouraged due to high interest.

For further information, contact Betty Walter or Ken Burrows at the Continuing Education Office (704) 597-4447 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.



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