

## **Faith in the Home**

### **Fourth Sunday of Lent John 9:1-41 "Cultural Outcasts"**

One of my favorite non-Lutheran preachers is a pastor named Voddie Baucham. When he addresses the Ten Commandments that we are called to follow he often puts his tongue in his cheek and jokingly talks about our "11 th Commandment," which he says is, "Though shalt be nice," or "Though shalt not offend." Pastor Baucham then says that 11 th one seems to trump all the other ones for us. This presents a problem for Christians who are not called to be offensive or filled with hate, but what we believe in, is often deemed offensive by our culture.

In John 9, a man who was born blind was healed by Jesus on the Sabbath. In the culture of Judea in that day it was believed that man born blind must have had been a sinner or his parents were sinned to make their son that way. Furthermore, the Pharisees did not fully understand the spirit of the 3 rd commandment, "Remember the Sabbath Day and Keep it Holy." Whenever Jesus healed on the Sabbath, the Pharisees accused Jesus of sinning by performing "work" on the Sabbath.

The man who was healed by Jesus was brought before these religious leaders, and it created a great controversy among them. Some said Jesus was in league with Satan, others said how could a man born blind regain his sight except from God? The healed man is asked by the Pharisees whether or not he thinks Jesus is a sinner for healing him. The man's response is in amazement because he believes that God would not listen to a sinner and only a righteous man could share healing from God. Even with the division among the Pharisees as to Jesus' righteousness, the man gets kicked out of temple for standing up for Jesus.

Though he gained his sight he was considered an outcast by the religious leaders. In their minds they condemned him to Hell. However, Jesus comes to Him reveals that He is indeed the Son of God, and the man worships Jesus. He may have lost status in the world, but he gained something even greater than sight, salvation. The man never sought to offend the Pharisees, but he was placed in a position where he had to confess what he believed. He was not doing so to give offense, but they took offense at his confession of faith. The world has many misconceptions about you as a Christian and many people will think you are vile and hate filled for what you believe. Don't be afraid of people taking offense at your faith. Jesus said we will be hated just as He was hated. They miss the point that He came to save, heal, and love. He showed the ultimate act of love by dying on the cross, and rising again, granting us eternal life.

The cost of being vilified by non-Christians is actually small when we consider how awesome the eternal life, eternal joy, and eternal love of Jesus is. Our lives in this world are only a mere blink in the eye compared to an eternity of Christ's presence in His new creation.

***So how do we do we teach and model these things to our kids?***

1. Recognize the tension that we face walking in Christ's truth and love. We are not called to judge the sinner because Jesus did not come to be the world's judge, but it's savior (John 3:17). We are also called to walk in the light (1 John). That means that as our kids get older and see more about the world, we need to teach them the world is going to live differently than we Christians are called to live. We cannot make people believe in God. We can only remain faithful. People who recognize the lies of the world will be more likely to run to God and His Church when we stand in God's love and truth.
2. Remember you are not filled with hatred because you believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation. You are being completely logical in your beliefs. If condemnation comes from rejecting the one true God, then salvation can only logically come from trusting in and having a relationship with the one true God. The concept of Hell is offensive, but the answer is not watering down beliefs. The answer to Hell is sharing the Gospel of Jesus. In the same way you are not filled with hatred if you live in accordance to your faith and teach your children to do the same.
3. There are movements within our society and culture that go against God's Word, and are therefore of Satan. Satan loves to appear as an angel of light. So, he paints us as Christ's followers as being filled with hate. Before we attach ourselves to any social movement it is up to us to research them and test their beliefs and the fruit of their movement against Scripture.
4. If you are in a situation where you come across someone who is antagonist toward the faith, instead of arguing with them, simply ask, "Are you trying to learn about Christianity or are you looking for a fight?" If you sense that they are just looking for a fight, "Just say this is not going to get us anywhere," and disengage. There is a reason why Jesus said in Matthew, "Don't cast your pearls before swine."
5. If you are in a situation where you have to choose between being faithful, and being perceived as "nice," your children and your fellow Christians will be strengthened by you being faithful over being "nice." The issue isn't that Christians shouldn't condemn sin. The issue is that when we condemn sin, often we do not make enough of an effort to share the Gospel. The point of calling our sin is to get people to see the need for Jesus.