

## **When the Blind See, part 2**

(John 9:13-34)

(preached 1/13/19; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

### **Introduction**

On December 4th, 1941 a memo arrived in the hands of Franklin Roosevelt warning that Japan has set its sights on Pearl Harbor.

The note said that the Japanese empire was going to pursue open conflict on the Hawaiian military base.

Quote.

“In anticipation of possible open conflict with the United States, Japan is gathering information and possibly planning an attack on the US West Coast, the Panama Canal or Pearl Harbor.”

It went on to say that Pearl Harbor was the most likely target since information on the movement of Navy ships in and around Pearl Harbor has been leaked.

Though the memo wasn't made public until the late 1980s, it is clear that America had been warned 4 days before the attacks on December 7th..

So the natural question is why didn't the US warn the Navy in Pearl Harbor and make plans for a coming attack?

Well according to experts, the memo was taken seriously and discussed but in the end, no action was taken simply because top military officials and even the president couldn't believe it was possible..

According to government officials, quote..

“The memo convinced us that Japan was planning some sort of military action, but simply weren't convinced that the Japanese government would be bold enough to move their soldiers 1000s of miles across the Pacific, stop and refuel, and then move close enough to Hawaii for a strike.”

The bottom line is that America simply couldn't believe that Japan was going to attack despite evidence to the contrary.

A similar thing happened in the lead up to September 11 attacks.

It has been shown that US intelligence had advised government officials of the threat of terrorists hijacking commercial airlines and using them as part of a suicidal attacks within the US..

But the thing that kept US officials from preparing for this threat was the fact that they couldn't believe such a plan could be pulled off..

Yet, the reality is that the two worst attacks on the United States were successful because the people in charge simply refused to believe the evidence in front of them.

Much of the same could be said about the top officials in Judaism at the time of Christ.

Though they saw they saw the miracles, they simply refused to believe that Jesus could be responsible for them.

In fact, John 9 lets us know that they just didn't see what Jesus did, they even investigated his miracles..

They even heard first hand testimony of what Jesus had accomplished, but instead of accepting it, they lived in denial...

This is the tragedy of unbelief.

You are unable to see what is right in front of your eyes.

And this morning, we are going to get a closer look at how unbelief operates in the world..

People always ask me..

“How can someone come to church, clearly hear the truth preached, and walk away without showing the least bit of interest?”

And my answer to that question is always the same.

They are dead in their sins and blinded by their refusal to believe in Christ.

Look, if you reject the obvious truth of Christ, you put yourself in a position where the truth could slap in the face but you won't feel it.

And that is how people can come in a church hear the gospel and head back out to their sinful life...

That is how people can listen to you tell them to repent of their sin and trust in Christ alone, but give you a blank stare and change the subject.

But we are going to uncover a few more truths about unbelief in verses 13-34 this morning..

To begin, let's read John 9:1-12 to remind of of what is going on..

*1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.  
2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"  
3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." 6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. 8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" 9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." [a]He kept saying, "I am the one." 10 So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is He?" He \*said, "I do not know."*

Last week, we simply began chapter 9 with the facts of the story.

Jesus was leaving the temple under threat of being stoned to death by the religious leaders..

But even as he leaves, his compassion is not put on hold.

Instead, he stops by a blind beggar, and after correcting the wrong thinking of his disciples as to why this man is blind, he proceeds to heal him of his blindness..

Jesus then moves on from the scene, but the news of the healing is just beginning..

Let's look at verse 13..

We will call this..

## **I. Unbelief Is Unreasonable (13-16)**

Verse 13..

***13 They \*brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind.***

As the blind man now sees, the people around him are astonished..

So they take him to the Pharisees..

The Pharisees are the religious leaders of Israel, so why take him to them?

Couple thoughts here..

#1 - Maybe the people around the blind man may have been trying to convince the religious leaders that Jesus was God in the flesh.

This probably isn't the case since the crowds are not believing in Jesus...

#2 - Maybe they are trying to figure out from the religious leaders how this man's blindness was healed.

The leaders are those who are supposed to be "the closest to God," so maybe they will have an answer..

However, the most likely reason he was taken to the religious leaders is what we see in verse 14..

***14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.***

Most likely, the crowds took the blind man because they wanted to get Jesus in trouble..

You see, the Jews took their Sabbath laws to the extreme.

God has created a day of rest to benefit people, but the leaders has changed a day of rest into a day of being burdened..

Though we don't have time to revisit all the Pharisees silly rules the Sabbath, just know that breaking their rules for the Sabbath was bad...real bad..

So they show up with the blind man and they make the charge of a Sabbath healing..

Verse 15..

***15 Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see."***

Now, look what an incredible miracle described in just a few words..



But I assure you that the Pharisees were not interested in the fact that the blind man could now see..

They were only interested in two words in this simple explanation..

Applied clay...

The fact that Jesus has spit in the ground, mixed sort dirt with it, and then put that clay on his eyes was enough for them to accuse him of working on the Sabbath..

Which leads to what we read in verse 16..

