



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA



By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

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John 9:26-41

May 6, 2007
English Standard Version

“The Confrontation of Christ”

This is the 33rd sermon in the series on the New Testament book of John entitled,
“The Gospel of Christ.”

John 9:26-41

“They said to him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’ 27 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?’ 28 And they reviled him, saying, ‘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 comes from.’ 30 The man answered, ‘Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 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. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’ 34 They answered him, ‘You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?’ And they cast him out. 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ 36 He answered, ‘And who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?’ 37 Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen Him, and it is He who is speaking to you.’ 38 He said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped Him. 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.’ 40 Some of the Pharisees near Him heard these things, and said to Him, ‘Are we also blind?’ 41 Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

INTRODUCTION: *Helen and Anne*¹

Since childhood, Helen Keller grew up blind, deaf, and unable to speak. Yet through the patient work of one dedicated person, Helen Keller was able to make a meaningful contribution to the world through her writing, teaching, and her inspirational example. In her autobiography,

¹ The introduction is adapted from *Following Christ ... The Man of God* by Chuck Swindoll, pages 38, 40.

The Story of My Life, which was made into the famous play, *The Miracle Worker*, Helen records endless days of anticipation and despair, waiting for someone to draw her out. Listen to her description of March 3, 1887, the day she first met the person who would do just that — her lifelong friends and teacher, Anne Sullivan.

“Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with compass and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had now way of knowing how near the harbor was. ‘Light! Give me light!’ was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour. I felt approaching footsteps. I stretched out my hand as I supposed it to be my mother. Someone took it, and I was caught up and held close in the arms of her who had come to reveal all things to me, and, more than all else, to love me.”

Helen goes on to describe the dramatic moment, when months later, Anne Sullivan first broke through her dark, silent world with the illumination of language. She writes, “We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other hand water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten — a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “*w-a-t-e-r*” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away. I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that mother, father, sister, teacher were among them — words that were to make the world blossom for me ... It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I as I lay down at the close of the eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, and for the first time longed for a new day to come.”

Certainly, this was how the blind man must have felt in John 9 when he saw water for the first time as he washed his eyes in the pool of Siloam. We finished last week with the blind man’s testimony in verse 25, “***One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.***”

Countless Christians throughout the ages have applied the same words to their own transformation, their own experience of the move from darkness to light, “***One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.***”

Today we see in the second half of John 9 the blind man’s reactions and responses to this great miracle and to this great miracle-worker.

We start with this confrontation he faces from the Pharisees because ...

v. 26-34: THEY DEMAND ANSWERS ²

“They said to him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’ 27 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?’ 28 And they reviled him, saying, ‘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 comes from.’ 30 The man answered, ‘Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not

2 The Exposition of the text is adapted from my sermon “*The Question of Questions*,” 8/2/92; the sermon “*Who Sinned?*” by Derek Thomas, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 1/26/03; *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, Vol. 2 by Leon Morris, pages 359-367; *The Gospel According to John* by D.A. Carson, pages 375-379.

listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.'

First of all, we see that once again the Pharisees begin questioning this man. They ask him, *"What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"* Now the blind man recognizes the Pharisees questioning as a sham. He has seen through their pious façade. He understood that they weren't interested in finding out what happened, but merely trying to gather evidence to use against Jesus. He recognized that they weren't trying to find out the truth, but prepare their case. It's all further evidence of their refusal to believe. Refusal to believe what happened to the blind man and refusal to believe in the one who healed the blind man.

So he let's them know that they're wasting their time trying to get him to implicate Jesus as if the healing was a crime. He says, verse 27, *"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?"* With a show of innocence he asks if their desire to hear a repetition of his testimony is bound up with a secret desire to become disciples of Jesus themselves. But he knows as well as them, that becoming a disciple of Jesus is the last thing they want.

You see ...

- **His Answer is based on EXPERIENCE**

They claim instead to be disciples of Moses, forgetting that back in **John 5:46** Jesus had already told them, *"If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me."* But they continue to deny Christ — proving that they're not even true disciples of Moses — and they deny Christ by saying, verse 29, that *"we do not know where He comes from."* The man answers them in verse 30, *"Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes."*

He isn't going to let the Pharisees forget the main issue here — he was blind, but now he sees! And he's amazed twice. First, he's amazed and astonished by what's happened to him. You can't deny his experience — now he sees!

But he's also amazed at the unbelief of the Pharisees. In essence, he's telling them that "you can't even recognize that Jesus has been sent from God, even when He's doing these miraculous signs right in front of you. How can you fail to receive with open arms someone able to open blind eyes?"

His answer is based on his experience, *"I was blind, now I see."*

But also ...

- **His Answer is based on KNOWLEDGE**

Here we see that this man, though blind, knew the Scriptures! He continues on in verse 31 saying, *"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 blind man knew the Scriptures. He was quoting to these religious leaders the Word of God! What he says is found in so many different passages in the Old Testament that they had to recognize what he was talking about. There are way too many to list, but here are a few of them ...

