

(John) 12 - the Light Refused

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon explores the profound claims of Jesus and the implications of spiritual freedom and identity in Him.

Duration: 52:23

Scripture: John 8:37, John 8:58 - 9:1, John 9:6-7, John 9:18-19, John 9:33

Topics: "John"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jesus healing a man who was born blind. The preacher emphasizes that this story is not just about physical blindness, but also about the ministry of Christ as the light of the world. The sermon begins by highlighting the context of the story, where Jesus had just faced a controversy with the Pharisees and was not afraid to confront them. The preacher then discusses the principle of the man's case, emphasizing Jesus' statement that he came to the world so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. The sermon concludes by reading from John 8:37-59, where Jesus asserts his moral majesty and declares himself as the light of the world.

Transcript

Just a prayer together. We worship you, dear Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus, that you came. Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about his lovely name? For your name's sake. Amen.

Now from James to John. Now turn with me, will you please, to the last part of chapter 8. In your notes on John, we've got as far, I think, as the great statement of Jesus in verse 36. If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

I'm going to read from verse 37 on to the end of the chapter. Have you got it? John 8, 37. I know that you are descendants of Abraham.

Yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your Father. They answered him, Abraham is our father.

Jesus said to them, if you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did. For now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.

You do what your Father did. They said to him, we were not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God. Jesus said to them, if God were your Father, you would love me.

For I perceived it, and came forth from God. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.

You are of your Father the devil, and your will is to do your Father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God, hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them, is that you are not of God.

The Jews answered him, are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan, and have a demon? Jesus answered, I have not a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it, and he will be the judge.

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. The Jews said to him, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets.

And you say, if anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death? You greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died? Who do you claim to be? Jesus answered, if I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God. But you have not known him.

I know him. If I said I do not know him, I should be a liar, like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word.

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day. He saw it, and was glad. The Jews then said to him, you are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Incidentally, just as I read that, it hit me.

You are not yet fifty? Jesus was only thirty. I wonder if his strain had begun to tell. I wonder if he looked like being fifty.

I wonder if the pressure was so tremendous that he was beginning to look old. You are not yet fifty. The Jews would have said, you are not yet thirty.

You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. So they took up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple. This is the word of the Lord.

Now, in this tremendous passage, in verses thirty-seven to forty-seven, we have been speaking about what Jesus said concerning freedom. They didn't understand. Christians delivered from one slavery to another, and changed to sin, now in chains to Jesus.

Now, in verse thirty-seven onwards, the issue is one of pedigree. Pedigree, that is, dissent, natural dissent. And Jesus says, in verse thirty-seven to forty-two, talking about being descendants of Abraham, you seek to kill me, verse thirty-seven, because my word finds no place in you.

I speak what I have seen with my father, and you do what you have heard from your father. Abraham is our father. Jesus said, if you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did.

But now you seek to kill me. A man who has told you the truth which I heard from God, this is not what Abraham did. You do what your father did.

And he said to him, we were not born of fornication. We are one father, even God. Jesus said to him, if God were your father, you'd love me.

For I proceeded and came forth from God. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Jesus is just saying this, and you could get this down, I think.

Natural dissent, natural dissent, doesn't carry with it spiritual likeness. Natural dissent doesn't carry with it spiritual likeness. Physical and moral likeness don't always go together.

Gentiles could never claim natural dissent from Abraham. But Galatians 3.29, just down that verse, Galatians 3.29, Paul says, if we're Christians, then we're Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. And in verses 43 through 47, Jesus applies this truth to the Jews. It tells them that their father isn't God, but the devil.

Make a note of this. We can talk a lot about our pedigree, boast about it, but ignore the fact that character settles the question of kinship. That is, character tells us to whom we belong.

Sure, we can make a lot of big boast about our pedigree, ancestry, but ignore the fact that character tells us to whom we belong. We've got to show a family likeness. That's Christian living.

