

## Short-Sighted Faith – John 5:39-47

### I. Introduction:

- A. After the Lord Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, another confrontation with the Jews began.
1. **Questions** came up about **Jesus' authority** and **power**.
    - a. In **John 5:22** Christ said, *"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."*
    - b. *He that honoureth not the Son honoured not the Father which hath sent him."*
  2. Jesus said that God the Father bore witness to His authority, and John the Baptist did as well.
  3. Then He pointed to the Bible – *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."*
  4. When the discussion turned to the subject of salvation, the Lord Jesus added that many of those Jews were living with a trust in Moses and the law.
  5. *"Do not think that I will accuse you to the father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."*
    - a. Whether the boast was in their blood relationship to Moses, as it was with Abraham...
    - b. Or if they were claiming to be friends of God through their obedience to the law which Moses shared...
    - c. Whichever it was, their faith was misplaced, or as I'll say tonight – it was *"short-sighted."*
  6. When their trust for salvation should have been in God the Father and in the Saviour, it wasn't.
  7. It fell short when it was placed in the law – the holy law which God had given to them.
- B. Now here we are sit in our lofty ivory towers, two millennia later, looking down on those rebellious Jews.
1. **We** know better than to trust **our** ability to keep the law. We are miserable failures at that.
  2. We know that the *"law was our school master to bring us to Christ"* for salvation.
  3. We know that **baptism** can't wash away sin, so we look dismissively at many of the Protestants.
  4. And we know that the **Lord's Supper** doesn't save our souls, so we pity the poor Catholics.
  5. Our faith for salvation is squarely on Christ, His death at Golgotha and in His sacrificial blood.
- C. While that may be true in regard to salvation, isn't it also true that when it comes to our day-to-day lives, we often practice *"short-sighted faith?"*
1. My theme and lesson this evening will be short and simple.
  2. This lesson is for me as much as it is for anyone else.
  3. For and outline let's consider three kinds of faith – *"blind faith," "full faith" and "short-sighted faith."*

### II. First, let's quickly address the **BLIND** variety.

- A. Christians are often accused of demanding or employing *"blind faith."*
1. That is defined as putting **trust** in something **without any reason**, except the demand of the teacher, the evangelist or the cult leader.
  2. It is *"blind"* because it is willing to believe without question or evaluation – someone has his eyes shut.
- B. While that may be the accusation, it is made blindly, because the true man of God only asks people to believe what the Bible teaches.
1. Of course the unbeliever is going to disagree, but to the believer, what God says in His word is true.
  2. If the Bible declares something to be a fact, it is a fact. If the Bible says something is true, then it is true.
  3. For example, **I don't** believe in **creation, because** I have been told to believe it.
  4. While it makes more sense than evolution, I believe that God created the universe in six days because the Bible tells me so.
  5. And I don't believe **all men** are **sinners, because** I have met and investigated the lives of all men.
  6. I believe all men are sinners, because the Bible tells me, giving me examples, evidence and explanations.
  7. I urge and invite people to trust Christ as Saviour, because I know for a fact that Jesus saves – He has saved me and a great many other people I know.

- C. I don't push blind faith on anyone.
1. I want people to listen to the Word of God and to accept what it says.
  2. Paul said of his friends in **Thessalonica**, *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it **NOT** as the **word of men**, but as it is in truth, **the word of God**, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."*
- D. Blind faith is not really a Biblical subject.

### III. So let's move on to comparing **SHORT-SIGHTED FAITH** to **FULL FAITH**.

- A. I've already pointed out *"short-sighted faith"* when it came to the salvation of many of those Jews.
1. And so many professing Christians around us today are also trusting their salvation to *"short-sighted faith."*
  2. They trust their **baptism**, their **kindness** to others, and their **donations** to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.
  3. Rather than putting their faith in the blood and the death of the Lamb of God, they believe they are saved by wearing a gold cross around their necks and going to church now and then.
  4. They may say that some of these things are good & from the Lord, but in reality they are not trust-**worthy**.
- B. But let's get real: even as Christians we often fall back into *"short-sighted faith"* in our day-to-day lives.
1. **Abraham** gives us an **extreme example**, but it is also a **REAL** example.
  2. In **Genesis 12** God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, telling him – *"I will make of thee a great nation."*
  3. As Austin pointed out a couple weeks ago, Abram and Sari were middle aged by this time.
    - a. They were childless, and the clock was still ticking.
    - b. In **Genesis 15** we read, *"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision."*
    - c. *"And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless... behold, to me thou hast given no seed..."*
  4. Just as the Lord blessed Abram for trusting Him to move to the place God would give to him, God expected Abram to trust him for the rest of the promise – a nation full of his own children.
  5. But Abram's faith failed him; it fell short of **direct** faith in the Lord Himself.
  6. Still believing that God would give him sons, Abram took Hagar to become his concubine in order to satisfy God's promise.
  7. Rather than trusting the Creator to create something new, Abram put his trust in human flesh in order to assist the Lord.
  8. It was probably fully justified in Abram's mind, but it was short-sighted and sinful.
- C. I probably shouldn't bring up this example, because it hinders my primary purpose just slightly, but consider the woman with the issue of blood. Please turn to **Matthew 9:20**.
1. For twelve years she had been plagued with a physical problem which may have destroyed her old life.
  2. But said to herself, *"If I may but touch (Jesus) garment I shall be whole"* – **Matthew 9:21**.
    - a. I have used this woman as an illustration of great faith, because the Lord makes that application.
    - b. But for just for tonight, I'll briefly point to the fact that her great faith was somewhat *"short sighted."*
    - c. Rather than addressing the Lord Jesus Himself, she touched His wonderful, seamless robe.
  3. And I'll also point out she was not healed in doing so. It didn't work, because it was short-sighted.
  4. **"BUT – Jesus turned him about,"** to look at her.
  5. Then He said, *"Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."*
  6. The Greek could easily be translated *"from THAT moment"* she was healed.
  7. When she looked into the face of the Son of God, putting her faith in His grace, she was delivered.
  8. But to be specific, she wasn't healed by trusting in the Lord's robe.

