

John 9:18-23
Counting The Cost Naming The Name

REVIEW / INTRODUCTION

John Chapter 9 is the story (or narrative) about Jesus healing a blind man and then observing the way various people react to His work. Last week Pastor Dave spoke about the reaction of the Pharisees to the healing of the blind man. They stood in the position of judge and jury. Rather than celebrating God sightings they usually took the negative approach looking for ways to disqualify and disregard. If you kiss their ring you might be in. If you challenge their authority and call out the rules and application of rules that they made up and added to the bible then they became vicious. That is the setting in which this man was called to account for his healing. Despite the pressure of knowing that the pharisees wanted to kill Jesus; this formerly blind man openly attributed his healing to Jesus.

Today you will see the reaction of the blind man's parents who are called to vouch that this was their son and that he was born blind. Their reaction is a bit different than that of their son.

READING THE TEXT

John 9:18-23

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 21 But how he

now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” 22 (His parents 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.) 23 Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

PREACHING THE TEXT

John 9:18-23

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight,...

“The Jews” in this text is primarily a reference to the Pharisees who were the religious leaders and religious police of Israel. And the first assumption of the religious leaders is that they did not believe the miracle account. Their assumption is like that of most skeptics who say things like; *“there must be a logical explanation.”* They supposedly represent God but they do not believe that the power of God is displayed as a normal occurrence in the lives of ordinary men and women. Their assumption is that God only goes to work when they are around and leading the show.

These so called religious leaders are mirrored by some of the false teaching among many churches that believe God could not possibly show up and do anything significant unless a priest or a paid professional is nearby. How DARE this Jesus not get our permission to go heal people

and cast out demons. We forbid God to work in such a way because it breaks some of our rules...or at least the application of our rules.

So Jesus shows up among the blind and lame and common crowds of people and even among the lepers who supposedly made him ceremonially unclean. In this case Jesus did a miracle right out in the open in front of witnesses but in their desperation to disbelieve they cast doubt that this man in front of them healed of blindness was even the same man....

Vs 18 continued until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind?

Many in the crowd are convinced and now the parents of this blind man confirm that not only is this their son but he was born blind. And now the deck is so stacked in favor of the truth that a blind man was healed that the Pharisees would reveal their cold hearts if they still refused to acknowledge the simple truth; a blind man regained his sight. Rather than assuming that Jesus had healed this man they acted confused. It could not be Jesus that healed this man. There must be another explanation. So they asked the formerly blind man; ...

How then does he now see?”

It could not be Jesus because He is on our poo poo list. So please give us some other answer about how He was healed.

To be honest there are times that a hint of this kind of negative assumption has been present in me. Early in my ministry I was a bit jealous of others who had succeeded in ministry. And there were times that some people led by the Spirit saw amazing results and because I was jealous of them and did not see the same results in “my” ministry I approached as a skeptic. There are some who were genuine God fearing people who prayed and received clear answers to prayer. But I was the chief skeptic. Was it my need to be in control? Was it all the phoney healings and false signs and wonders ministries that steal people’s so called seed money? Something had turned me skeptical and caused my first reaction to be one of doubting. So I am not hating on the Pharisees because we have all been Pharisees at one time or another in our lives. But we must not stay there.

So the Pharisees who speak for the group want to find another explanation for this miracle that does not include Jesus. They would rather the healing come from a limp wristed lackey that they could control. The problem is that God does not usually work miracles through limp wristed political hacks. So they ask the man’s parents how their son was healed. And whether it was the body language or their brutal history of killing the prophets the parent knew there would be a cost in giving glory to Jesus. There always is!

²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.

So they testify to the truth that this is their son. They testify that he was born blind. He was probably missing his eyes from birth or they were

so damaged that even the best surgeons of today would not be able to restore his sight.

REACTION TO THE INCREDIBLE:

Let's pause our story here and call out the obvious. If you have something either spectacular that occurs in your life or something out of the ordinary what is the first thing you do? We always share amazing occurrences and answers to prayer with our closest friends and our family. If I had a cancer diagnosis and it looked deadly what would happen if I suddenly was healed or a procedure worked and all the cancer was gone, but I failed to call my mother and update her?

I am assuming that this man either told his parents that Jesus had healed him or certainly someone shared with them the account.

