

The Most Important Question John 9:35-41

We have going through this fascinating chapter, and we have seen Jesus do something amazing at the beginning of the chapter, and that is give sight to the man who had been born blind. And then we have various different dialogues and even interrogations as far as what has happened to this man. Something that should have been celebrated has become something of a curse to this man. The people of Jerusalem have turned their backs on him, his parents have not defended him but have abandoned him not wanting to be identified with him, and now he has been banished by the leaders of Jerusalem. The religious leaders threw him out of the temple, they literally banished him from the assembly, and therefore to have anything to do with him would end up in them being banished. And yet, as he knew an authentic miracle had taken place. He seemed like he was all alone. Wow, have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt totally ostracized by the world or rejected by family or maybe have so few friends at school or whatever? And much of it has to do with your identification with Jesus Christ.

And think of how this chapter has been put together. After the healing of this man, Jesus has been absent. The whole chapter has been about him and his identity. But he has been absent, but we have this last paragraph where he reappears. We see him come back, and look at what verse 35 says, **“Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’”** We think of the hardship suffered by this man who seems all alone and abandoned that so often we miss the absolute grace of Jesus Christ in the chapter. Jesus sought out this man and healed him. This man was not looking for a healing. And then after Jesus hears about him being thrust out of the temple he seeks him out again.

And that is the amazing thing in all of our anxiety and all our troubles is that we feel all alone. But we often say this as believers, and I think we think of this more of sentimentality rather than fact. And that is that we are never alone. We have a Saviour that knows of our distresses and really cares for us. Notice Jesus knows that he had been cast aside, and knows the reason. The reason was because of his miracle and the determination of this man not to say that Jesus was a fraud or that he was not from God. But Jesus not only sought him out but he found him. And again, whatever you are going through, whatever deep waters and trials are in your life, know that you are never alone. Jesus said that he will never leave us or forsake us, that he is with us to the end of this age, and he is God in human flesh. You have God’s Word that you are not in it alone. He has not only found you but he is with you.

The other thing to see in this passage is that Jesus cares about this man deeply. He has already proven that through the healing, but there is something more necessary in his life, and that he needs to be healed spiritual. He like every person here tonight will spend eternity somewhere. It is not a matter of whether we will live after this life but where. And that is where this chapter goes. It indicates that although this man has recognized who Jesus is, that is a man from God, he truly has not seen spiritually who he is. And again, it is fascinating that so many would be miracle workers today blame the sicknesses and the diseases of others on their lack of faith. There is no reason for Jesus to ask the question that he ask unless this man is not a believer. Jesus can heal

whoever he wants to heal. But the main message here is that Jesus cares. He really does. He cares about the destiny of sinners. And even though we do not deserve his care and grace he comes to us. He seeks out sinners. And it really is a rebuke to our Christianity that is so concerned about politics or about job security or other aspects of life that we are never burdened for the greatest needs of those around us. Every single person will spend eternity somewhere. We are sent as his ambassadors to speak forth a message. We are to love others enough to truly seek them out. And I want us to see that tonight. I want us to see Jesus challenge to this man and then also his challenge to the Pharisees. May God give each one of us a burden for the plight of those outside of Christ.

1. We see the burden of Jesus for this man. Vv. 35-38.

Incredible how Jesus not only seeks him out but how he steers the conversation in a particular direction, because he really does care about this man. So often we will not even attempt to bring up Christ because of fear or rejection or ridicule. The reason why we do not challenge people with the gospel is not always that the time is not right but because we love self more than them. Here Jesus is an enemy of the state, and yet he comes right back to Jerusalem to find this man and challenge him with the gospel. Jesus had a burden and love for this man that is and was so great. How great of a burden do we have with the individuals that God has put in our lives?

So look at verse 35, “**Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’**” It must have been something to hear that voice once again of Jesus. He challenged the man after applying mud to his eyes to go wash in the Pool of Siloam, and he came back seeing, but there is nothing in the text that he saw Jesus when he came back. But he would have recognized that voice. That voice was seared on his conscience and mind. He would never forget it!

