

## Gospel of John - episode 18

### Chapter 8 part 3 - chapter 9

Welcome to our Sharing on St. John's Gospel. I now want to deal with the last part of this long controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leadership in Chapter 8 of his Gospel. We finished the last episode and we begin this one with them accusing Jesus of being possessed. This is chapter 8:48. The Jews - meaning the Jewish leaders - replied, "are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and possessed by the devil?" That is about the worst possible thing they could say to Jesus! They say that to the one who said, 'you cannot convict me of sin!' They say that to the one who said that he was the truth. They say that to the one whom the Samaritans discovered was the Saviour of all the world! Therefore, it's an unbelievable insult. Now, what you and I need to take on board is, what do they mean by this? Jesus has told them that they are being guided by Satan, the father of lies, and they say that he is possessed by Satan! So that means Satan is governing everybody! Somebody is right and somebody is wrong!

So why are they choosing to say 'you are possessed by Satan and you are a Samaritan?' What you need to know is that the Samaritans were hated for many reasons; one of them was they loved magic and the occult. Therefore, they say to Jesus that 'all your works come from Satan. All your miracles come from Satan'. Now, in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus warns them that it is possible to commit the sin against the Spirit, the unforgivable sin! The unforgivable sin is that you accuse God of being Satan. Because if you accuse God of being Satan, you have reached the ultimate blindness where truth will never reach you. It's really sad. So, when they call him a Samaritan and possessed, it means that you are into magic and the occult; you are possessed by the devil, and that is what's wrong with you. Both the accusation of being a Samaritan and the accusation of being possessed carry the accusation of uncleanness.

This is a very important because, in the scriptures, 'unclean' does not mean dirty. In English, I can say to you, 'my hands are dirty', but if I wash them, they're clean. That's not what uncleanness means. Nothing unworthy or unholy can enter the presence of God is what the scriptures tell us. Uncleanness means unfit to enter the presence of God. So, if we know what John has been saying from chapter one to now, these men are saying that **the one** who has been with God from the beginning, **the one** who brought all things into being, **the one who is God**, **the one** who is **the great I am**, **the one** who is the **presence of God** in their midst - they are accusing **him** of being Satan! That is the unforgivable sin. It's absolutely incredible. So, I just hope they didn't realise what they were saying. That's my hope.

Jesus answers them with extraordinary meekness and kindness. He says, "No, I'm not possessed. I honour my Father". If that accusation was given to ordinary folks like us, we would become angry and upset, and we would defend ourselves roundly. Jesus is so calm. He is so humble that the very humility with which he responds proves that **he is who he is**. "I honour my Father, but you want to dishonour me". Now, back in Chapter 5, Jesus had said, that "you will honour the Son in the same way as the Father, because the Father and the Son are one God". "And you dishonour me, he said. Not that I care about my own glory. There is somebody who takes care of that". You will hear in chapter 12 that when the hour has



come, Jesus will say, “Father, glorify yourself”, and He will say, “yes, I have done it, and I will continue to do that”. To glorify is to fully manifest who you are. In verse 51, Jesus says, “I tell you most solemnly, whoever keeps my Word will never see death”. Now, the amazing thing is that they have given him the greatest insult they could possibly cook up. Instead of getting upset Jesus continues to reveal himself. If **he** isn't God, nobody else can do this. Nobody can reach this level. It is just unbelievable. We now reach the climax of the confrontation between Jesus and the leadership of Israel; it's a fantastic climax because they know that they are only saying this to hurt him, but Jesus doesn't take hurt. If you go into 1 Corinthians 13, Paul will explain love to you. One of the things he says is that love does not take offence. Here you see that with this ferocious accusation, Jesus doesn't take offence.

The Jewish leaders said to him, “now we know for certain that you are possessed. Abraham is dead, the prophets are dead, and you say, “whoever keeps my Word will never see death”. You can see that the level of below will never understand the language of the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, they do ask the absolutely important question, “Are you greater than our Father Abraham, who is dead? The prophets are dead as well. Who are you claiming to be?” This is fantastic. We're now reaching the pinnacle. Back in Chapter 4, Jesus was asked, “are you greater than our father Jacob?” In Chapter 6, they said, “are you greater than Moses?” Here in Chapter 8, “are you greater than Abraham?”.