Human nature makes it likely that the parents know. There is a hint in the text that **the parents change their testimony based on fear**. They acknowledge this is their son but here is the rest of their testimony;

²¹ But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself."

His parents do what our politicians do. They play ignorant and deflect rather than answering honestly. We know they are failing to be honest because of verse 22.

²² (His parents 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.)²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

BECAUSE THEY FEARED

It is obvious from the text that his parents knew their son was healed by Jesus. Either their son or a family member ran to the house just like any of us would and update his parents (“you won’t believe what happened, Jesus put dirt in your sons eyes and created a new set of eyeballs! Your son can see.....come and check it out...hurry...they are down by the gate)!

So now they are called in front of the world champions of legalism. They did not deny their son. But they denied Jesus. Their denial was similar to that of Peter who pretended that he did not know Jesus or have anything to do with him. He did so to spare his own neck.

They denied Jesus to spare their own necks. Now let’s not be too judgmental toward the parents because all of us have either denied Jesus or been tempted to deny Him.

CHRIST FOLLOWERS PAY A PRICE

Let’s think about some of the ways that this applies to us. Some of us are surrounded by friends that believe in Jesus Christ. But I would venture to guess that every single one of us face circumstances on a regular basis in which we have to decide whether we will acknowledge Jesus or deny Him.

Co-Workers & Supervisors - there were several occasions in my former food service career in which people complimented me for having a positive

and upbeat attitude. So the reason I am positive and upbeat is because I know that Jesus Christ has designed my life. He has redeemed me from the pit. He literally pulled me off the cliff when I was suicidal. He healed me and set me free of many addictions and especially the addiction of self pity. And now I have joy because I have a hope and purpose and vision and a future that has been set before me by the King of The Universe. Yes I am positive.

But when I was asked by my counseling supervisor for my Master in Counseling why I am I so upbeat...I hesitated? She was an atheist and an activist against Christian causes. Will I say; *“well, I’m not sure why I’m so upbeat. I guess a positive attitude helps me function better.”* **Or** will I rightly give God the glory even if there might be a cost involved? What is His glory and His name worth to me?

Last year you heard of several high level executives being fired not because of poor performance but because they hold to a Biblical view of marriage, and they were not hating on anyone. There are some places that Christians do not get promoted unless they give up your core beliefs.

Dating in High School & College - How many of us have been in a situation in which we have been very attracted to someone. We know that they are not a believer. But we want them so much that we fail to tell him about our faith in Jesus. After all if he finds out you are a believer and knows that believers do not put out he might leave. The pressure in High School is enormous. Truthfully it always has been. Even back in my day.

Life or Death - And then there are our brothers and sisters overseas who live in the middle east and in places like Cuba. In the last 3 to 4 months many Christians were executed or jailed for their faith in Cuba. And in the middle east our heroes are dying for their faith never denying Him even if their life depends on it. Contrary to the word faith heresy sometimes God tests our faith by giving us the honor of dying for His name to receive glory upon glory in heaven. The bible constantly calls us to remember that we are temporary citizens of this world. Don't love the world so much that you will trade your confession in for something or someone who has no power to get you into heaven.

STORY: A Martyr's Tale of Courage

Jonathan Huss gave his life because he stood for uncorrupted practices based on God's word.

Martin Luther at the diet or council at worms was forced to recant his teaching that we are saved by grace through faith alone. If he did not recant he faced a death sentence.

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. God help me. Amen. - (Martin Luther)

PASSAGES:

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Matthew 10:33

but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Mark 8:34

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

2 Corinthians 12:10

¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

TAKING IT HOME

1. If your friends or coworkers asked you about how you find hope (even when times are difficult) what would you say?
2. What are one or two conversations you wish you could have back.
You know looking back that you chickened out from sharing your faith when there was a clear opening and a prompting of The Holy Spirit?

3. What are some ways that you can ready yourself so that when it is time to either share your faith or deny Jesus Christ you will be ready?

Note: God is not calling us to jam Jesus down the throats of others. He is not calling us to force Jesus into conversations. But He is calling us to be ready to have an answer when The Holy Spirit moves people around you to seek hope, healing and meaning in life. Jesus is real and has done very real things in your life. Your testimony is simply repeating without shame what Jesus had done for you, especially how He saved you and filled you with the Holy Spirit and His joy.