Proverbs 15:29, *"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."*

Psalms 34:15, *"The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears toward their cry."*

Psalms 66:18, *"If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."*

Isaiah 1:15, *"When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood."*

Isaiah 59:2, “...but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

Micah 3:4, “Then they will cry to the Lord, but He will not answer them; He will hide His face from them at that time, because they have made their deeds evil.”

Job 27:8-9, “For what is the hope of the godless when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life? Will God hear his cry when distress comes upon him?”

Job 35:13, “Surely God does not hear an empty cry, nor does the Almighty regard it.”

It was salt in the wounds of his enemies to hear this man proclaiming such truth. He knew, as they did too, and as we should as well, that prayer is directly related to godly character, obedience, and knowledge of God’s will as it’s found in Scripture. And as we’ve just heard, the Scriptures amply attest to the relationship between the righteousness of the one praying and the attentiveness of God. We find this same principle in the New Testament as well, **James 5:16**, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.**”

Friends, do your prayers constantly seem to go answered? How’s your walk with Christ? Are you committed to regular time in God’s Word so that you may, as the Apostle Peter says, **2 Peter 3:18**, “... grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

When confronted by this type of situation in the Gospel of John, where there’s a clear difference between those who believe and those who don’t, you have to ask yourself, “Is there any difference in my life?” And can anyone else see that difference? I mean, is your life being continually transformed, day by day, through God’s Word as the Holy Spirit applies it to your heart? If not, then come before Him in prayer and confession, seeking, as David said in Psalm 51, “a clean heart and a right spirit.”

To this man the conclusion is obvious. He says in verse 33 that “*If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.*” Even the Pharisee Nicodemus recognized this back in **John 3:2** where he said, “*Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.*”

As in the case of Nicodemus in John 3 and the woman at the well in John 4, here we can watch the progress of this man “*growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.*” All the supposed might of the religious leadership couldn’t scare him. All the petty arguments of the Pharisees couldn’t shake him. He knew that Jesus had come from God, otherwise He could do nothing ... and this man was going to stand on that fact. Likewise, Jesus is going to tell us in **John 15:5**, “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*”

The Apostle John is driving home an important lesson for both Christians and those on the verge of accepting Christ: Opposition from the authorities is to be expected — it’s always been that way. And such opposition is best met with courageous truth ... and with transparent openness to the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And there are certainly consequences here for this man, look at verse 34, “*They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.*”

The consequence, the results, of breaking with tradition and leaving the status quo in order to follow Christ is mature and knowledgeable faith. And yet, we see that his answer is not just based on experience and knowledge, but also ...

- **His Answer is based on GRATITUDE**

Notice the end of the sentence in verse 27 where the man said, “*Do you **also** want to become His disciples?*” The New Living has that verse, “*Do you want to become His disciples, **too?***” What he’s saying is something to the effect of “Do you want to be one of His disciples

like I've become?" The man has taken sides. He's letting the Pharisees know that if being healed by Jesus means following Jesus — then count him in. He could see that either loyalty or a denial was being forced on him. His gratitude precluded any possibility of denial. He would remain with Jesus. Because, we now see, like him, that ...

v. 35-41: JESUS IS THE ANSWER

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him, and it is He who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. 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." 40 Some of the Pharisees near Him heard these things, and said to Him, "Are we also blind?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."

The Pharisees didn't want to be with a man whom they thought was a sinner, so they threw him out of the Temple. He probably hadn't been allowed in the Temple previously, but then he gets his sight, he can enter the Temple, and they throw him out ... because of the boldness of his words, they declare him a sinner and **"cast him out."**

But Jesus is the One who seeks the sinners out for He says, **Matthew 9:13**, *"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."* And Jesus, knowing that this man has been kicked out of God's House for having a testimony of truth, seeks him out and so we see that ...

- **He is FOUND by the Lord**

Jesus comes to him so that he can learn that the miracle was not the important; it was secondary. He must learn to walk this new life by faith, **not by sight**. This is pretty tough to tell someone who's just started seeing!

So Jesus asks him the question of questions, *"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"* And that's the all-important question that needs to be raised with each one of us, no matter what our station in life. Sometime in your life you have to face up to this question, *"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*

This man had been **scrupulously obedient**, yet Jesus asks him the question, **"Do you believe?"** because obedience alone does not save us. The man did what Jesus told him to do, but now Jesus wants him to understand that it's an issue of faith. Jesus says, *"apart from Me you can do nothing."* Without faith, your works of obedience don't count for much.

This man had passed through a **remarkable experience**, yet Jesus asks him the question, **"Do you believe?"** because a remarkable experience, in and of itself, doesn't save us. The man was blind, but now he sees, and he's ecstatic. But sight doesn't save, and Jesus doesn't want you to get so caught up in your feelings that they become more important than your faith.

This man had spoken out **courageously and suffered** for Christ because of it, yet Jesus asks him the question, "Do you believe?" because courage in the face of persecution doesn't save us. The man stood up to the Pharisees and was thrown out of the Temple. But Jesus doesn't want you to think that courage is the only requirement because courage without faith is often pointless.

