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## Of Salvation and Judgment

### John 9:34-41

**Intro:** Last time, we looked at the amazing reaction to Jesus' healing of the man who was born blind. Instead of being a cause for rejoicing and turning to Jesus it was scandalous and hardened the official opposition that was building against Him. The formerly blind man could now see and because of this, he was "called on the carpet" by the religious leaders and grilled like a criminal simply because Jesus saw fit to miraculously heal him on the Sabbath.

Now, the real target of the religious leaders' ire was Jesus Himself but since He wasn't present at this interrogation, they naturally focused their displeasure at the man who was healed. This was definitely not what this man signed up for when Jesus invaded his life but surprisingly enough, he was up to the task. Far from breaking the man, this unrelenting opposition served to sharpen his testimony of Jesus and helped to expand his understanding of Jesus. So much so that, at the end of it all, this formerly poor beggar was able to deliver a solid, knowledgeable defense of Jesus that stymied the greatest theological minds of the time. Of course, they failed to appreciate the irony of it all.

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**34-** These religious leaders were appalled at his candor and impudence; not because he was wrong but because he was right and they were wrong! These men despised the common people in general and this man in particular solely because he withstood their constant questions and unfiltered harassment and beat them at their own game. How was this possible? Their argument was based on preconceived notions and his response was based on facts. But for all his courage and wisdom, they still held the power and they used it to cast him out (excommunicate). Of course, what other recourse did the Pharisees have? It was either cast him out or accept the claims of Christ!

We should understand that this excommunication was only the last of 4 attempts by the Pharisees to avoid the supernatural support this miracle gave to the claims of Jesus. The Pharisees didn't refuse to listen at the beginning. No, they first tried to discredit the miracle by "uncovering the true

story” (You weren’t really born blind, were you?) When that failed they tried to separate the miracle from Jesus. They couldn’t deny that the healing had occurred, but they denied that Jesus was the cause. Then, when that didn’t work, they retreated into law—“We know that God spoke to Moses.” It’s only after these 3 attempts had failed that they threw the blind man out.

This was not just a slap on the wrist either. When the man was blind, all he could do was beg. Now that he has been cast out of the synagogue, he wouldn’t even be able to do that! No one would have pity on him, the Jewish society as a whole would have nothing to do with him. But as bleak and as shameful as that sounds to us today, if we were to assume that this was the end of it, that this man was doomed to a life of shame and deprivation, we’d be wrong. Truth is, the actions the Pharisees took against this man were the best thing that could have ever happened to him.

First, being cast out was actually a great honor for this man! Why did they cast him out? What had he done wrong? Nothing, but confess the truth that he knew about Jesus and refused to back down from it. But we should take note of this one important fact: the same confession that aligned this man with Jesus also separated him from those who didn’t want anything to do with Jesus. He might not have recognized it as a great honor at the time. He was probably feeling pretty dejected when Jesus finds him later and reveals Himself to him. Still, it was a great honor for him to be ejected from the company of those who would not have Jesus.

Sometimes new believers who’ve been saved out of difficult situations are afraid that their old acquaintances might pull them back into that life. They don’t want to offend their old friends but they don’t want to participate in their lifestyle either. There is an easy remedy for that: simply be faithful to testify what Jesus has done in your life. If you do that openly and consistently, the bad influences will remove themselves on their own. For many believers, excommunication has been the brightest moment of their entire Christian walk.

This excommunication did something else. The Pharisees cast him out but what did they cast him out to? They cast him into the arms of Jesus! If there had been no one waiting, this would have been bad; he would have been all alone – no family, no friends, no spiritual counselors no place to worship. But to be cast out into the arms of Jesus, what could be better than that?

The arms of Jesus are great because in His arms we can each find all we need. Do you need strength, love, comfort, protection, provision, forgiveness? These and more are found in His arms. Don't be afraid, Jesus is waiting. (**Ps 27:10**) "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me".

