

Simple Wisdom From Above
John 9:28-34

We are in the fourth dialogue after the healing of the man born blind. And this is the second time that the Pharisees have questioned this man. And what they try to do is amp up the pressure for him to recant of his former confession that Jesus had miraculously healed him. Look at verse 24, **“So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, ‘Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.’”** Give glory to God is basically saying and calling on the man to admit his deception and come clean. God knows about it and so do we. We know Jesus is not from God and we are in the know. And the blind man does not try to give more information or knowledge than he knows, but look at what his response in verse 25, **“He answered, ‘Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.’”** He hasn’t been sitting at Jesus’ feet, and although he has his conclusions about Jesus, he tells what he definitely knows - “I was blind, now I see.” An authentic miracle took place, and it had to come from the hands of God.

And the Pharisees are no doubt frustrated and taken a back at this simple but clear and powerful testimony but try to pressure him to find some inconsistency in his testimony in verse 26, **“They said to him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’”** They are asking him the how of the healing, and again, it is the wrong question. They might be looking for some rational or natural explanation. The correct question is if this is a valid miracle, which it is, then who did it? It is the who that we are taken up with. But he knows that they have no interest in Jesus, and his testimony becomes that much more bold and clear in the next verse, **“He answered them, ‘I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?’”** He knows by asking these questions again that they have ulterior motives. They really have no desire to find the truth. So he becomes a little more bold. He asks if they want to become disciples of his or followers, which would have infuriated them.

No doubt the Pharisees are convinced in their minds that Jesus is not the Christ, and therefore are not open to listening to anything or anyone, and here is the amazing thing - they are not even open to listening to God. But what comes out of that is greater hostility. And we many times are not prepared for that. Many times we want the best and highest for people, and that is they might come to Christ. But what we are met with is a greater hostility. Many families and friendships have been torn apart because of who Jesus is, and our claim that he is the Christ the Saviour of the world. And what comes the more the light shines is the darkness tries to cover it, no matter how clear the light and evidence of Jesus Christ. But what comes in the heart of the believer is a greater conviction of who Jesus is, and a greater boldness many times in our witness of Christ. God takes the affliction that we go through and the opposition and causes us to grow in our love and devotion for Christ. He sanctifies the believer.

So often people say that I wish I had the faith of that person as they suffer for Christ or go through some affliction, and the reason why we do not is because we have not gone through it. If God calls us to go through that opposition he always gives the grace to go through whatever opposition and trial we go through. And not only go

through it but to grow in grace. To love Christ. His word actually becomes more real and we love him more. And in this passage you see both of these elements. You see the clearer the light, the more fierce the opposition. But you also see the child of God grow in a time where we would think it would wane. This should encourage us with whatever we are going through and whatever darkness.

1. First, we see the growing opposition. Vv. 28-29.

As the man who received his sight from Christ is questioned more and more, the light of Christ becomes more clear. His personhood and his work becomes more necessary. And that growing conviction begins to change him. But not only does a growing conviction of Jesus change a person, but also a defiance to Jesus and his servants will also change you. People become actually more bitter and hateful, and do things that they never thought they would do. The Pharisees would have never imagined that they would condemn and even labour for the execution of an innocent man, and then celebrate that death. Religious pride and rejection of the light of Christ will always change individuals.

With this in mind, look at verse 28, **“And they reviled him, saying, ‘You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.’**” Now the English word “revile” does not do justice to the strength of the Greek word that is used here. It is basically pronouncing an anathema against the person, that he is worthy of the judgement of God and of hell itself. He is the absolute worst of sinners. And isn’t this so often the case, especially when people are exposed, their sin is exposed, and Christ is proclaimed, when other arguments and objections are silenced then name calling begins. Their sin has been exposed. They do not want to know the truth about Jesus. This trial is all a charade of a to condemn Jesus. It is sin and falsehood.