We give ourselves away, not by our talk, but by our walk. Christian will give himself away, not by his talk, but by his walk, because he shows a family likeness. You often hear a proud parent saying, or somebody about him, well, isn't that child the image of his father? Family likeness.

But the different people, different people, that may be like, but not like Jesus like that. We have his nature in us, and therefore ought to show the family likeness. Trace in this gospel, and I hope you notice it as we go through, Jesus claims for himself.

The claims he made. And here he makes a claim to be sinless. You notice that? Verse 46.

Which of you convicts me of sin? Claim to be sinless. It would be the worst of sins for anybody else to make a claim like that. Which of you convinces me or convicts me of sin? I can see the Lord standing there as a living expression of truth.

Which of you convinces me of sin? Jesus never sought pardon from anybody, because he didn't need it. He had nothing to be sorry for. He never sought pardon from anybody.

If I haven't sought pardon, then I need pardon for not seeking it. But Jesus never sought it from anyone. Notice that in the closing section of this chapter, verses 48 through 59, there are three small paragraphs here, each beginning with something that the Jews said about Jesus.

Verses 48 to 59. Can you find out what they said about Jesus? Verse 48. They insult him by calling him a Samaritan.

But they knew he came from Galilee. And not only by saying he was Samaritan, but saying he was possessed with a demon. Verse 48.

Samaritan, and you have a demon. Remembering who he was, and to whom they were speaking, and what he could have done to them, you notice his quiet reply, I have not a demon, but I honor my father, and you dishonor me. How do I react when I'm insulted? Jesus, quiet reply.

The first thing this Jew said then, was that he was a Samaritan, and had a demon. Verse 52. Notice this.

I'll read verse 51. Truly I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. Verse 52.

The Jew said to him, now we know that you have a demon. Abram died, as did the prophets. And you say, if anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.

You greater than our father Abram, who died? See, they take up the statement of Jesus, they've just made, and confirm that he must be possessed with a demon. They didn't understand him when he talked about freedom, now they don't understand him when he talks about death. He says he's greater than Abram.

Known and honored of God, knowing him as nobody else ever could. The chains of Christ are absolutely tremendous. Jesus answered, I glorify myself, and I glorify myself, my glory is nothing.

It is my father who glorifies me, of whom you said that he is your God. But you have not known him, I know him. If I said I do not know him, I'd be a liar like you.

But I do know him, and I keep his word. Your father Abram rejoiced that he was to see my day. He saw it, and was glad.

The claims of Jesus are absolutely staggering, and only credible because he was God. Only credible because he was God. Underline the claims of Jesus in your Bible.

The claims that he made for himself in this gospel. So the Jews said he had a demon, and sought to prove it. Because Jesus claimed to be alive before Abram.

Verses 57 to 59, here they don't only misunderstand him, but they misquote him. The Jews said, you're not yet fifty years old, have you seen Abram? Jesus never said he had. I should be a liar like you, but I do know him, and I keep his word.

Your father Abram rejoiced that he was to see my day. He saw it, and was glad. Jesus had said Abram saw him.

That only brought a tremendous claim from Christ. Before Abram was, I am. Verse 58.

The Greek reads like this. Before Abram was born, I am. Was, before Abram was, that implies creation.

I am, that implies existence. This is the claim that Jesus made that led to his murder. Before Abram was, I am.

Before he was born, I exist. Just put this down. His life had the timeless quality of deity.

His life, the life of Jesus, had the timeless quality of deity. He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Exodus 3.14. Exodus 3.14. God said to Moses, I am who I am.

And he said, say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you. Exodus 3.14. Jesus claims to be God.

To the Jew, that was blasphemy. And they threw stones at him. Fancy throwing stones at the creator of the universe.

Before Abram was, I am. They threw stones at him. The one who was, who will be, and who is, needs the total worship of our hearts.

Just think, in those verses, put down this, the moral majesty of Jesus. The moral majesty of Christ. Right? Now just let me read to you the opening verses of this next chapter.

