

The Sin of Shortsightedness

How are we doing? We doing good? Well I hope so because we are going to get punched in the throat today by Jesus.

I can guarantee you this today, that some of you will leave here mad at me, some of you will realize that it is not nice to shoot the messenger, and you will be mad at God, but more importantly some of you will have the holy spirit move and convict you of your sins and move you towards a fuller sanctification. We are going to talk about what that means a little later in the sermon, but right now I want you guys to put on your shoulder pads because we are in the trenches here.

We are going through the book of John, and we are seeing who Jesus is by examining the life of Jesus through the eyes of John. And right now we are in the final saga of a defense that Jesus is giving in front of his critics, who are put off by the idea of divinity that Jesus seems to be spreading amongst the Jews.

And just so we are still all caught up, Jesus is giving this sermon because the religious Jews are blinded by their own religion and self righteousness that they fail to see Jesus for who he really is and instead, just want to kill him.

Here is the inciting incident for the discourse that Jesus is giving, he just performed a miracle and professed that he indeed is the son of God, then we see this

5:18-19a

See this sermon is not like the sermon on the mount that we see in Matthew. Let me explain. Every time you come to church, read your bible, say your prayers or have any sort of communion with God or with fellow believers in an atmosphere of applying the gospel to your life, you are experiencing discipline.

Now there are two kinds of discipline the first one is called formative discipline. This is what happens most times when you hear a sermon preached, it is a positive reinforcement through teaching that causes you to live a more disciplined life. Right, this is what some of us may know as “spiritual disciplines.” We are learning and being encouraged on how to better be disciplined, controlled, responsible, worship laden believers because we are shaping and growing our knowledge and understanding of God.

Then there is what is called restorative discipline. This is what some of you may know as Church discipline. Because where formative discipline can be done from the pulpit to a large audience, church discipline is normally private because it deals with specific sins of individuals. It is typically focuses more on correction and the specific sins, rather than a more broad appeal we see in formative discipline.

See if you were to come to me and say, I want to know how to grow as a Christian, I could give that answer to almost anyone at anytime and most people would leave encouraged by it.

But if I found out you were struggling with specific sins that were of a detriment not only to yourself, but also to the greater body of this church, we would have a little different kind of meeting. Where my goal would be a strong rebuke and correction with the end goal being restoration. Meaning that you might leave my office feeling a little sore and tender, but also knowing that I am disciplining you not out of anger, but so that you can become restored to your best life possible which is in Christ.

But the sermon we are looking at of Jesus, is not a light hearted formative discipline, because we are going to see today that Jesus is coming at these self righteous Jews with a beat stick.

Last week we saw the begging of this when I introduced you to slow turn Jesus, but now Jesus is about to hit his stride.

So let's **pray** because we are going to need it today.

Open your Bibles with me to **John 5:30-37a**

So we see here that Jesus is continuing to talk about the truth behind who he is. Because the reason these Pharisees are mad at him is because he is claiming to be someone who in their sinful minds, he could not possibly be.

Now you can imagine the grace Jesus is having here, these people are accusing God of claiming to be God. Now let me tell you how my sinful heart would have handled this. So if I am Jesus here, I am looking at these chumps who think they know God better than I know God, these chumps who see my miracles as party tricks and chances of luck. I would be like this. "You don't think I am the son of God, you're all crippled. You in the back, you have leprosy, you in the corner, I don't like the way you think of me, you're dead. Son of God that."

But Jesus doesn't call upon his own power to prove that he is God, but rather he uses witnesses to the truth to further prove that he is the Son of God. See Jesus is like, I don't need to prove anything to you, because it has already been proven. The truth still stands.

Jesus says "I can do nothing on my own." Why? Because I am the Son of God. If Jesus were able to do things outside of God's will, he would then become elevated above God, which would in turn ruin the homeostasis of the trinity, which would then prove our scripture wrong, which would then leave us without God.

Then he says, but I don't need to do anything on my own because I have witnesses and testimonies that speak in my defense that I am indeed the son of God. He says don't take my word for it, but seek out the truth, because it points to me. He says remember John the crazy hairy Baptist who you killed. He testified to me. Remember that guy who like 2:45 seconds ago was crippled and who is now running around town speaking of what I did to him. That testifies

to me. Remember when I healed the official's son, that healing testified to me, remember when I turned water into wine, that testified to me. Remember the God who you think you are protecting by trying to kill me, that God testifies to me because it was He who sent me to you.