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**35-38-** So, this man, who had been rejected by everyone else, was not rejected by Jesus. When Jesus heard that he had been cast out, He went looking for him. Why? Apparently, just so He could ask the man a question. This wasn't just any question – it is a great question. It's actually a question by which God could do this man some good. This was Jesus' whole purpose in asking the question and it compliments the previous interaction He had with this man. Unasked, he had been healed by Jesus. Unsought, he had been found by Jesus. Now, by virtue of this question, this formerly blind beggar is being helped to make a considerable advancement in his faith. He knew something about Jesus already. He knew that He was a man called Jesus (**11**). He'd come to realize that He was a prophet (**17**). Later, he began to see that Jesus was from God (**33**). Yet, for all this, the man still didn't know all that Jesus intended for him to know. So Jesus came with a question that was to bring him to the place where he was able to fall down and worship him—"Do you believe in the Son of Man?" This was the question by which Jesus sought to do the man good, and it's the question that will do everyone good right now. Will you ask it of yourself? Will you answer it? There's no more important question that can be asked or answered than this one here.

**1)** This question is important because it deals with salvation and – salvation is important! Notice that Jesus is coming to a man that He has already helped physically (given sight) and helped intellectually (given insight). But these 2 areas of life are relatively unimportant compared with the salvation of the man spiritually. So Jesus asks a question designed to give life to his faith and lead him to place his trust in Jesus himself, regarding his own salvation. There are many things today that people think are very important, that the world judges to be important; but none of them are as important as the matter of salvation. The Bible itself stresses this importance in **Mark 8:36**.

**2)** This question is also important because it addresses the only way of salvation. Many like to believe that there are multiple roads of faith, all of

which lead to heaven. This is not true. It's also not true that there are many ways a person can become right before God. The Bible clearly and unequivocally states that Jesus is Himself "the way, the truth and the life" (14:6). It's precisely because of who Jesus is that He's able to save sinners. He is God and as God, He is able to die for an infinite number of sins. He did what no mere man could do. Thus, salvation is by Him, through Him, in Him and of Him. In fact, Peter declared this same truth to the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:12, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Salvation of the human soul is something achieved by Jesus. It is the center of the Christian faith and it cannot be separated from the person of Jesus Christ. The teachings of other religions can be and often are separated from those who established them or taught them. The truth of scientific discovery exists entirely apart from the one who discovered it. But that's not the way of Christian truth, because Jesus always pointed people to Himself. Here, Jesus is concerned with this man's salvation. He knew that the core of this man's salvation depended on the man's relationship to Himself. Did he believe on Jesus? That's the important question because it concerns salvation and concerns belief in Jesus Christ as the sole means of that salvation.

**3)** This question is also important because no other experience eliminates the need to answer it. Think of all this man had already gone through. He had been obedient to Jesus. Jesus told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam and he didn't balk at the command; he just went. He could have hesitated or objected but he obeyed immediately and without a quibble. Still, Jesus came to him with this great question. The question needed to be asked even though the blind man had been unhesitatingly obedient. He did a good deed in obeying Jesus but that didn't save him. In the same way, no religious observances, no matter how perfectly carried out, can save you. You must believe on Jesus.

Also, this man had a fantastic experience: he had been touched and healed by Jesus! He had been blind his entire life until Jesus healed him and the light he had never known came streaming into his life. No one can deny that this was a great experience yet, he still needed to answer Jesus' question. Many have had amazing spiritual experiences but: experiences do not save anyone, only Jesus saves so, each one must examine their relationship with

Him.

Note too that this man bore a courageous testimony for Jesus and also suffered for the cause of Christ. Yet, Jesus still seeks him out and asks him this important question. All of these things were good and right but none of them brought him salvation. Only his belief in the person of Jesus Christ could accomplish that; everything else was secondary to this. That's why this question was so important for this man to answer and that's why it is so important for each one of us to answer today. This question is for everyone no matter your position in society or station in life. Do you believe in the Son of God? My prayer is that you can say yes to that with full confidence and assurance.