Chapter 9, from verse 1. As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus said, it was not this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him, we must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day. Night comes when no one can work, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

And as he said this, he spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and anointed the man's eyes with clay, saying to him, go wash in the pool of Siloam, which means scent. So he went, and washed, and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before, as a beggar, said, is not this the man who used to sit and beg? Some said, it is he.

Others said, no, but he is like him. He said, he said, I am the man. They said to him, then how were your eyes opened? He answered, the man called Jesus, made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, go to Siloam and wash.

So I went, and washed, and received my sight. They said to him, where is he? He said, I don't know. Stop there a moment.

This miracle follows the claim of our Lord to be the light of the world. Jesus had said, I am the light of the world. And here is how he proved it.

The cure of this man, blind, born blind, only takes two verses, six and seven. But the account of the preface, and effect, take the whole chapter. Just two verses to describe the miracle.

But the whole chapter occupies the preface, and the effect. It's not simply a story of physical blindness, that's secondary. Rather, it's a tremendous example of the ministry of Christ, as the light of the world.

Now notice in its setting, a second, he'd just come from a tremendous controversy with the Pharisees, in the temple. They had tried to kill him, and as he walked out and passed by, he paused. He paused on the steps, as he saw a man, blind, from birth.

He wasn't afraid of enemies, he wasn't running from them. He paused. His hour had not yet come.

He paused in verse four, to do the work of him that sent me, while he was there. And he saw a man. Can't you see the picture there? He saw a man.

And his eyes were just such, from head to foot. How amazing that millions of people cannot see Jesus. Ephesians 5.8, just jot down, which says, once you were darkness, now you are light.

In the Lord, walk as children of light. Once you were darkness, now you are light. In the Lord, walk as children of light.

I mean, he can't see anything in Jesus, but he sees you, and he sees me, and he sees room for a miracle. He sees room for a miracle. See, some people thought they'd no need, so he passes by them.

But he stops alongside someone who's blind, and sees a tremendous opportunity of displaying his power, in this man's life. That's what we all need at Cap'n Ray, a confrontation with Jesus. Every miracle is a parable.

Picture. Look at the problem of this man's condition. That's how I'd title the opening part of the chapter.

The problem of this man's condition. His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, if not this man sinned, nor his parents, but that he might work the works of God, that they may manifest in him. A man blind from birth, he'd never seen a face, never seen a hill, never seen a flower.

Blind. He was a tremendous problem to the disciples, and they made two bad mistakes. Get this.

Verse 2. They said, his blindness must be due to his sin. And instead of showing compassion, they proposed having a theological discussion about him. How often we talk when we are to help.

Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, it was not this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. Now, there's something very interesting to me in this. See, the disciples were sure there must be some connection between the man's blindness and his sin.

They were sure of that. They made a bad mistake. In a sense, they were right.

Because, of course, it's not God's will for anybody to go around blind. It must be the result of failure somewhere, that the disciples were suggesting that he himself was responsible. Perhaps in some previous existence.

Or maybe his parents were to blame. And our Lord clearly says in verse 3, his blindness was not due to his own sin or his parents. But he didn't answer their problem, one which we all have to face.

We've all asked, why? About something like this. And Jesus says something tremendously significant. Have you got it? In verse 3 and 4. Read them to yourself again.

Does that mean to say that this man was born blind in order to give God an opportunity to show his power? Is that what it says? This man's born blind to give God an opportunity to show his power. It was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God then manifested in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while his day and night comes, when no one can work, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

It would seem as if he's saying, this man was born blind to give God the chance of showing his power. But is the Lord like that? Would you allow somebody to suffer for a lifetime just to be able to show his power in

him? I find that hard to believe. I believe that the Lord will permit suffering.

One day we shall know as we are fully known right now. Today I can ask why about all sorts of things and not understand. But one day I'll understand as Jesus knows me now.

Hebrews 2:10 is another verse that George had dropped down there. The captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. If we read those verses again, Dr. Campbell Morgan has a very interesting suggestion to make, and I follow him.