***16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.”***

What you need to understand is this..

Unbelief so hardens the heart that in the face a miracle that had never been before in the history of the world, all unbelief sees is a violation of a man made rule..

Here is Jesus, God in the flesh, doing a miracle to prove that he is God, but all the religious leaders care about is the fact that He has broken their Sabbath laws..

This is irrational..

This defies logic.

Yet, unbelief is unreasonable..

It is senseless..

This is why you can present a logical case for Christ to an unbelieving friend or family member, but all they all they want to talk about is some silly error in the Bible.

These Pharisees were just given proof of a blind man seeing but their unbelief has blinded them so much that all they do is rule Jesus out because he broke their rules..

This is silliness.

This is senseless.

Yet, this is how unbelief operates..

Now, take note of the end of verse 16..

***But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such [b]signs?” And there was a division among them.***

Now, this is ray of hope in a very depressing chapter, but here we see Pharisees who were impacted by the giving of sight to a blind man.

These men looked beyond the Sabbath issue to the fact that only God could heal a blind man..

These men have hope.

And the lesson here is simple.

The truth about Christ always makes an impact on someone..

Sadly, we never hear from these leaders anymore in this chapter, but just like Nicodemus, they seem to open to the fact that Jesus may indeed be their Messiah..

Unlike their fellow Pharisees, these are reasonable men.

Yet, the unreasonable group continues to dominate the scene..

Let's move to verses 17-27 where we see that...

## **II. Unbelief is Unsatisfied (17-27)**

Veres 17...

***17 So they \*said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” And he said, “He is a prophet.”***

Though the blind man has given details of the healing, they Pharisees continue to press the issue by asking the blind man who he thinks Jesus is..

Well, the blind man simply calls him a prophet.

At this in Jesus’ ministry, that is the view that many people had of Him.

They simply saw him as another prophet in a long line of Jewish prophets..

Maybe the blind man had heard others say this..

Al he knew was that Jesus had the power to take away his blindness..

So in his mind, he was no ordinary Jew..

However, the Pharisees are not convinced..

Verse 18..

***18 The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?”***

Instead of attacking his answer to their question, they go on a personal attack against the blind man..

They accuse of him of lying about his blindness..

Now here is a key point as you try to take the gospel to the world..

Quite often, the people that you share the gospel with will turn on you..

You see, the message of Christ is so offensive that unbelievers will attack both the message and the messenger..

This is why you cannot let an evangelistic conversation get personal..

Unbelievers will do anything to get the attention off themselves...

In this case, the Pharisees unwillingness to believe in Christ has led them to attack the credibility of a blind man..

So they call his parents in to testify of his identity, the length of his blindness, and the source of his cure..

Verse 20..

***20 His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;***

I see where the blind man gets his straight forwardness..

His parents give a straight forward answer to the Pharisees..

This is our son and yes he was born blind, but now it gets a little less straightforward...

Look at verse 21..

***21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.”***

Though I can't prove this...

It seems like a stretch for the parents to not know that Jesus gave him sight.

Surely, their son told them exactly what he has told everyone else since he was healed..

Surely, the crowds told them what had happened..

So why do they say that they don't know who made their son well?

Verse 22..

***22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be [c]Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."***

We may understand this, but to cast from the synagogue was worse than a death sentence for a Jewish person..

Once out of the synagogue, your character was ruined.

Your social circle disappeared.

Your business or occupation suffered..

This was not a wealthy family or they would have been caring for their blind son instead of allowing him to beg at the temple..

So in an attempt to save whatever way of life they had, they refuse to testify that Jesus had given him sight.

Instead, they put that chore on their son..

Now, he had nothing to lose by testifying of Jesus..

He was already out of the synagogue.

He was already an outcast in Jewish society..

Sadly, the parents thought they had too much to lose, so they pass the buck to their own son.

Verse 24.

***24 So a 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.”***

Now remember, the Pharisees have already heard from the people around the blind man.

They have heard from the blind man.

They have heard from his parents.

But now they go back to the blind man a second time.



And they raise the stakes by asking him to ‘give glory to God.’

That phrase would be our equivalent of saying..

“With your hand on the Bible, is the man who healed you a sinner?”

You see, unbelief is so hardened into hearts that unbelievers are not satisfied until they find a reason to remain in their unbelief..

Simply put, unbelief won’t stop until it feels justified in its rejection of Christ..

Again, remember this when you are speaking to others about Christ...

It is not about you winning an argument...

In fact, unbelievers won’t be satisfied until they think they win the argument..

And look, that is okay.

It is not about you winning.

It is about you getting the gospel into their ears and letting God do the work..

And though this blind man has not met Christ, he becomes a pretty good evangelist...

Verse 25.

***25 He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"***

The bottom line when facing an unbeliever trying to trip you up is this...

Admit your lack of knowledge in some areas and simply tell them what Christ has done for you...

You have to love the simplicity of this man's explanation..

All I know is this..

I was blind but now I see.

That is the testimony of everyone who belongs to Christ.

We may have had physical blindness but we were certainly spiritually blind until Christ opened our eyes..