God's people bear witness to me, my works done through the Father bear witness to me, and the Father himself bears witness to me, now explain to me one more time where you missed the point. It's your move.

See Jesus could have just done another miracle, or killed all of those people standing there, but Jesus knew that in the end, it is not about Jesus, but it is about God, and God's will for him, and His Father's heart for redemption. See Jesus got the big picture here. The Son of Man was able to see beyond himself.

When Jesus lived his life, he was able to accomplish all that he was charged to accomplish in stunning fashion because despite persecution and affliction, the center of Jesus' life was not himself, but rather the will, the workings and the wondrous plan of his Father in heaven.

Jesus the only guy on the face of this planet who had no need to be humbled, realized that his worth was not in himself, but in his Father. And that anything done with himself at the center rather than the will of the Father was an incomplete and wasted life.

Ok. So let's put ourselves in the shoes of these Jews who are thinking they are smarter than Jesus here. At this point we are starting to see that we are beginning to lose this battle. Jesus has men, his miracles, his Father, and the Spirit (1 John 5:6) who testify to his truth. I have Joe over there who testifies to my truth, but if what Jesus said is true, Joe only has existence, breath and the ability to form and dumb doctrine because God has allowed him to do that. This is a proper time for what we like to call a tactical retreat.

I remember one time when I was fishing, and I was standing right where the river split, and I just wanted to float my line a little farther into the second branch of the river, and I could feel the place where the river bottom fell out underneath me due to the current. But I still thought I could slowly make my way towards that edge and be fine. But very soon I realized that the current had me, and now I was running on this underwater treadmill trying to fight the current, when really all I was doing was running forward with all my might while the current took me down the slope and pretty soon I was being carried chest first into a log jam with a very sharp stick pointing right at my chest.

This is what the Pharisees are feeling right now, they are ready to make a tactical retreat, but Jesus is about to lay his final blow on them. Let's read on.

5:37b-47

Check and mate. These men have just become undone before Jesus, and what once started as a silent thought in their heads, now turned into a righteous butt-whopping where they are so

beside themselves that they are hard pressed to tell you which way is up.

But did you see what Jesus did here. He won this debate not by flexing his big boy muscles and throwing around mean names and insults to crush the spirits of these men, but instead Jesus, because he is God, examined their hearts and brought them to a place in need of restoration because he confronted them with the truth of their sinful hearts.

No one can do that but God. I can stand up here and tell you what your sins might be, but only Jesus can tell you your specific sins, meaning that when we go through this list we just read, and you feel a tugging at your heart and that twinge of guilt, that isn't me calling you out. That's the holy spirit calling you out.

Jesus says to them. You claim to know God, but you don't know him. You think you love him, but his love does not live in you. You say you believe in God, but you don't. You think you have found life in your religion, but religion is lifeless when you miss me. The life you think you have found is no life at all, and the real life I offer you, you refuse. You do not have the love of the almighty. You are so obsessed with yourself that you will believe anyone who says anything to you so long as their message is of benefit to yourself. You are more terrified of man's judgment than my judgment, and my judgment is just. You think that your acts of good deeds and religious works will save you, but in fact you are condemned by your own theology, because if you think you can fulfill the law yourself, you have never read the law because even Moses testifies in my name saying that you need me.

Now here is the thing. We can look at this rebuke that Jesus is giving to these people and say wow, good thing that is not me standing there. But let me present you with the truth church, you know what these people would be doing right now if they were alive today...they would be sitting right where you are.

There will be church people who do not end up in heaven. There will be people who think they have this God thing figured out who will be extremely disappointed when they reach the pearly gates.

Look here: **Matt 7:21-23, 1 John 2:18-19**

So Jesus is standing here before a group of top notch church people and telling them that they are dead, how dead, dead dead. This is a scary fact. Because we all hate the Pharisees, but none of us ever assume that we are the Pharisees.

So how do we avoid the mistakes of these men? How do we see the witnesses of Jesus and come crawling and begging to him so that he can make himself and his glory known to us?

First of all we have to identify the root sin in the hearts of man. There is one sin that Jesus seems to be pressing his finger on the hardest in dealing with these people, and it is from that one source sin, that many little sins sprout up from.

We can see this most clearly when we look at vs **44**. Pride, we care too much about man. We care too much about ourselves, and our status, and what we can do.