And Jesus comes and asks the most important question that one can ever ask of another person. And a question that each of us has to answer for ourselves. And that is: “**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**” And the reference here to the Son of Man was Jesus’ most popular designation of himself as the Messiah. And it was not a title that was in wide use among the Jews in the time of Jesus to refer to Messiah. But it was both a title to reveal who he was and also conceal his identity from others who had false ideas of the Christ, and were adamant in not following Jesus. It was taken from Daniel 7:13-14, which says: “**I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**” Here Jesus is using the term to reveal himself. He is the Son of Man. He is the One who is given dominion and glory from God the Father. He is none other than God in human flesh.

But there is one problem. This man does not know that Jesus is none other than the “Son of Man.” Look at verse 36, “**He answered, ‘And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?’**” He has been an honest man. He is not trying to skirt the identity of

Jesus. He has already said that this man has to be from God because no one can do the works that he does unless God be with him. But that is a far cry from professing and believing that he is the Messiah. And there is an important word in this verse. And it is the word that the man addresses Jesus with, and that is the word, "sir." It is the Greek word "kurios." There are many uses of this word. It was used by a slave to address his master. It was used of someone in lower rank in society to address maybe someone in political power. And it was also a term to address God. Here the use is just a polite designation of the person in front of him, and it is proper to translate it as "sir." But this man is searching. He wants to know who Messiah is, and he wants to trust in him. He knows that is where hope and faith is found.

So look at verse 37 and the response of Jesus, "**Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.'**" Jesus identifies himself as none other than the Messiah, and it is amazing because this man wants to believe. He wants to know who the Messiah is. And Jesus says "you have seen him." And it is amazing because we know there are two kinds of seeing. One is physical sight, but the other is spiritual. Jesus has restored this man's physical sight, and now he gives him his spiritual sight, that he might see and believe. And no doubt there was nothing outstanding or glorious about Jesus' appearance. He looked like any other Galilean, but he is none other than God in human flesh. And Jesus is doing something also, not just appearing before him but speaking to him. And we are not open to believe anything we want about Jesus. Eternal life is about believing specific truths about the personhood of Christ. And without hearing that word there can and will be no faith. Listen to how faith comes in Romans 10:17, "**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**" There is a word to hear and a word to be believed. Without this, then there is no salvation. Jesus care so much for this man who has been rejected by all to open up the truth of his identity.

And look at his response in verse 38, "**He said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him.**" This is such an incredible response that can only be accounted for because of God's grace and God's enabling. He says, "Lord, I believe." He puts his faith and trust in Jesus as the Messiah who can do for him what he cannot do for himself. He has seen Jesus physically, but more importantly he has seen him spiritually. And he uses the same term here in addressing that was translated "sir." But here the meaning is definitely different for two reasons. One is that he has trusted that Jesus is the "Son of Man." He is the one that Daniel 7 talks about. He is none other than God. And the other reason we know that he means "Lord" is what he does after he calls him by this title and that is he worships him. And this is amazing because the only who is worthy of worship is God. He worships Jesus. This is what we do as the people of God when we come together. We worship the one who is worthy. That is worship does. it announces the worth of another. This is what we will do in eternity. Listen to what the throng in heaven sing in Revelation 5:12, "**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!**" This is the characteristic of a changed heart. Those who do not feel compelled to worship Jesus have never seen him spiritually and have never believed on him.

And think of it: this man will be eternally singing and worshipping Jesus Christ because of this encounter with Jesus. Think of the glory of this because God has chosen to use us as instruments of his redemption - to announce that Jesus is the Christ and you can have life through his name. And when those individuals respond they will worship the one who is worthy of worship for all of eternity. And the compulsion for us to worship is that Jesus is worthy of that eternal worship from those who used to curse him. He is worthy. Our love for him compels us to be his witnesses. Are you willing to announce this message for the welfare of others and the glory of Christ? Our love for him should energize our evangelism. Everyone will spend eternity some where, we want them to eternally praise our Christ.

