

The Gospel of John

The Power of Unbelief (Part 2)

John 9:13-34

INTRODUCTION:

Open your Bible to the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John is often called the Gospel of Believing. That is because John expresses the purpose he wrote the Gospel. “These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

I am going to approach this message slightly different than normal this morning because there is a lot to cover. Instead of reading the entire text in our scripture reading, I am only going to read verses 18-19, then we will read all of the text as we go through the narrative.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 9:18-19 (NASB)

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?”

Prayer

BODY:

II. UNBELIEF CANNOT BE CONVINCED.

As we learned last week, unbelief is **hostile** toward the truth. Now we are going to see that **unbelief cannot be convinced**. The blind man was going to tell his neighbors and acquaintances as well as the Pharisees exactly what had happened.

John 9:11 (NASB)

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.”

They all wanted more evidence. So he gives them his testimony. The unbelief of the Pharisees could not accept the facts that was before them. There are all kinds of people around affirming the reality of his new sight but they continued to seek for more evidence, even though they never expected to do anything with it. They were only on a mad search to discredit the miracle. They keep probing, not because they seek the truth, but because they seek justification for their foregone conclusion.

And since God's truth can only be understood by faith, they were blinded to the truth. So, they seek more evidence in verse 17.

John 9:17 (NASB)

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."

In their mind, this man really has no authority to speak to them. Why? Remember how unbelief starts with a conclusion? It was because he was born blind and they believed his blindness was related to his sinfulness. That was their conclusion. That was what the apostles asked when the story started, right? **Who sinned? This man or his parents?** They truly believed that he was a cursed man. The scribes and Pharisees would not go near those people. They were outcasts. But now they had a dilemma. He was not longer blind. What does that reveal about their belief that his blindness was due to sin?

John 9:18-20 (NASB)

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

Unbelief cannot be convinced. The Jews had already made up their mind that Jesus was not of God. The story did not match their conclusion. So they went to the parents and had them confirm that he was their son and had been blind from birth. And although they only received more undisputable facts. They still did not believe. Unbelief cannot be convinced.

I'm telling you this because you need to understand what you are going to face when you give the Gospel. Most of the people are going to reject what you tell them. Throughout your whole life of ministry and evangelism, most people will not accept what you say. "Enter through the **narrow** gate; for the gate **is** wide and the **way is** broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

Now listen to how the parents responded to the second question in verse 21.

John 9:21-22 (NASB)

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." 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 Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

I want to start by saying **they were lying!** They were lying to protect themselves. They were afraid that if they admitted that it was Jesus, they might get thrown out of the synagogue. They **knew** who did this. I am sure their son and many of their acquaintances had told them. The parents did not want to be thrown out of the synagogue, so they replied in verse 23.

John 9:23 (NASB)

²³ For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

The Jews cannot throw their son out of the synagogue. He was already an outcast! So they asked once again in verse 24.

John 9:24 (NASB)

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."

Don't you just want to ask them, "**How do you know that Jesus is a sinner?**" Haven't you seen enough evidence by now?

And what do they mean by "Give glory to God?"

Essentially they are saying, God is glorified when you tell the truth, so tell us the truth. We want the real truth! The facts are not adding up with our conclusion that Jesus is not of God. We know that "**this man**" is a sinner based upon his violation of the Sabbath. **We know!** So, the former blind man **picks up on the use of the word "know."** He then answers in verse 25...

John 9:25 (NASB)

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."

You want to talk about what we **know**, and what we do **not know**? I do **not know** who He is. I **don't know** about your accusation of Him being a sinner, but I **do** know that I was blind, and now I see! But their unbelief was not remotely interested in anything that related to the truth. So they said to him, in **verse 26**,

John 9:26 (NASB)

²⁶ So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

Do you see the significance of that question? The Pharisees have basically **just admitted that he was blind, and now he was standing in front of them with vision.**

III. UNBELIEF IS IRRATIONAL.

And that takes us into the next characteristic of unbelief. **Unbelief is hostile, it cannot be convinced, and thirdly, unbelief is irrational.**

You face this all the time in trying to proclaim the Gospel to people. You give them the facts, the truth of God, the "spiritual light", but they reject it. They ignore the truth and reach an irrational conclusion. So how did he answer them in verse 27?

John 9:27 (NASB)

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?"

I want you to realize that this is an outcast talking to the in-crowd. He uses sarcasm and exposes their hypocrisy. Here is a man who is experiencing a miracle in his life and knows

that he is dealing with a man who is from God. His confidence allows him to attack them because he is no longer spiritually blind or deaf. So, they revile him in verses 28-29.

John 9:28-29 (NASB)

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."

There is that divide again. Moses and Christ, the church and the synagogue, Judaism and Christianity. We **know** this man is a sinner. We are from Moses. You are His disciple. "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for," here it goes again, "**this man**," they will not, cannot, say his name. "As for this man, we do not know where He is from."