This is what he says. He suggests that the punctuation is at fault. And it should read like this.

Neither did this man sin, nor his parents. Stop. Period.

Instead of a comma. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, comma, I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. That puts new light on it.

Just by putting a stop instead of a comma. Let me read to you again. Neither did this man sin, nor his parents.

Stop. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. Christianity does not answer the why, or eternity to understand that.

But meanwhile the gospel gets to the root of the whole problem. Sin. Not necessarily personal sin, but the whole of sin.

The back of all suffering. Let me just give you that again. Christianity doesn't answer my why.

One day I'll know. But meanwhile the gospel goes to the root of the whole problem. Sin.

Not necessarily personal sin, but the whole of sin. Which is the back of all suffering. We can't answer the why of people, but we can expose the root.

The root of it all, and give the answer. This man was both blind and bankrupt, verse 8. A beggar. That's a picture of everybody outside of Jesus.

Paul is a good statement regarding that. But in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 4. In their case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbeliever to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel, of glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. That's it.

Blinded the minds. You can't argue anybody into receiving Jesus. A spiritual problem needs a spiritual answer.

A spiritual problem needs a spiritual answer. Look at the process of this man's cure. Verses 6 and 7. The method Jesus used.

Very strange. Spittle and clay. Supposed to have some healing effect, I suppose.

May be used to encourage the man's faith. But of course the gospel is strange as well. To say that we're saved by faith is absolutely absurd to most people.

Clay and spittle, rather offensive. So is the gospel. 1 Corinthians 1.23. To the Jew, a stumbling block.

To the Gentile, foolishness. There's nothing spectacular about the gospel. Very commonplace.

But a faith in Jesus transforms character. Notice the command that Jesus gave to this man. Verse 7. Go wash.

Specific, simple, personal. Go wash. Specific, so is the gospel.

Believe. Simple, anybody can wash, so is the gospel. Anybody can trust.

Personal, nobody could go for him. It meant instant obedience. Jesus didn't say tomorrow or next week.

If I want Jesus to save me, then I must do it now. I'm not going to answer this, but you put down and find out if you can. How often Jesus said go before he said come.

How often he said go before he said come. Remember some instances of that we've touched on already. Woman of Samaria, go.

Bring your husband. John Paul. The rich young ruler, go sell everything you have.

Mark 10. The ten lepers, go show yourselves to the priest. Luke 17.

The nobleman, go. Go home, your son is healed. I'll just give you those four instances, but there are many, many more.

Perhaps you'd like just to note the text. Go to the woman of Samaria. John chapter 4. Go to the rich young ruler.

Mark chapter 10. Go to the ten lepers. Luke chapter 17.

Luke chapter 17. And go to the nobleman. John chapter 4. The command Jesus gave, go wash.

Then notice the remedy that Jesus effected. Verse 7, it was immediate. So he went and washed and came back seeing.

So was salvation. Repent and believe, immediate. The only way to remove blindness is to believe the one who is light.

The only way to remove blindness is to believe in the one who is light. Immediate. It was definite.

Just look at verse 11. He answered, the man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, go and wash. So I went and washed and received my sight.

Listen to him again. Verse 25. Luke on in your chapter.

He answered, whether he's a sinner, I don't know. One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see. That's tremendous.

It was definite. This man knew it without a shadow of doubt. And he gave direct answers.

It was transparent. Transparent. Verse 9. Other people knew it.

Misguessedly recognized the same man. Some said, it's he. Others said, no, but he's like him.

He said, I am the man. Jot down and be careful to put this down. If a person has grace in his heart, it's bound to show up in his life.

I repeat. If a person has grace in his heart, it's bound to show up in his life. The converted ought always to arouse curiosity.

Got that? Say it again. It was transparent. Other people knew it and scarcely recognized this man.

If a person has grace in his heart, it's bound to show up in his life. The converted should always arouse curiosity. If my profession of faith has not changed my life, there's every reason to doubt the reality of it.

