

Testify To What He Has Done

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Primary Scripture from John 9

In 1 John 3:8 we read, “...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” It has been the devil’s work to mar, deform, discredit, and break the image of God that is man. Since the fall of Adam we have been broken and in need of a Savior. The Son of God, Jesus the Christ, has come into this world to re-create us in His image, Romans 8:29, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” And from 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.” So when God takes opportunity in our brokenness to re-create us and make us whole, we are to testify to the world what God has done, that He might be glorified.

In John 9, where we were last week, we read of a man who was born blind and then healed, re-created, by Jesus so that he could see. Simple but astounding. The whole episode caused a bit of an uproar in the area as they discussed whether or not this blind man was healed, and if so, how. He testified that he is indeed the one, and the crowd wanted to know how. He simply tells them the facts of what happened, basically that Jesus made clay, anointed his eyes, told him to wash, he washed and now sees. There was no embellishment.

And so it is best for us to do. We simply testify to what God has done. They may want to know more detail than what you yourself know. Don’t make up anything, and don’t speak falsehoods to make you or God look good or reasonable.

They brought him to the Pharisees. Some want your testimony to be scrutinized by the credentialed religious leaders. The credentials of many these days do not include any sort of relationship with the Lord. As such they deny miracles out of hand, and frankly deny anything that smacks of a personal God doing something for one of His creatures. This is the line today of those who have a type of academic credential but lack the Spirit.

The Pharisees question him. He gives a consistent answer, namely, the truth! That's what he knows so that's what he says. Some of the Pharisees immediately declare the whole circumstance to be not of God because, in their own sight according to their own standard, Jesus broke their rules, err, ahh, the Sabbath. You will get people who will disbelieve you simply because they think God could not have acted in the way you claim, in a way based ultimately on their idea of how God should behave. But watch out for the other cliff as well, namely, that a person is justified in his thinking or actions just because he thinks God has directed him in some way. God's direction will not contradict His written Word. To be clear, some will use that argument to claim God has done things contrary to what is plainly spoken of Him in Scripture. So the two cliffs are these: not believing God has done what He has, and believing God has done what He has not. Truth often traverses a knife's edge whereby deviation to either side will end in tragic error.

Notice this. Some of them were conflicted because they recognized that if He was a sinner as some claimed, He would not be performing such miraculous signs. In the grand plan of God He has the highly credentialed, highly learned scholars asking this poor formerly blind man what he thinks about Jesus. The irony here is that the answer is plain for all to see. The one who had been blind sees it, but those who had not been blind cannot see it. So the former blind man states what he thinks, that this Jesus is a prophet, for how could it be otherwise?

When you testify to what God has done, and testify to who Jesus is, expect there will be quite a number who will not see what you are talking about as true. The answer will be plain as day to you, but these people, no matter how intelligent they are otherwise, and no matter how much education they have, even religious education, simply will not see. Do not get frustrated at this, but understand it to be true that you are in the midst of a spiritual battle. It is God alone Who can open blind eyes, and so it is that prayer is your weapon of choice.

The reaction the Pharisees give to the former blind man's declaration is then to disbelieve anything astounding has happened. They thus did not believe he had been blind from birth. In order to corroborate their narrative, they call his parents. Their question reveals their heart. Is this your son... they ask, calling into question every single piece of the testimony so as to bring doubt and reason not

to believe. They continue, “whom you say was born blind.” In other words, we’re pretty sure we have it right and you are simply ignorant and didn’t really know that your son could actually see. Besides that, your word doesn’t mean much anyway. “Then how does he now see?” So if in fact you believe your own little story, then how do you explain him seeing now? And you are not allowed to say that Jesus healed him because we know that’s not true.

You see, such people threaten with their credentials and threaten with their position. “You’re ignorant and if you disagree with us, there will be consequences.” The parents felt trapped, most likely. This stance often appears with more subtlety in such a culture as ours, but our culture is rapidly changing such that this type of argument is becoming much more common. So what do you do when faced with such a trap? You could bow to them, or stand up to them, or take a road somewhere in the middle. Bowing might be something like: “I suppose he could have had some sight and we didn’t know it. He’s been out of the house for awhile now. Maybe he grew out of it.” Standing up to them might look like: “Without a doubt he is our son, and without a doubt he was born blind and remained blind until now. Nothing but the hand of God could have healed his blindness, and it is this Jesus who has healed our son by the power of God.” But as we know, they took a middle road. They declared what they couldn’t deny, that this was indeed their son – they were not willing to disown him to save their skin – and that he was indeed born blind. But they became fearful of men and stumble and shrink back at declaring the glories of Jesus. And this is exactly what some of us do, or perhaps what all of us do some of the time. We are pleased to share something of what has happened to us, but we shrink back at the point where we need to give God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ the glory for these wonderful events.