Jesus had already told them several times that they **think** they know where He came from. The problem is that they only know His earthly origins. You do not believe or accept My heavenly origin. I love how the man replies in verse 30.

John 9:30 (NASB)

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.**

The obvious conclusion is simple. He opened and created new eyes for me. I can now see! I have gone from total darkness to this wonderful realm of seeing. I can see color and people and places; the sky during the day and even the stars at night! These are things that were way beyond what I imagined when I was blind! He **must** be from heaven because this is something that natural man cannot do. This includes **you!** Pharisees!

How can you **possibly** say that you do not know where He is from? **He has opened my eyes, and you do not know where He's from?** It is as clear as my new sight that He is from God! This man was now a believer!

But the Pharisees remained under the power of unbelief. They were convinced in their mind that Jesus was a fraud. So despite all of the indisputable evidence that Jesus and the former blind man had just revealed to them the facts would be used in an irrational way and come up with the same conclusion: that Jesus is **not** the prophesied Messiah.

IV. UNBELIEF IS ABUSIVE.

Unbelief is hostile; it cannot be convinced, it is irrational, and finally unbelief is abusive. Listen to the rest of this man's testimony to the Pharisees.

John 9:31-33 (NASB)

³¹ We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. ³² 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."

Not only has the man received physical sight, he is also revealing spiritual understanding. He knew his Old Testament when he says "We know that God does not hear sinners". That's what the Psalm says.

Psalm 66:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;

He also knew that **no one** who had been blind from birth had ever received sight in the Old Testament.

So, he has become the preacher. He is preaching to the leaders. At first he was sarcastic, and now he is specific and clear-minded. He is teaching them spiritual light. He is giving them an explanation of reality; a logical explanation for the miracle that he and **they** have just experienced. To which they respond with their **pride** in verse 34.

John 9:34 (NASB)

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

How dare you, a sinner, preach to us! So they react with abuse and excommunicate him.

Be prepared to face this when unbelief investigates a miracle or hears the truth. This is how unbelief acts. It will be a disappointment for us. **We must remember that even Jesus, who was without equal, in proclaiming the truth, faced massive unbelief and rejection, and rested in the fact that the only way hard-hearted unbelievers could ever be rescued from their own bondage of sin was when they were drawn by God.**

We have to warn sinners that **they** are responsible for their sin, unbelief, and rejection. But at the same time, we have to completely depend upon God for the work of drawing them to Him. Jesus taught us that earlier in the Gospel.

John 6:44 (NASB)

⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

The only way an unbeliever can be released and delivered from the bondage of sin is by the power of God. So, what do we do? We plead with the sinner to believe, and we plead with God to be merciful. Allow the sinner to truly hear and avoid the wrath to come.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (HCSB)

¹⁴ But the unbeliever does not welcome what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually.

So, we do not go out to evangelize with any hope, really, that we have the power in **our reason** or the power in **our facts** or the power in **our truth** to shatter the spiritual blindness and **bondage** of unbelief. We go with the truth, and we cry out to God to draw the sinner out of this powerful bondage of unbelief.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, I want you to consider the following...How do you describe sight to a blind man? How do you explain color? How do you explain what a mountain looks like? How

do you explain the beauty of the sky during the day? How do you explain that a picture is worth a thousand words?

Blind people can only smell, hear, taste, and feel objects. From that experience they can make some conclusions concerning sight. But in their wildest imaginations, they cannot even imagine the beauty of the colors. Sure they can feel some things like trees or the hands of friends or coins but what does it mean to see them?

What is this seeing thing???

Or a person born deaf. When you hear a person playing a violin and you describe it in sign language what do they imagine the concept of hearing is?

Yes, they can feel vibrations such as the loud bass of music or the thump of a bass drum through a sound system. They can see the movements of the people creating the sound, but they cannot possibly imagine the sensation of hearing even the most simple tone let alone the sensation of hearing all of the tones from the violin! With no possible point of reference it would be impossible to imagine the concept.

That is the challenge that Jesus faced when He came to this world in human flesh. He came to tell us of a spiritual world that we have never experienced. It is a spiritual world that is much different than this world that we live in. Somehow Jesus must try to explain to us what this spiritual world is like. The concept is extremely different than anything we know. Physical sight is completely different than spiritual sight and physical hearing is much different than spiritual hearing.

We are born both spiritually blind **and** spiritually deaf. We do not know God and we cannot see God. The truth is not in us. We do not know our purpose in life and we do not know the will of God in our lives. We cannot imagine the fellowship of walking with Him.

Jesus had to try to teach us these spiritual truths by using earthly concepts that we were familiar with. The disciples once asked Jesus during his ministry, **“Why do You speak to them in parables?”** He answered them in...

Matthew 13:13-17 (NASB)

¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,

‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵ For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

Do you have that kind of relationship with God? If not the scriptures promise us that we can **see, hear, AND understand** God's spiritual truths. If we truly seek God and His righteousness, we are promised that He will draw us to Him.

Go Tell it on the Mountain.