See the problem with us humans is we struggle with the ability to view life outside of ourselves. We are so narrow minded that we are oblivious to those who are around us and more importantly, we are oblivious of God.

Now you might say, I cannot be oblivious to God, because I am here, I am in church. But look back at verse **39-40**. See we are so prideful, that when we read the scriptures, which scream of God, we are unable to see him because we are so fixated on ourselves. See we have on one hand the God of the Bible that we are reading offering us life, and yet we are so fixated on finding the life ourselves and doing things on our own, that our pride driven insecurities cause us to think life exists in our own actions inside of Christianity, rather than something that Jesus has already accomplished and is now giving us. We reject salvation because we think we can produce and sustain our own salvation.

Now this may sound like a ridiculous thing, but let me help you diagnose your own heart. Why do you do this Christian thing? Why do you come to church? Why do you tithe? Why do you pray?

Because if you are coming here, and doing those things because you think that your actions are going to save you, or are continuing to save you, you are missing the point. Because in doing that, you are making it about you. It's not about you.

You can do nothing to outdo what Christ has already done in your life. Because we Christians struggle with sin and insecurity, we will always be on the look out to prove ourselves. But we have nothing to prove. We spend our time as Christians, doing Christianity in meaningless redundant ways.

2 Thess 3:11 says "For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies."

Here is the thing about salvation, it's not by our own doing that we are saved. Look at **Rom 5:1**, see justification is the religious word for justice being paid, meaning when Christ died, in that moment all people who were Christians, are Christians and will be Christians had their faith bought and paid for by Christ. Meaning your salvation was completed not when you first accepted Christ, but when Christ died for you.

There was once a time not long ago where I would become so guilty about sins that I would try to out worship, out pray, and out read everyone. Know this may sound like a good thing. But in all reality, I was not worshipping because I was broken, but rather I was worshipping, hoping that the worship would please God, and therefore he would forgive my sin and let me into heaven.

But this is exactly what Jesus is saying to these people, he is saying, look, if my work here as the

Christ is not about me, but about God, how much more do you need God than you need your works. Your works will not save you, God will save you.

See we are thinking that we can out think and out work our own sin so that we can present ourselves as pure, so that we can bear witness to ourselves. Whereas Jesus on the other side is saying, I am nothing without God, it's not my works, but the fathers work in me.

Do you see the point Jesus is making here? Jesus is saying you will amount to nothing. You rejected me, you rejected God, you rejected love, you rejected reason therefore your works done for your salvation mean nothing.

See when Jesus diedp on the cross we became justified, past tense. Meaning that we now stand pure in God's sight not because of anything we have done, but because of what Jesus already did. But because we are so self-centered and sinful, we fail to see the work that God already proved in us and we try to prove it on our own.

Paul says this to the **Galatians 3:1-3**. Paul is saying, "Your flesh cannot out do what God's spirit is already doing."

So how then do we work, how then do we fix this, how do we operate under this? Does this mean that we don't do any good service because God already died for you and justified you?

No, it means you have to see outside yourself, and broaden your view, and then your service takes a different shape. See Jesus in giving this talk to these men wants not to simply crush them, but to restore to them a proper view point, where God is center, and man is under God.

See when we look at Jesus proving himself by showing of his father, we need to follow suit, because our life becomes more meaningful, less stressful and more joyful when we dethrone ourselves as Lord over our salvation, and instead give it back to God.

See justification is a final and completed act that Jesus did on the cross, where he paid for you sins, but sanctification is a progressive thing that draws you closer to God as you begin to realize his will and work inside of that.

And when Jesus becomes the center, and we trust his spirit to bring our souls to salvation and completion we begin to worship differently, because we worship not out of a deficiency, but out of an excess, when we tithe, we tithe not to pay our avoid hell tax, but because we rejoice in what God has graciously given us, when we pray, we pray not to fulfilled required communication, but we pray to commune with the source of our redemption. And when we serve and learn and go to church, we do it not to earn any standing before God, but rather to just simply stand before God, to be in his presence to see him.

When we see Jesus as the center of our lives, our walls of sin begin to crumble because he is our proof and our hope.

Church, you want to avoid the label of Pharisee, you want to avoid the wrath of God, stop trying to earn your salvation, and rather live in your salvation, grow in your salvation, become sanctified in your salvation. Let God be your witness, and your life be his glory.