This man exercised faith in the Lord, to a small degree, yet Jesus asks him the question, **"Do you believe?"** The man told the Pharisees back in verse 33 that *"If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."* But Jesus wants you to be absolutely sure who you believe in because your faith shouldn't remain small or vague, but should grow and become certain as you continue to walk with the Lord.

This question from our Lord must be raised in every age for everyone, so that each of us can examine our own hearts and see if we really do believe. Is our faith reflected in our life, in

our actions, in our words? Do you love God? Do you love His Word? Do you love His people? Do you delight in His worship? Claiming to have faith in Christ will be to no avail **if Christ has not claimed you** as one of His own.

Jesus asks him, and us, “Do you believe?”

And in this man’s case, we see that ...

- **He has FAITH in the Lord**

The man boldly answers the Lord’s question with a plea, verse 36, “*He answered, "And who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?"*” No longer confident in tradition and religious authority, the man seeks the truth, the real answer, he thirsts for living water. And Jesus fills him with faith. He tells the man, verse 37, “*You have seen Him, and it is He who is speaking to you.*”

This man knew the voice of Jesus. Never in all his life would he forget the voice that had told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And now he’s able to see the man behind the voice. And with the power of sight given to him by Jesus, he beholds the light of the world, the living water. He sees Christ face-to-face. And he bows down and worships Him, verse 38, “*He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him.*”

Look at the response of this new believer.

First, he says, “**Lord.**” He places himself in humble submission to Christ.

Second, he says, “**I believe.**” Answering the question of questions, he places his trust fully in Christ. **Proverbs 3:5** says “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.*” And here he does just that.

Third, he changes his focus. He takes his eyes off himself and looks to Christ as his Lord and Savior. His immediate response is to worship Christ. Follow the example of this man. Place yourself in humble submission to the Lord. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, responding in simple faith to that question, “Do you believe?” Change your focus, taking your eyes off yourself and look to Christ as Lord and Savior.

Watch as this man comes to an understanding of his faith.

In verse 11, the man says, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight.” He hasn’t a clue who Jesus is or where Jesus comes from; he just knows that this Jesus healed him. He hasn’t seen Him since.

In verse 17, under interrogation he says, “*So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about Him, since He has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."*”

And now in verse 35, when Jesus asks him does he believe in the Son of Man, and he says, “Well show me where He is.” And Jesus says, “It is Me. It’s the One who is standing by you.” And he **believes**, and he worships.

Your response to Christ, especially as we gather together in this place and at this time, should be to worship Him. Remember, when you come here, the question at the end of the service is not “What did I get out of it?” But “How did I do? Did I worship Christ as my Lord and Savior this morning?”

However, there’s one other example we need to learn from. And that’s the example of the Pharisees for ...

- **They did not FEAR the Lord**

Whenever people are confronted by Christ, a dividing line is drawn. Some will say, “Yes, I do believe” and they will see, while others will say, “No, I don’t believe” and without even realizing it, they will remain blind.

Jesus wants this man to understand what just happened here in John 9. This miracle that opened his eyes and the conflict that followed was an acted out parable about sight and blindness

in the spiritual realm. Look at 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.'"*

You can be like this man, a new believer, and see — or you can be like the Pharisees, unbelievers, who were blind. Because they claimed not to be blind in challenging Jesus, verse 40, *"Some of the Pharisees near Him heard these things, and said to Him, 'Are we also blind?'"*

The Pharisees were implying to Jesus that they could see just fine, even though they were utterly blind spiritually, and so Jesus told them, verse 41, *"If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."*

They refused to admit their sinful state, they refused to confess, they refused to ask for forgiveness. Therefore, they are not forgiven! Jesus will say in **John 15:22**, *"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."*

We're about to come to the Lord's Table. We're about to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. But before we do, we're going to have some words to say about admitting your sinful state, confessing your sins, and asking for forgiveness. Don't make the mistake of the Pharisees and refuse to confess your sins, repent, ask forgiveness, and come to Christ!

Because Jesus is calling us, like the blind man, to forgiveness and to faith. Experience, knowledge, and gratitude are not enough. What Christ desires most of all is our faith, and so this morning He's asking you, ***"Do you believe?"***

You see, the story ends with those who thought that they could see being set in their blindness. And the one who was blind has his eyes opened to understand and appreciate who Jesus is. It's **a picture of the gospel**; this is how the gospel works.

It's interesting that there's no mention of the man's name. Don't you think John might have slipped in the man's *name*? You know, he was Peter or Joe or whatever ... probably David. But we don't know, John never tells us. And perhaps John is saying to us, "Look, I don't want to tell you his name, slip in your own name, because this is **every** man's name. This is **your** name; this is **my** name. We need the touch of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us **to see**. And when our eyes are opened, what is it that we see?"

Do you believe? Do you see Jesus?

We need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

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