Here we have reached the question that they needed to ask because they have worked their way through the scriptures to find that Jesus is greater than the patriarchs. Jesus's response to this is a complete shock to them. ‘Who are you claiming to be?’ Jesus said, “If I were to seek my own glory, that would be no glory at all. My glory is conferred by the Father”. Now, they have been asking all the time, “who is your Father? He is the one whom you say, he is our God”. This is very clear; nobody can miss it; “although you do not know him”. Now, this is very interesting, because when Jesus was speaking to this Samaritan woman in Chapter 4, he told her that she was worshipping a God - that's the Lord - whom she didn't know. But you are not scandalised by that, because after all, she was a poor sinner, and she was a heretic, and she was a Samaritan etc. So, you're not surprised; she opened up and let Jesus bring her to the truth.

But here you are talking to the leaders of Israel! They are the people who are leading the Mosaic religion. You are talking to those who are the scripture scholars and the theologians. You are talking to the top brass! Jesus said, “you do not know him!” How could Jesus say that these people who have the right jobs, the right position, they have all the power, and are in the position of teaching - how could they be said not to know God? It is because you will only get to know God in prayer. You will only get to know God in a personal relationship. There is no other way. I have to say, “My Father”. It's very important. Each one of us has to have a personal relationship with God. That is why Jesus said, “you don't know him, but I do know him”, because we've been told in chapter one that Jesus is leaning on the bosom of the Father for all eternity, and he is the only one who truly knows God. “I do know him” - He continues to tell the truth in the face of all opposition. Now, if I were to say, “I do not know him, I would be a liar as you yourselves are liars”. As you can see, the gloves are off. They're talking straight language to each other; Jesus is telling them their sins, because if he doesn't tell them their sins, they can't repent. He is giving them the opportunity to repent. “But you are liars yourselves, but I faithfully keep his Word”.



Now, this is the headline for all Christian followers, that we have to faithfully keep the Word of the Lord. To keep it means to live it out. Then he is going to give them the shock of their lives. “Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to think that he would see my day. He saw it, and he was glad”. So, let’s look at this for a moment. How could Abraham rejoice to see Jesus’s day? Abraham lived approximately 1900 years before Christ. How could he possibly see Jesus’ day? Jesus’ day is **THE DAY OF THE LORD**, Yom Yahweh. It doesn’t mean that Abraham would know his name or any of the particulars about him as an individual, but that he would know there was going to be a day of the Lord. How did Abraham know that? Go back to Genesis 3:15, where the promise of a Saviour was given. He knew that, and he knew, therefore, that there was going to be a day when Redemption would be given to the world. Abraham knew that this was true, particularly in the birth of Isaac, because that birth was a miracle of God. It was an intervention of God in their human history. The birth of Isaac was literally an impossibility for Abraham and Sarah. It was only the intervention of God that enabled the child to be born. All the promises that God made to Abraham about his future and his descendants were all lodged in this one person, Isaac. That is how Jesus could say, ‘he rejoiced to see my day’, because if God would intervene in that dramatic form, he would intervene again. And he would intervene to do what he said he would, because if he kept his promise about giving the child Isaac to them, He will keep his promise in Genesis 3:15 - that’s why he could say, ‘yes, he saw my day and he rejoiced’. When Abraham offered Isaac to God it foreshadowed the special hour of Jesus when he is offered to the Father on our behalf; that is the connexion between Isaac and Jesus.

So, the leaders are reacting on the lower level, and they said to him, “you are not 50 yet. How could you have seen Abraham?!” This happens in the temple of God before the leadership of Israel, with the crowds of people all around - and this is the final revelation. Chapter 8:58, “Jesus said, I tell you most solemnly, before Abraham ever was, I am”. So here they are; they have accused him of the worst possible crimes and he reveals himself that **HE IS THE LORD**. The unforgivable sin is to accuse God of being Satan, and that’s exactly what they’ve just done. It is mind-blowing. Then we have a very sad thing to finish Chapter 8, and it’s verse 59: “At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself and left the temple”. Now, if you remember back to Chapter 6, after Jesus gave the wonderful sign of the overflowing gift of bread, the people wanted to force him to become king, and Jesus had to flee from them. That was the crowd. Here, you have Jesus having to flee from the temple itself! Don’t forget Ezekiel Chapter 10. You are told that the Spirit of God lifted up from the temple and moved away. Only when the people repented did the Spirit of God return. That’s a very dramatic ending to a very dramatic chapter in John’s Gospel.