2. We see the burden of Jesus for the religious leaders. Vv. 39-41.

And what Jesus says here almost seems like a contradiction to what he has said in other places. We see that Jesus came to seek and save, not to judge or condemn the world. We read in John 3:17, **“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”** It is quite clear Jesus came to save us from judgment and ultimate damnation for all of eternity by giving his life as that perfect ransom for many. We are drawn toward this Jesus who comes to meet our greatest need.

And yet look at what he says in verse 39, **“Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.’”** Jesus says for judgment I came into this world. He says this is the purpose. Well, the question then becomes what is it - salvation or judgment that he came? And the answer is that he came to save, but the moment you say that his life is about salvation then also his life is a life of judgment. If he says the only way to have life eternal is through Him, and you do not trust in him then that rejection of him will bring eternal judgment. Salvation and judgment are inherent in the same message. We either have eternal peace with God or eternal war with him. We either have eternal reconciliation with him or eternally ostracism from his presence. We either have the eternal love of God or the eternal judgment of God. It all depends on how we respond to the gospel message. The message has both promise and judgment in it.

And that is what he means when he says, **“that those who do not see may see.”** This is so emblematic of the blind man who was not only given physical sight but more importantly spiritual sight. He gives us the ability to see our sin and see it in such a light that we have never seen it before, so that we trust in the only way of salvation - and that not of ourselves or anything that we can do but in Christ alone. But the puzzling aspect is that second explanation of why he came and how he came to judge. He says, **“and those who see may become blind.”** Notice that it says, “may become blind.” What does Jesus mean? And the gospel has this effect. Not only does it open spiritual eyes, but it closes others. Those who are convinced that God will welcome them into his eternity because of who they are or something they did, when they hear the gospel and reject it, they harden themselves in that unbelief. They cannot see the glorious truth of Jesus and him crucified.

There is an excellent illustration of that in 1 Corinthians 1:18, **“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is**

the power of God.” It is the same message but it has different responses. For some they do not see their need, and it is foolish to believe that a Jew hanging on a cross could take away sin. They are blind and willfully blind, but for those who believe - whose eyes have been opened - it is none other than the power of God. Only God can save sinners like us. Paul goes on in 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 and explains, **“For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”** Some will say they are not convinced but if God would write my name in the clouds then they will believe, others will say that it does not mesh with their philosophy. But others believe. Why do they believe? Paul says because they have been called or given spiritual sight, and with that sight we see Christ as the power and wisdom of God, and the only thing we can do is trust him.

But look at the response to this message, **“Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, ‘Are we also blind?’”** Evidently Jesus was not alone when he found the man who was born blind, but there were Pharisees, no doubt keeping their distance from this man but heard the conversation. And they ask the question: “Are we also blind?” And the English does not pick it up but it is looking for a positive message from Jesus. It is like saying, “But there is no possibility that we are blind, right?” And this is one of the characteristics of spiritual blindness that is so different than physical blindness. A physically blind person knows his sight is impaired, but a spiritually blind person thinks he sees with 20/20 clarity. Look at who we are - the Pharisees would say. Look at how we keep the Law and how much more righteous and humble we are! We have sight! There is no possibility Jesus could be talking about us.

But look at what Jesus says in the last verse of this chapter, **“Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”** What Jesus is talking about here is a particular kind of guilt. And the guilt here is that they have seen and heard Jesus Christ, but have rejected him. If they never heard of him, then they would certainly be judged according to their sins and the light that was given them, but not for not knowing Christ whom they have never heard. But they said, “we see,” and we have no need of Christ, greater their guilt in the sight of God. If they would admit they are poor, needy and blind, and sought Christ there would be no guilt, but now they have guilt before God.

Jesus loves even the Pharisees in this passage. The emphasis is a little different from the blind man, but it is the same - whatever you do with the Son will have eternal significance in your life. Jesus is compassionate, bold and loving all at the same time. He is willing to give this message in tough places. How about us? It is so easy to make life about other messages. This is the message that God has given us to speak and preach for his glory and the welfare of others. May God give us such a love for him and others that we will announce his gospel to those whom he has put in our lives.