

Morning Sermon October 21, 2018

"Believing, But..." John 12:42-50

In the passage preceding today's text, John speaks powerfully about the unbelief of the Jews, quoting the prophet Isaiah – John 12:38 ... "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

John 12:40 ... "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."

⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. (John 12: 41 NKJ)

The first of those passages is from Isaiah 53, which speaks powerfully about Christ's cross / the last of Isaiah's vision of Christ's glory – also connected (in John 12) to Christ's cross!

I. Shy, silent belief –

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; (John 12:42 NKJ)

1. *The positive aspects of this belief:*

- A. *Many believed, they are contrasted in context to those who were blinded, hardened, unbelieving ... not all were equally caught up in the blind, hard-hearted, "crucify Him, crucify Him" passion that characterized "the Pharisees" who would put people out of the synagogue for faith in Christ.*
- B. *Many believed, ... they were large in number!*

2. *But ... They did not confess Him – How important is confessing / professing Christ?*

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10 NKJ)

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33 NKJ)

Yet, Peter denied him three times, but repented, obviously Acts 2 on Peter professes Christ boldly –

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13 NKJ) *Maybe*

Nicodemus & Joseph of Arimathea were a bit like Peter? ³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. (John 19:38-39 NKJ)

This confession / profession of Christ seems an essential, natural outflow of real saving faith, yet ...

3. *Mere profession / confession is not enough, life, obedience must go beyond words –*

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21-23 NKJ)

Some are bold, casting out demons, performing miracles, but not doing God's will!

4. *The motive is clear here, in John 12, fear of Pharisees, - lest they should be put out of the synagogue; (John 12:42 NKJ)*

A. *This too, is opposite of what Christ taught His disciples – "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵ "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (Luke 12:4-5 NKJ)*

B. *The man born blind despised this fear – "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. ³³ "If this Man were not from God, He*

could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. (John 9:32-34 NKJ)

II. Incomplete belief -

1. John spoke before of faith that seems incomplete, not saving – ..." ³⁰ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. ³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." ³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* you say, `You will be made free '?" ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. (John 8:30-34 NKJ)

While John 12 speaks of confession being missing from faith, John 8 spoke of content missing from faith –

A. John 8's Not-quite-disciples are not willing to admit their slavery to sin, even though they were children-of-the-Devil – "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44 NKJ)

B. Later they deny Christ's Deity, even to the point of being ready to stone Him – Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." ⁵⁹ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:58-59 NKJ)

III. Faith missing LOVE for God's GLORY– for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (John 12:43 NKJ)

The word twice translated "praise" in John 12:43 is translated glory in John 12:41 - These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. (Jn. 12:41 NKJ) $\delta\delta\zeta\alpha$ doxa {dox'-ah} Meaning: ... in the NT always a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honor, and glory 3) splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, a thing belonging to God ; His glory

The faith of these men who were fearing the Pharisees and loving man's praise / glory more than God's praise / glory... Their faith was missing the oomph a real view of Christ's glory and majesty would give them –

1. Having too much in this world blurs a real view of Christ – *Isaiah 3:16-26 – Isaiah 4:1-2*

2. Note Jesus is that Bright Light –

A. Faith in Christ; is faith in God the Father -

Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. (John 12:44 NKJ)

B. A vision of Christ; is a vision of the father - "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. (John 12:45 NKJ)

C. What the sun is to our world, which would be cold, dark, colorless and dead without it, Christ is to our spiritual, real life - "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. (John 12:46 NKJ)

"Concerning the office of Christ, there can be little doubt that in this place He compares Himself to the sun. Like the sun, He has risen on this sin-darkened world with healing on His wings, and shines for the common benefit of all mankind. Like the sun, He is the great source and center of all spiritual life, comfort, and fertility. Like the sun, He illuminates the whole earth, and no one need miss the way to heaven, if he will only use the light offered for his acceptance." J. C. Ryle

3. Christ's mission was (and is) a saving mission – "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. (John 12:47 NKJ)

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17 NKJ)

4. Christ's Words, which are God's Words, will save or judge – "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. ⁴⁹ "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ "And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." (John 12:48-50 NKJ)

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