

14 John 2:23-25 Jesus Knows What Is In You

(August 2nd Park)

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to look at a passage in which Jesus calls out people who have surface faith rather than saving faith. Knowing the difference between surface faith and saving faith and acting accordingly could be the difference between heaven and hell.

Our text is John 2:23- through John 3:3.

READING THE TEXT

John 2:23-3:3 (ESV)

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.**24** But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people **25** and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

3:1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2** This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that

you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Let's digest this text a few bites at a time.

PREACHING THE TEXT - John 2:23-3:3 (ESV)

²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name **when they saw the signs that he was doing.**

FAITH BASED ON SIGNS

People believed Jesus was special because of the signs and wonders that He performed. They believed there was something special about Jesus. They had a surface faith that acknowledged Jesus was special but many of them did not have saving faith. God was at work through this man Jesus. The “man upstairs was doing cool stuff.” People knew where to go if they wanted a miracle.

Many of these people came for the show and spectacle of Jesus. Some came because they need something from Him. Others came because they were jealous of Jesus and the attention He was getting. So they came to convince others to stop paying attention to Him.

Let's look first at those who have a **surface faith** whose aim is to steal God's glory for themselves.

Mark 8:11

¹¹The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven **to test him.** ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."¹³ And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

Calvin on "Testing Him":

By this word (Testing) the Evangelist means that it was not with honest intentions, nor from a desire of

instruction, but by cunning and deceit, that they demanded ... what they imagined was not in his power. Regarding him as utterly ... despicable, they had no other design than to expose his weakness, and to destroy all the applause which he had hitherto obtained among the people.

These same religious leaders had either witnessed or heard about the miracles of Jesus. Even if they had a 1000 miracles they would not come to saving faith. They were blinded by their jealousy and **Jesus was in the way of their next “pride fix”**.

They had their flowing robes and a good handle on the rule book and on the ceremonies and rituals of the religious law. Their strong desire was that others be impressed with them. They were looking for the intoxicating pride fix they received when people fawned, and wished their children to grow up to be like them one day. **Jesus was in the way of their pride fix.**

They demanded miracles from Jesus so that they could mock or disprove Jesus in some way. And if they

saw a miracle they would say that Jesus worked miracles in the power of Satan. They would not be convinced.

This reminds me of people who go to church all their life but know nothing about brokenness, humility or spiritual discernment. They want the spotlight and recognition. Church is a place to politic and sway people and become a power broker. At home they are just the guy who forgot to take out the trash. But at church they have the right connections and wield power and feel like they are someone special. God's people should be so impressed with them.

You may have a surface faith instead of saving faith if you rush to politic rather than pray. And if someone should bring up an idea that is born out of prayer and fasting, you oppose them rather than hearing them out and praying for discernment. Those who use the church to fuel their pride will turn against you when you share things that God has brought to your mind. You are stealing their recognition and control.

Now in moments of weakness all of us have been tempted by pride. God does a great job of correcting us. You may have slipped into a pride response and perhaps today God will move your heart to become open to the input of others who are praying and listening to God. If your first response to a proposal or idea is to rush to others and convince them of your position then it is time to go to God and get things right. Our first response should always be to pray first and discern the will of God first. Convincing others is last.

Another group of people come to Jesus because they need something from Him. They are so broken physically, emotionally, spiritually or relationally that only Jesus can fix them. Leprosy, demons, and crippling conditions are something that only Jesus could deal with completely. So people came to Jesus for their miracle. A great example is in our text.

I WANT THE MIRACLE WITHOUT FOLLOWING HIM

John 4:46-49

⁴⁶ So (Jesus) came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus detects something in this man and also in the crowd. This man loves what Jesus can do for him and his son. But that is all they want from Jesus. They want His miracles but they do not desire to follow Him. They have not been given the faith to believe Jesus for salvation and to cry out in brokenness. Jesus responded with these words;

⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.”

Jesus is telling him and others in the crowd that there is more to Him than miracles. Miracles authenticate Jesus is the Messiah and Savior. But receiving miracles is not the same as receiving Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior.

DEMONS TO UNBELIEF

In my life I may have had the privilege of praying for somewhere around 300 people who have been demonized to one degree or another. This includes probably about a dozen people in the past year. In the cases in which demons were cast out and relief was experienced only 5 people in the past year and perhaps half of those in that past 20 years have truly come to faith in Jesus Christ.

They wanted myself or the prayer teams I worked with to get rid of their pain and fear and demonic harassment. But once the pain was removed it was party time.

This reminds me of the lepers who were healed and only one returned to thank Jesus. Desperation drives people to Jesus for answers, but after the healing and miracles are distant memories the true heart of a person is revealed. Some loved the miracles of Jesus but they did not love Jesus nor did they truly worship or desire to submit their lives to Him.

So the first group we mentioned hears about miracles or God sightings and mocks and dismisses because the power of The Spirit is a threat to their power and control.

The second group are people want a miracle from Jesus but they do not want to follow Him or love Him or worship Him. Surface faith verse saving faith. Which one do you have today?