They revile him, and look at what they accuse him of - “You are his disciple.” It is amazing that believers were first called Christians at Antioch, and it was a derogatory term. But believers didn’t mind being called “little-Christians.” And here is another term we esteem, and that is “disciple of Christ.” But when those who hate Jesus use it as a derogatory term. “You are not one of those Bible thumpers are you?” Praise God I am. But here is the thing: believers do not need a neon sign saying I am a follower of Christ but it will become evident that they are by the way that they speak and act and handle themselves and live. It will become so evident. And that is like this man’s life. It is absolutely clear that he is one of Jesus’ disciples.

But they counter, “but we are disciples of Moses,” and make a distinction that you are either following the teaching of Moses or the teaching of Jesus as if they are exclusive from one another. This is an amazing statement in light of what Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 5:45-47, **“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”** Moses wrote of Jesus. If they truly believed the writings of Moses then they would know who Jesus is and would have trusted in him. But there are many that hide behind the teachings of Moses rather than Christ. I have heard it so many times, as long as you keep the Ten

Commandments you will be alright. In other words, because of my stellar life I will be alright, I do not need Jesus.

Also there are other Christian groups, such as old line Fundamentalism that trusted more in their piety than in Jesus Christ. They dressed a certain way, they ostracized themselves from others instead of being witnesses of Christ. They stayed away from movie theatres or whatever, and it is not saying that we do not love the world or the things of the world. But in their opinion they were the only ones going to heaven, and they took more pride in their lifestyle than trusting in Christ alone for salvation. And so often people describe their faith in God or relationship with God even in Christian circles by some other standard rather than faith in Christ's finished work. As the hymn writer writes, **"my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name!"**

Look how their objection of this man continues, **"We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."** This whole section drenched in the knowledge that the Pharisees say that they have, and here they state what they do know, and then state what they do not know. They have just said that we know that this man is a sinner. They claim that we know that God spoke from Moses but know nothing of Jesus. And it is amazing to look at their hatred of Jesus, because they will not even name his name in this passage. He is always "this man." But it is amazing because they say they do not know where he comes from, but the reader does. The reader know that he has come from above. And now they are evading the whole incident. They are basically saying there is no way to tell where this man comes from, but we know Moses, and we know he is from God, and we know this man does not line up with Moses, so we cannot tell whether a miracle has taken place or where this man is from.

Again, it is incredible to see the lengths of unbelief. That is what unbelief does. It does not exist because of a lack of evidence. It exists because an individual does not want to believe. And they might go from a state of ignorance of not knowing about Jesus, to knowing about him, but just because that state changes doesn't mean that they believe. They many times grow in their determination to reject him. You can see that so clear in this passage. But is a good warning to us also, because we can grow in having hard hearts about certain sins in our life. We can feel that regret and remorse when we first do them, but then harden our hearts and continue on. We have to remember we are hardening our hearts against Jesus, and we are growing not in faith but unbelief. Today is the day of repentance and trust in Christ.

2. We need to see the growing faith of the believer. V.30-34

When a person comes to believe on Jesus, he is given a new nature. He becomes a new creature in Christ. And that new life cannot be stamped out, but at the same time, it will grow. It is one of the marks of the true believer. There will be fruit in our lives. And one aspect of that fruit is a growing conviction about the person and work of Christ. The world may not see it, but there is such wisdom in a simple testimony of a person who is in Christ. But there is also a growing testimony of the person in Christ. It is glorious to see what we were when we came to Christ we are not now. We have grown in our convictions and even in the way that we articulate those truths of Christ and what they mean to us.

You can see that in this passage. The more he ponders the work of Christ in his life the clearer it becomes. Where the Pharisees are growing in their unbelief, his convictions are growing and he is glowing from clarity to a greater clarity in his spiritual sight. Look back at verse 15, **“So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, ‘He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.’”** Very truthful but does not say too much about Jesus. Now look at the beginning of the second interview, in verse 25, **“He answered, ‘Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.’”** So much stronger. They want to get off course and talk about his character and ignore the miracle, but a miracle has taken place. He really put him in his place, and did so with very little knowledge.