That's underlining James. Repeat. If my profession of faith has not changed my life, there's every reason to doubt the reality of it.

Verse 16. The Pharisees said, he's breaking the commandment. This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.

Always bugging him about something. How can a man who is a sinner do such signs? Incredible. Yes.

It was immediate. It was definite. It was transparent.

And one other thing. It was permanent. He didn't become blind again.

Christ never cures anybody temporarily. Christ's cures last because he lasts. When God does something, he does it forever.

I believe in being born again, but I don't believe in being unborn. I have nothing to preach to anybody except an eternal salvation. I'll just repeat that.

He's a little thinking into it. It was a permanent cure. He didn't become blind anymore.

Christ never cures anybody temporarily. His cures always last because he lasts. What God does, he does forever.

I believe in being born again, but not in being unborn. Nothing to preach but an eternal salvation. And just let me show you one more thing here.

The principle of this man's case. Look at it in verse 39 if you will, but you'll read it again later. But just look at this.

Jesus said, for judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, that those who see may become blind. Link that with John chapter 3 verse 19. This is the condemnation.

Light has come into the world, but men prefer darkness. And notice, will you, the wonderful dawning in this man's mind about Jesus. Verse 11.

A man called Jesus made failure not in my eyes. Verse 17. Verse 17.

When the people asked him, what do you say about him since he's opened your eyes? He's a prophet. Verse 17. Verse 27.

He answered them, I've told you already and you won't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to come and to be his disciples? Will you also be his disciples? And verse 33. Verse 33.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. And finally, verse 39. Verse 37, sorry.

Jesus said to him, you have seen him and it is he who speaks to you. He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

See, more and more light. And the more light he had, Jesus gave him more. Just notice those verses again, as I read these little phrases, one after another.

A man's deepening convictions about the Lord. Verse 11. A man called Jesus.

Verse 17. A prophet. Verse 27.

Will you also be his disciples? Verse 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. Verse 39.

Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. He followed all the light he had, and he got more.

Intellectual conviction, complete trust, utter devotion, he worshipped. What began in wonder, ended in worship. When you stop wondering, you stop worshipping.

This man went steadily on and up. The Pharisees went steadily down and out. He went steadily on and up.

They went steadily down and out. They had light, but wouldn't look at it. Therefore, Jesus pronounces their fate.

Verse 39. May I just give you one last little sentence to jot down? Here it is. Ready? Slowing down a moment.

The Pharisees thought it incredible that they should be included among the blind. The Pharisees thought it incredible that they should be included among the blind. Verse 40.

Some of the Pharisees heard him, and they said to him, Are we also blind? And Jesus meets them on their own ground. And verse 41. This is what I want us to get clear.

They could be excused the blindness of ignorance. They could be excused the blindness of ignorance. But never the blindness of self-satisfaction.

They could be excused the blindness of ignorance, but never blind self-satisfaction, which stopped them seeing the truth. Their condemnation was all the greater because of their privileges. I'll say that again.

Their condemnation was all the greater because of their privileges. Got it? And I can't just leave you without just noticing one thing here. What a miserable couple his father and mother were.

Verse 20. His parents answered, We know that this is our son, that he was born blind. But how he now sees we don't know, nor do we know who opened his eyes.

Ask him. He's of age. And speak.

Let him speak for himself. The boy hadn't missed much by not seeing them. They should have been wild with joy, but they were filled with fear.

And you notice, verse 22, what they were afraid of. They feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. They were afraid of that.

That's exactly what their son got. Verse 34. They answered him, You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us? And they cast him out.

What their parents were afraid of, their boy received. Miserable couple. Let's do a prayer together.

O Lord, how we thank you that you have opened our eyes. And in the light of what you have shown us, we ask that we may walk in the light with you. We demonstrate to others, arouse people's curiosity, because we claim to know him, who is the light of the world.

We ask it for his sake. Amen.

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