

Believing Comes Before Knowing

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John 9:26-34 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

- I. We seem to have misunderstood the Scriptures in a most important matter of how salvation happens.
 - A. If any man will do his will he shall know...
 - B. We have understood it the other way around; we believe that we must first know, and then we will do his will.
 - C. We are constantly stumbling over this misconception of how the Lord looks at man.
 - D. God is looking for those who will believe Him and trust Him so He can show them things and give them knowledge and understanding.
 - E. We are constantly seeking to inform others with knowledge in order that they will trust God, which never seems to work.
 - F. That creates Pharisees and not true believers and followers of Christ.

John 7:17 *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

Proverbs 28:5 *Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.*

- G. Head knowledge does not constitute salvation and very seldom leads to salvation.
 - 1. The pride of the heart prevents the submission of the soul when much knowledge is in the way.
 - 2. This is why hell is going to be populated with so many religious people.
 - H. The difference between knowing and doing is the difference between heaven and hell for eternity.
- II. It is the submission of our will to the Lord that is the only true gauge of our faith.
 - A. It is not the outward show of abstaining from certain things, or the doing of certain things.
 - 1. This is a great stumbling block that the devil uses to wreck many souls.
 - 2. The putting on of the “new man” is presented and understood as compliance and conforming to the current standards of morality held by the preacher or church or movement that has “led you to the Lord.”
 - 3. This is exactly what happened here with this blind man.
 - 4. There was a great change in him, and he could now see, but he did not answer the questions of the Pharisees the way they expected him to.

5. He told them that a man named Jesus had healed him and given him his sight, but they called upon him to give God the glory:

John 9:24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

- B. Give God the glory and join up with us.
 1. Become a person who lives by rules and creeds.
 2. Become like us and live your life motivated by pride and contempt for others.
 3. Be like us and make your life about a religion based upon these things.
- C. But the blind man would have no part of it.
 1. He did not know much about Jesus, but he knew ONE thing:

John 9:25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

2. He knew that he could see the world as it was, where up until he met Jesus he was blind to everything around him and all he knew was what he had heard and felt and smelled.
3. The Jews had much knowledge of history and the Scriptures, but they had no understanding because of their un-yielded will.
4. The blind man had very little knowledge, but had understanding because of his faith in Jesus Christ.

III. We must not mistake our zeal for obedience to the laws of God and man for saving faith in Jesus Christ.

- A. This was the error of the Jews and Pharisees.
- B. They assumed they were not only right with God, but that they were God's authority on earth to command and direct other men in the ways of God.
- C. But Jesus called them "blind" Pharisees and said that the fact that they claimed to be able to understand, but would not yield their will to God, was their condemnation.

John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

IV. The key to salvation is very simple: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31)

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

- A. It is not a religious act that is done, but a life that is surrendered.
- B. It is not an acknowledgement of a fact, but a surrender of the will to the Lordship of Christ.
- C. If believing in Jesus Christ is only an agreement of the intellect and a symbolic "signing on" to his program, it is not salvation.
- D. All the Scriptures concerning this matter involve repentance and being baptized (i.e; Acts 2:38)
 1. Baptism being a symbol of the death and burial of the old man, and the resurrection of the new man.

Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Ephesians 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

- E. This all shows clearly that the new birth happens only upon the death of the old man.
- F. That old man consists of the will, the self-centeredness, the selfishness, the pride of life, the pride of his intellect, and the idols of his heart.
- G. The change that God counts is the change that happens in the heart, mind, spirit, and soul.
- H. Man does look on the outward appearance, and men have a right to expect a change in the outward appearance, because if the inside is cleansed, then the outside will be also.
 - 1. But men tend to put the outward appearance first and not second, and thus deceive themselves and lead others into error and damnation.

Matthew 23:26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

- 2. We have been so influenced by Pharisees that we find it very difficult to believe the inside has been cleansed UNTIL we see some changes on the outside that make them look more like us.
 - 3. We are more concerned with them being conformed to our image than we are with them being conformed to Christ's image.
- I. The inner cleansing takes place in an instant when that soul yields to Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - 1. The will is surrendered and says, "LORD, what wilt thou have me to do?"
 - 2. And that is the law that governs that soul from that point on.
 - 3. This only is true salvation, and is the only evidence of the new birth.
- J. The outer cleansing is the result of sanctification as that soul learns of Jesus and the ways of God and the reasons for things.
 - 1. And this takes time as knowledge is given through learning and experience, and examples of good AND bad.
- K. Understanding this truth will clear up so much confusion about so many things.
 - 1. It is the answer for people who struggle with salvation and have so much trouble having assurance in their soul.
 - 2. It is the answer as to why so many people start in the way, and then abandon it.
 - 3. It is the answer to why so many imposters are in positions of leadership and authority in the churches, and always have been.
 - 4. It explains why cults are so prolific and influential, as well as all the superstition that has been woven into mainline Christianity.
 - 5. It explains the lack of power in the Gospel that is preached now.
 - 6. It explains why a generation in which righteousness prevails seems to always be followed by a generation where wickedness and apostasy prevails.
- L. Just always remember that Jesus gives sight to the blind who will simply trust Him and obey his first command to them.
 - 1. And only then can they see and receive knowledge, and have understanding.
 - 2. As long as we say we see, we understand, we know, but we will not lay down our own will, and say, "Not my will but thine be done," we are indeed blind as the Pharisees.
- M. Have you ever been to that point and permanently laid down your life before the Lord?