Chapter 9 continues from Chapter 8. Here the Lord shows them that no matter how blind they are, he can save them. It doesn’t matter how stubborn they are, he can still save them. It doesn’t matter how sinful they are - and they have shown themselves as sinful as it can get - he can save them. Chapter 9 is mostly the story of the blind man. There are two movements there: a man goes from total blindness to total sight, and the leadership goes from sight to blindness. What John wants you to see here is that your response to Jesus and his Word will show whether you are going towards the light or the darkness.



As we're reading this, let's not judge the Scribes and Pharisees. They are dead and gone. This is given to us now as the living Word of God for us to learn the lesson. The leadership have shown us clearly in chapter 8 that they are blind, but Jesus says, 'It doesn't matter if you are blind, I can heal you'. So, let's look at the text. "As he went along, Jesus saw a man who had been blind from birth". Now, there is a discussion among scholars as to whether this man had eyeballs or not. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, Who sinned this man or his parents for him to have been born blind?" John wants you to hear this on two levels, not just on below and above, but at the time of Christ, and at the time of the Church as well, on the 2 time-scales. John wants you to look at Baptism in John Chapter 9. The man who is born blind has is the Spiritual condition of every child who has ever been born since the fall of Adam. This Spiritual blindness has to do with the original sin. That's where John is trying to teach you about Baptism. So, I will get you onto that one as well. We have here a man who is physically born blind, and the disciples asked Jesus, 'Is this a punishment from God?' I mean, is God punishing the parents for something that a child would be born blind? They even said something incredible, "who sinned this man or his parents?" If this man has been born blind, how could he possibly be responsible for his blindness? Jesus puts that argument aside, and said, "neither this man nor his parents". This is not a punishment from God! He puts a completely different meaning onto this event altogether: "he was born blind so that the works of God could be displayed in him".

Now, do you remember the works of God? We've been talking about the works of God since Chapter 5. "My father goes on working, and so do I". But what does the Father do? He goes on creating and maintaining everything in existence. What does the Son do? He recreates everything, so, this man is a subject for re-creation. We are going to see this creative act of Jesus here. Then in verses 4 and 5, "As long as the day lasts, I must carry out the work of the one who sent me. The night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world". Now, there are two things here. The day is that Jesus is alive, and night, Jesus will be dead. He says, 'My ministry is only going to last another short while. Afterwards, I will be dead, so the day of salvation for Israel will be over'. He wants everybody to hear that divine election is being offered to everybody, past, present, and future. As long as Jesus is alive, the light is among them, and he is going to demonstrate that he can take someone from darkness to light.

In the person that he heals, he takes him, first of all, from physical darkness to physical light. Is that the healing? No! Because if it's only confined to the body, the body is going to be left behind in the Earth when you go on. If the soul is not brought from darkness to light, the healing isn't complete. We need a sign that shows a genuine Spiritual resurrection. At the end of chapter 8, if you were not convinced that the leadership of Israel needed a Spiritual resurrection, you didn't hear me at all! This is why immediately after this desperate controversy and confrontation between Jesus and the leadership, he shows them that bringing someone from death to life is not a problem for him. He told us that back in Chapter 5, that "the Son is the source of life, that the Son, at the sound of his voice', people would be raised Spiritually first and then raised physically. This is what you're going to see here. This incident takes place during the feast of Tabernacles. Therefore, the concentration is on light. Jesus says that 'I am the light of the world' - even if everybody rejects me, I still am the light of the world. He wants to show them not to give up. No matter how desperate the situation is, they can come to him, for he is the source of life for them.