In the face of unsatisfied unbelief, the best testimony is the simplest testimony..

However, unbelief is not giving in..

Let's move to verse 28-34..

We will call this...

### **III. Unbelief is Unmerciful (28-34)**

Verse 28..

***28 They reviled him...***

Let me stop right there, and warn you of something.

Unbelievers are not harmless..

In fact, unbelief is often hostile to true belief in Christ.

Make no mistake.

Unbelievers are fueled by the power of hell and sin..

They will not go quietly..

These men questioned his character but now they attack him verbally..

***28 They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."***

Here, the Jews draw a line between themselves and this blind man that still exists in the world today...

And that is the line between Judaism and Christianity..

And that line in the sand is simply belief in Christ as Messiah.

These Pharisees line up squarely behind Moses, while the blind man and those who believe in Christ stand on the opposite side..

If you have the resources, I would highly recommend you watch a recent interview on TV between John MacArthur and Ben Shapiro...

MacArthur, as most of you know is a Christian pastor of almost 50 years in Southern California..

Shapiro is an orthodox Jew who comments of politics.

He is one of the brightest minds on the planet these days.

Now MacArthur have much in common in terms of politics.

Both would be considered conservative.

Both would operate from a biblical worldview.

So the interview is filled with things that the two men agree on..

Yet, at the end, Shapiro asks MacArthur what really separates Jews and Christians

And MacArthur's response is simple..

You either believe in Christ or you don't.

And that is exactly the same line that these Jews drew on this day.

They were disciples of Moses and the blind man was a disciple of Christ..

And then the blind man makes his case for Christ..

Verse 30..

***30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. 32 [d]Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."***

This sounds like the testimony of Nicodemus who said that no one could do the things that Jesus does unless God was with him..

And their testimony is right..

Jesus is God.

Therefore, He does the miracles of God.

No one had ever opened the eyes of a person who was born blind, yet Jesus did that for this man.

And he did to reveal the fact that He is God.

You would unbelief to let us or give in, but it doesn't.

Verse 34..

***34 They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” So they put him out.***

For years, this man could not get in the temple because he was blind and therefore unclean..

Now that he has sight, he was able to get into the temple.

But here he is kicked out not because he is blind but because he is testifying about Christ.

Again, we are reminded that unbelief is unmerciful and even hostile to true belief..

Sometimes, people will simply tell you to shut up and take your testimony about Christ elsewhere..

This is the current approach of American culture, which says that it is okay to preach your Christ in your churches but don't bring him in my living room or in my school or in my public building or community meeting.

You see, unbelief isn't asking you to do that in the name of freedom.

That may be what they say publicly, but the reality is that unbelief is hostile to the truth about Christ and want those who testify about him silenced..



## **Conclusion**

So what do we take with us from this text this morning?

### **#1 - Don't miss the forest for the trees.**

Pharisees and unbelievers are so focused on the details that they miss the boat on what is important.

These men had just heard testimony that Jesus gave sight to this blind man but they were more concerned about breaking their rules than seeing God before their eyes.

Sadly, so many Christians gets lost in the details instead of see the eternal picture..

Sadly, so many Christians love their little rules more than they love Christ.

Personally, I want to major on the majors and minor on the minors as I live as a believer in the world.

And what I mean is this.

I want to be wise in picking my battles.

I will fight to the end over the deity of Christ.

I will fight to the end over the authority of the Bible.

I will fight to the end over a gospel of grace instead of a gospel of works.

But I will put my sword down over matters of lesser importance..

These supposed religious leaders loved their religion so much that they couldn't see the God of their religion when he came into their temple..

May we not be blinded by our own rules and forgot to see our Christ..

## **#2 - Don't take it personal.**

In matters of evangelism, don't get too caught up in the actions or the lack of action in unbelievers.

The Pharisees here had a much better case made for Christ than you could ever make for Him.

They had a miracle that had never been done before.

They had the testimony of the man to whom it occurred.

They had the testimony of the people around him.

They had the testimony of his parents that he was born blind.

They also had the reports of all the other miracles that Jesus had performed.

They had the testimony of Jesus who identified as the great “I am.”

Yet in the end, they rejected this man, the miracle, and the fact that Jesus was God.

In other words, if unbelief rejects a case like that, it will quickly dismiss anything you can add about Christ..

So don't take your evangelism so personal..

Unbelief is unreasonable, unsatisfied, and unmerciful.

You are going to find rejection in the world, but keep going.

Keep taking the gospel to the world.

Keep praying, and most of all,...

Keep depending on God to open hearts..

In the end, the effectiveness of evangelism isn't dependent upon you.

It is dependent upon the God who sends you into the world.

He must move and He must open hearts.

Our call is not to be successful.

Our call is to be faithful.

Do you need Christ today?

Have you been resistant to the truth of salvation in Christ alone by faith alone?

Well, come today.

Repent of your sins and put your trust in the same Christ who healed this blind man.

He was sent by God, and today God send him to you.

I pray that your eyes will be opened as well..

Let us pray.