- D. I wouldn't try to deceive anyone, implying that the Lord never uses means to carry out His grace.
1. But my point is, we shouldn't lower our faith, looking for the means, when we should be looking to the Lord.
  2. The very next event in **Matthew's** synopsis of Jesus' life involved a pair of blind men.
  3. **Verse 27** – *“And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*
    - a. *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.*
    - b. *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.*
    - c. *And their eyes were opened...”*
  4. You may think I'm silly, but notice they didn't say, *“Hey, Lord, would you touch our blind eyes for us?”*
  5. They didn't look for any mediatorial means in order to be cured.
  6. They didn't say, *“We've heard that you have great and powerful spit. Would you please make a spittle mud bath to put on our eyes?”*
  7. Their faith went straight to the source, *“Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.”*
- E. I am not an expert in this area, but I'd like to grow in that direction.
1. **James 1:5** says, *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*
  2. Let's say that you are in need of life-saving surgery.
    - a. This kind of surgery is not covered by insurance, so if you proceed it will take all your savings and perhaps even your house, leaving your family with nothing. And you may not survive anyway.
    - b. You don't know what to do, so you ask your pastor for his advice.
    - c. And you go on line to find out how often this surgery is successful versus how often it fails.
    - d. You talk to your banker and your retirement fund administrator searching for financial help.
  3. And when you've explored all your options someone reminds you again of **James 1:5**.
  4. Perhaps you began with God in your search for wisdom and you ended with Him, but in the mean time you were a bit short-sighted in your faith.
  5. I'm not saying that we shouldn't be practical, but don't stop with touching the hem of Christ's garment.
  6. Don't make your prayer entirely about finding the best possible surgeon and least expensive hospital.
- F. As **Daniel** was being led toward the lion's den, his faith was in the Lord to meet that particular need.
1. Do you think that he gave to God his list of possible escape plans?
    - a. *“Lord would you mind killing those the lions for me; they are nasty horrible beasts?”*
    - b. *“Would you let them escape when the door is open, killing a couple of their handlers in the process?”*
    - c. *“God you could given them lock-jaw; why don't you use that to spare my life?”*
  2. We aren't specifically told, but it appears to me that Daniel simply believed that God would do what God intended to do with or without any kind of help or input from Daniel..
  3. And his full-sighted faith was blessed.
- G. When **Hananiah**, **Misael** and **Azariah** were being threatened with the fiery furnace, their faith was in the Lord, not in any intermediary.
1. *“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.*
    - a. *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace,*
    - b. *and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.”*
  2. Those young men weren't putting their faith in God's control of the Babylonian natural gas supply.
  3. They weren't using some short-sighted faith, trusting in a localized flood to douse the flames..
  4. Their trust was directly in the Lord no matter what the consequences might have been.

- H. **David** went into battle with Goliath, carrying nothing but a sling and five well-chosen stones.
1. But his faith was not in the training he gave himself, knocking over tin cans at a hundred yards out in the wilderness while his sheep were sleeping.
  2. He didn't have any short-sighted faith in his past victories over bears and the kings of beasts.
  3. His faith was directly in the King of kings.
- I. I know you've had plenty of lessons from **Abraham's sacrifice** of his son Isaac.
1. But consider once again, Abraham said, *"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."*
  2. He didn't say that the sovereign God had a ram already stuck in a thicket tied up by his big curly horns, because he had been praying for that as they walked along the way.
  3. He didn't trust that the Lord would send an angel to knock the knife from his hand.
  4. His trust was not in whatever means the Lord might use. It was in the Lord Himself.

#### IV. Conclusion:

- A. Let us never forget that the God we serve, the Saviour who loved us, and the Spirit who redeemed us, is the Creator of all things.
1. Do you need \$10,000 to get you through a problem which was really no fault of your own?
  2. Remember that the One who created all things out of nothing has not lost one erg of His divine energy.
  3. He who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, can certainly put a chicken in your pot.
  4. Trust Him to take care of you.
  5. He doesn't need to hear you tell Him to slaughter a steer on your behalf.
  6. Let the Lord decide how to move forward.
- B. Put your faith in **Him**, not in some **IMAGE** of **Him**.
1. Put your trust in the Lord, not in something which you think He might use to bless you.
  2. Don't set up an idol to represent the Lord in your time of need.
  3. *"Trust in the Lord and lean not unto thine own understanding."*
  4. *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."*