But that conviction of Jesus has grown. Look at 30, **“The man answered, ‘Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.’”** The man now instead of fearing these men and being maybe overwhelmed at being in the presence of such educated men, sees how much they really do not know or what is so obvious that it is astonishing that they miss it or will not admit it. And here is the amazing thing: out of all the people that could give an authoritative answer as to where Jesus originates from it was the religious leaders, especially after he opened the blind man’s eyes. In fact, this is not even something that is difficult given all that God had said about Messiah coming and what he would do. They know passages like Isaiah 35:5, **“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.”**

And then this man does something incredible, he appeals to these men or reasons with them from the Scripture. They say Scripture is on their side, and there is no way of knowing the origin of this man, but look at what he says here, **“We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.”** This is not a denial of the sinfulness of man but a simple truth that God hears those who worship him and trust in him. Psalm 66:16-19, says, **“Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.”** Proverbs 15:29, **“The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.”** This is an undeniable truth that no doubt they have even taught.

So look at his conclusion in the next couple of verses, **“Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”** Now, look at what he says because this is not exaggeration. He says, never one born blind has that person received his sight. You can look at all the signs and wonders in the time of Moses and the prophets, and you never see this miracle, but it is prophesied that when Messiah comes he will give sight to the blind. And by saying this statement he realizes that Jesus is more than a prophet, and that he is none other than the Christ - the long awaited Messiah. This man is from God. He is God’s servant. He is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. And I find this extraordinary that here is this simple man and the tables are

turned. They put him on trial and tried to teach him, and with this response he puts their views and conclusions of trial and teaches them.

And there is a glorious lesson here that we need to see - as we walk according to the light that God has given, God gives more light. This is one of the reasons why God's children so often are so immature, and walk in darkness is that they have not been seeking and walking in the light of Christ. They have not availed themselves of the opportunities of learning God's Word when the church doors are opened. They cannot seek to practice and live in light of what they do not open. No doubt this former blind man knew all the glorious promises of Messiah and how he would give sight, and after the miracle, and thinking and pondering Jesus more light is given. And the one who no doubt was looked upon as a poor fool, becomes a rich beacon of wisdom and truth. And yet the message and evidence of the truth of Christ is so easy and simple to see.

And you would think anyone in their right mind would relent and would admit they are wrong and repent and trust in the obvious - that Jesus is the Messiah. But not only do they have a hatred of Jesus but any who would claim that Jesus is the God-man and the Saviour of the Word. Look at their response, "**They answered him, 'You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?' And they cast him out.**" There response is not even to consider the obvious. They do not answer the words of the poor beggar. They just look down on him. If he was born blind it must be because of the sin of his parents - an error that Jesus refuted at the beginning of the chapter. But here are these proud men, and educated men, and they are not going to be taught by a poor, uneducated beggar. And really, at this point it didn't matter if he was the most wise scribe in all of Israel, the message was going to be rejected. They just really did not have any way to refute what he said.

And look at what they do to him, "**And they cast him out.**" Now, here is something that should have been celebrated in all Jerusalem and all of Israel. Here is one that could not even worship in the Temple. And here our brother can see and has been whole. Our brother has come home. And what they do is excommunicate him from Jewish society and worship. He cannot and will not be allowed to go to the Temple. People are to mark him out and have nothing to do with him. And the reason why is his identification with Jesus Christ.

And there is such a lesson for us. If you do everything that the people do at work, your neighbours do, and your extended family, you will be accepted and welcomed by them. But when you speak and live for Jesus you will not be welcomed. Individuals do not want you in their presence. And why? It is because of Jesus, just like this man here. But oh to be counted among the faithful! Jesus said in Matthew 5:11-12, "**Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**" This is a sign that this man is one of His. The more we grow the more the antagonism grows many times, but the more the light of Christ shines through. This is the amazing thing about this section - there is so much darkness, but the light in the midst of that darkness is so brilliant. God has called us to be light, and like this man - a growing light for the glory of Christ our Saviour.