FLOCK TO MIRACLE WORKERS

Many people today follow so called miracle workers. They go to huge convention centers to see charismatic people do mentalist tricks to make people fall over or bark and run around like crazy people. They are so desperate for a miracle they flock by the thousands to anyone who promises a miracle....until the so called miracle worker runs off with the money....or is caught with a prostitute.

People will try anything when they are desperate. But you can't just "try" Jesus for a few days, long enough to sneak a healing out of Him and also be saved and have a transformed heart and life.

So Jesus warns this official and the crowd about loving the miracles more than they love, worship and obey Jesus. How does the official respond to the correction of Jesus?

⁴⁹ The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

In other words, “*never mind about faith and repentance and following you*” just get on with it and give me the miracle. Heal my son. And Jesus does.

Later in the story this man’s son is healed and he begins to reflect more deeply on the faith. He ends up **moving from surface faith to saving faith**. But he is the exception, not the rule. Many in the crowd will leave Jesus when they hear about the cost of following Him. They want the sideshow and surface faith, not saving faith.

QUESTION: Are you looking for surface faith or saving faith? Are you looking for the benefits of being called a Christian but you want none of the responsibility to follow Jesus daily and die to yourself and your desires?

Jesus rebukes them and says that their faith is based on miracles and signs. They have a surface faith but they do not have saving faith. That is why Jesus held back something from them.

Jesus is interested in investing in the broken and humble. If you are broken and humble Jesus has time for you and so do I. But if you want to use Jesus for a miracle or you want to use the church to massage your pride then Jesus will withhold Himself from you. Pride will take over and destroy you and others around you. That is what Jesus meant in verse 24.

(John 2 continued) vs 24 **But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people**

HE KNOWS ALL PEOPLE INCLUDING YOU

The reason Jesus withholds Himself from some people is that He knows our hearts better than we know ourselves. We can lie to ourselves and fail to truly examine our own motivations. Jesus knows the inner

motivations of all 7 Billion people on the planet in real time.

John 10:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

When Jesus entrusts Himself to you that means He has put His Spirit inside of you so that you can know Him, and discern His will for your life. He has found a broken and humble heart in you and has not withheld Himself from you.

Do you want to use Jesus for your purposes? Or is The Holy Spirit drawing you to know Him, love Him and follow Him? Do you have surface faith or saving faith today? If you have surface faith then you will ask what God can do for you.

(John 2 continued) vs 25 **(He) needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.**
NO SECRETS FROM JESUS

There are no secrets from Jesus. You may have been able to hide something all your life from everyone on this earth. But you have not hidden it from Jesus. The person who matters most knows most. The person whose judgment about you is all important knows all.

You are totally known. Totally. There is not the slightest part of your heart unknown to Jesus, at this hour.

You may be able to look at others in the face and know that they do not know certain things about you. This shapes your relationships. But there is one who when you look him in the face sees totally through you. This utter knowing should lead us into brokenness and humility.

If you are following Him just to get something from Him He knows even though you have not been honest with yourself. If you are using His name or the church to fuel your ego He knows even if you have not examined your motives. Jesus knows your inner motives completely. He knows your own heart better than you know yourself.

He knows whether you have surface faith or saving faith. If you seek Him honestly today Jesus can show you what is in your heart that is keeping you from following Him or loving others. He can reveal to you things in your life that are hurting you or others around you.

How does being totally known by Jesus affect us? When you come to Jesus you come to someone who knows every single thing about you. He knows every sin. Every failure. Every careless word you have spoken. He knows when you will succeed and when you will fail. And knowing all that He knows about you He thought it was worthwhile to die for your sin and call you into His grace and love. He knew every one of your failures and yet He is willing to adopted you as a son or daughter even today.

Every one of us have hidden something from others. We have hidden things from others in church and even from our husband or wife. But nothing is hidden from Jesus. He knows you and He has decided to love you and die for your sin. He offers you a new life in His name.

What will you do with Jesus today? Will you keep playing the game of hiding your sins and motivations from others? Jesus can see it all. You are fooling no one.

Come to Jesus today. Come in humility. Examine your motivations today. Come in humility. Perhaps today is the day Jesus is calling you to repent of your sin that you have kept hidden from others. Do not resist your day of freedom. Come and confess. Come and repent. Come and ask for prayer for whatever need you have today.

Perhaps you have been using God but you have not been submitting to God's will for your life. Today could be the day you get that right with God. Perhaps you have been reacting rather than praying and discerning. Today God can deliver you and give you a clean start.

Pastor Brian will give you an invitation in a few minutes. First we have the privilege of hearing from someone who was healed by Jesus and who has decided to follow Him wholeheartedly. Listen to this testimony. Perhaps God will call you in the same way to receive Him or get right with Him.

OFFERING & SPECIAL MUSIC

Kami goes right into a quick testimony

TESTIMONIES

Kami Scott / Dave K ??

ALTAR CALL / CLOSING

Brian, offer to pray with people. They can come forward for prayer while others are dismissed when the music begins to play.

TEN MINUTE BREAK BEFORE BAPTISM CEREMONY