So instead of declaring the glorious work of Jesus, they, in essence, threw their son under the bus. “Ask him, he is of age.” In one sense they were right. They can verify what they know to be true, but to stick their necks out to give second hand testimony was too much. We understand that today from the standpoint of hearing or reading so many false testimonies that were concocted to make God look good. Such false testimonies are very harmful to the cause of Christ because they undermine the credibility of all testimonies.

The parents did not want to be put out of the synagogue. This decision, the one that they made, and ones like it that we make, often involve counting the cost. That is, am I willing to give up this comfort, status, privilege, job, friendship in order to testify of Jesus' work? Too often our thinking is merely temporal and not eternal. We may chuckle when a child cannot wait an hour to have a cookie after supper, but wants it now, regardless of all other considerations. That is in essence how we, at least some of us, behave. We opt for what is most pleasant or most attractive now rather than honor our Savior and potentially suffer ridicule, disdain or even attack.

Note that the Pharisees had already decided that Jesus was not the Christ. Any evidence to the contrary had to be discredited, denied, or destroyed by them. Even a suggestion to consider the evidence was seen by them as an attack on the narrative they had constructed, and thus a questioning of their integrity and intelligence. We are seeing that same dynamic all over the news today. Many no longer even want to discuss or debate the truth; they want to threaten, shout down, and attack those who question their narrative. So do we stop testifying to what we know to be true? Hardly. We testify and we pray that God will open blind eyes. Remember, I too once was blind, but now I see.

At this point the Pharisees did not think they had sufficiently shut down this testimony, so they called the former blind man back to them. Their opening volley is a declaration, couched in "God language" intended to entrap. "Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner." The irony here is palpable. They tell him to give glory to God while they themselves are expending all of their efforts to rob God of His glory.

The former blind man does not take the bait. He sticks to his testimony and refuses to get into tangential debates about things he doesn't know. We need to take note. People will bring up all sorts of strange and esoteric points, which can easily derail you if you travel down these side tracks. Testify to what you know and don't be entrapped by what you don't know.

It is interesting that they question him a second time on the details. I am not sure if they were looking for inconsistencies or were just so tightly wrapped up in their unbelief that they couldn't receive anything he said. He responds, I think, with some amount of incredulity, but is aware of their blindness and

hardness of heart. He is absolutely steadfast in his position, established all the more each time he relates what happened. He actually extends an invitation to them to leave their unbelief and join him in believing the truth, that this Jesus is extraordinary and worthy of being followed.

Their reply betrays their heart. They make a distinction between him and them, but they even mess that up. They identify him with Jesus (you are His disciple). This is a great compliment and cause for rejoicing when you hear it said of yourself. Sadly, however, they are declaring that whatever else they are, they are not followers of Jesus. But this realization by unbelievers is exactly what you want. They will not come to Jesus if they think they already know Him, or if they think everyone worships the same God. What God does in your life sets you apart from all of the unbelievers, and God has given you testimonies to share so that some will see that He is real and come to faith in Jesus.

It was actually an outright lie, that they were disciples of Moses. They were descendants of those who grumbled against Moses and questioned him for 40 years. Moses said one would arise like him, and here was Jesus whom they refused to receive. They were making a false appeal to authority and seeking to disparage Jesus by calling Him a nobody.

It is at this point that God gives divine wisdom to this man. This man puts together all of the pieces (remember, he is not educated in the way these Pharisees were) and lays them out in a water-tight, irrefutable argument showing Jesus has come from God, based on what Jesus had done for him. What a testimony!

Because the Pharisees know they have been bested by someone with far less education than they, and because they have a complete lack of humility, they resort to what is called an ad hominem attack, which means they attack his character rather than address the debate at hand. "You were born in sins." This type of attack is rampant today, with the favorite label being a "hater," though there are other prevalent terms as well. An ad hominem attack reveals that the other party is not going to change what they believe and is simply trying to justify their actions or beliefs against reason. Don't be surprised if you are attacked in such a manner, and do not respond in kind. The situation is about putting you and your testimony on display before a lost and broken world.

What happens next is quite revealing. Because of this man's testimony and willingness to exalt Jesus, Jesus seeks him out and comes to him. Not only that, but Jesus then reveals to him even more of who He is, and this man who had been a poor blind beggar, a broken man, has become a child of God with eyes to see what the Pharisees could not. When you testify to what Jesus has done in your life and are reviled for it, Jesus will draw near to you and often reveal more to you of who He is. If instead you seek comfort, you may get comfort, but you will not get either peace or joy or have any sense of the closeness of Jesus.

So testify to the things He has done in your life. Testify gladly for He has done great things! In the book of Revelation we get a sobering picture of those who keep their testimony of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Some are even killed, it states, because of their testimony of Jesus. But in the end, it is those who keep their testimony of Jesus who will dwell with Him in glory. I would like to leave you with Revelation 12:10-11.