Maybe you're having difficulty answering that question. Maybe you'd rather put it off or not answer it at all. Here's the thing tho, if you don't face this question now, you must face it later because the question itself is inescapable! The very nature of the question makes it so. Your answer must be a yes or a no. A maybe is a no. A delayed answer is a no. Even a partial answer is a no. So if you've heard it, you must answer it. If you've tried to avoid answering in this life then you will be forced to answer it in the day of God's judgment. This will be the basis of God's judgment. Not whether you were a good person or not but have you believed on Jesus? If you've not yet believed, now is the time to do so because the question can be settled now. If you're having a difficult time answering it, just ask Jesus to help you know the truth and respond to it appropriately. He wants to help you as much as He helped this blind man.

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**39-41** - We have just heard the best news we could ever hear: anyone who believes on Jesus will be saved. Now, we hear the worst news: any who refuse to believe will not only be condemned but already are! This contrast was seen in **ch3** which says **(16)** and then, "he who does not believe is condemned already" **(18)** = the flip side of salvation!

Jesus' statement in **vs39** appears to conflict with what He said **3:17**. So, what gives? The purpose of His coming to earth was not to condemn or bring judgment on humanity – it was to provide salvation for humanity. But, in another sense, His presence in this world had a moral effect on everyone He came in contact with: some believed and others rejected. In this way, His coming represents a judgment because people are divided according to the

way they react to that coming. Judgment was not the purpose of His coming but it is the inevitable consequence of it.

When the sun comes up there are certain plants and animals that seek it out and benefit from it while others run and hide from it. The sun doesn't determine which is which; their own nature does that. The sun only indicates what their nature is. Thus, to the man born blind, Jesus was the restorer of sight but to the Pharisees, those who thought they could see, He caused an even greater darkness. How? To run from the Light, you must push into deeper darkness!

This is the judgment of His presence: those who believe in Him enter into eternal life and go on to eternal happiness in the presence of God. Those who reject Christ also reject God and they go on being separated from them forever.

What is wrong with those who will not believe on Jesus? What are some of their characteristics? We've seen a few as we've made our way through John. One characteristic is they have no sense of need. They're all right by their own standards, and since they do all right by their own standards they think that they'll do all right by God's. That's the gist of the question they ask Jesus in vs40, "Are we blind also?" This was asked with a measure of sarcasm. Jesus had just stated that His coming would cause those who see to be made blind. He was not implying that those who rejected him actually had spiritually sight but that they thought they could see (tho really blind) and so refused come to Him. This only offended them more! How could He suggest that they were blind? If He is, how could He be taken seriously? Pharisees blind? That's crazy! But, they were blind and proved it by their lack of a sense of need.

Another characteristic of those who reject Jesus is that they consider the teachings of Jesus foolishness. They tried to dismiss Him before in ch8 by saying He was a Samaritan and demon-possessed and they'll do it again on ch10. They consider His teachings to be foolish because they don't want to hear Him and because their own discernment has been blinded by sin.

The final characteristic, the most telling is in rejecting Jesus. When the Pharisees asked their question, they no doubt expected Jesus to answer in the affirmative. What else would they expect from someone they have opposed so forcefully? But Jesus doesn't; He turns it a bit. Instead of

saying, “Yes, you’re blind,” He says if they actually were blind, they’d be guiltless: they’d have an excuse. But they weren’t totally blind. They knew the Scriptures and thus were guilty of what they knew, meaning: they were guilty before the law. It was a sin for men who knew the law to act as they did. They had enough spiritual knowledge to be responsible. Had they acted on the knowledge they had they would have welcomed Jesus. But they didn’t act on this. They claimed to have sight, but acted like they were blind. Thus, their sin wasn’t taken away. It remained with them.

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What are the characteristics of those who come to Jesus and believe on Him? They admit their need. They’re “blind” and they know it! They know their situation is hopeless unless the God of miracles helps them. Also, they’ve met Jesus and find His teachings to be comforting and reasonable. There’s a lot they don’t understand but what they do understand makes sense. So, they want to learn more. Also, they are willing to obey Jesus. They are eager to follow His commands. Finally, because of all these things, they find themselves growing in their knowledge of Jesus and worshipping at His feet. None of this is due to their spiritual ability but solely to the grace of a loving God.

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your savior, the good news of the gospel is still good because it’s not too late for you. Believe on Jesus! He is still the only doorway to salvation. 😊