Jesus considers the Spiritual condition of the Jewish leadership to be desperate. He doesn't consider the situation of this blind man desperate, because physical blindness is not going to stop you from entering eternal life. You can be blind and go to heaven. You can lose an arm and go to heaven. So, it's not the condition of the body that will keep you back from eternal life. It's the condition of your interior, of your soul. Jesus had told them that he was the solution no matter how desperate the situation is. This is verse 6. "Having said this, he spat on the ground and he made a paste with the spittle, and with this he covered the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the pool of Siloam.'" The name means 'sent'. The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored. He is going to have a wonderful mantra from here on in, "I went, I washed, and I saw"! That is the wonderful thing you're going to hear this man saying.

Jesus makes a paste from the dust of the Earth with his own spittle. It is a combination of something from him and the dust of the Earth. Now, the church has been telling us ever since that Jesus will use very simple things like water in Baptism, like bread and wine in the Eucharist, like oil for anointing. He uses very simple things from the Earth to do very wonderful Spiritual things in us. This paste is his very simple use of something from the Earth, and he put it on the man's eye sockets. Now, whether he had eyeballs or not, we're not completely sure. But we are sure that Jesus **is creating sight**. What was the very first thing you heard in Genesis 1:3? "Let there be light. And there was light". If God wants something to happen, it will happen. When we ask the Lord for something, we have to find out is it something he wants? Because if he wants it, it will happen. Jesus gave this man a command. You must ask the question, 'did the waters of Siloam heal the man?' To answer that, you've got to go back to the Prophet Elisha; The soldier who came down from Syria to visit him - a man called Naaman - had leprosy. He was told to go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and he would be healed. This man was insulted because the Prophet hadn't come to speak to him. Were the waters of the Jordan going to heal him? We will answer that for you the next time. Thank you for listening. God bless you.

### **INTERVAL**

Welcome into our sharing on St. John's Gospel. We are in John Chapter 9 dealing with the man who was born blind. Jesus has continued from where he was speaking in Chapter 8, so he reminds them again that he is the light of the world. He put a little paste on the man's eye sockets and sent him to the pool of Siloam. Siloam means the one sent, which, of course, is John's designation for Jesus himself. I left you with the question, 'would the waters of Siloam actually heal the man?' I reminded you of the story of Naaman, the Syrian, coming to Elisha the Prophet, looking for healing for his leprosy.

Elisha sent him to the waters of the Jordan to wash seven times. He reacted angrily and he said, "the waters in our country are just as good as the waters of the Jordan. One of his servants said to him, Sir, the Prophet only asked you to do something very simple". Why don't you obey and see will it work? And Naaman went and washed in the waters of the Jordan and came away clean. This man, here in John Chapter 9 goes to the waters of Siloam. Don't forget that it was the waters of Siloam that had been taken



in Chapter 7 during the Festival of Tabernacles and taken all the way to the altar and poured onto the altar. These waters of Siloam were considered very important in Jerusalem. So, we asked the question, 'did the waters of Siloam heal him?' Well, I think you know the answer, don't you? Because when you go back in John, I keep on telling you to go back in order to understand the text that you have, that the servants who filled the water jars in chapter 2, discovered that obedience to the Word of God changed the water into wine.

We discovered that the miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son in Chapter 4 was that he obeyed the Word of God. He went away believing, and then his son was healed. We found that the man in Chapter 5, that he was healed when he obeyed the command of Jesus. So, it's obedience to the Word of God that brings about this healing. The waters of Siloam are the same as the waters anywhere else. Here we have John underlining for us all the time that if you want God to do something dramatic in your life, then put his Word into practice. Then you will discover its power. It is this obedience to the Word of God that unlocks the healing power of Heaven in us. The interesting thing is that this man here in chapter 9 did not ask for a healing, and he did not ask for any restoration. We know that the man in chapter 5 also didn't ask for a healing and didn't ask for any restoration. So, you are dealing with the condition of the Jewish people, particularly in Judea, and their blindness and unwillingness to turn to Jesus as their Messiah, Saviour.

There was a difference between the lay people and the leadership; there was much more openness among the ordinary people, but the leadership are present. You will find at the end of this story that they are watching what is going on, because after all, the pool of Siloam was the pool that served the temple. Jesus hasn't moved; neither have they. We know from the Synoptic Gospels that they watched every move of his, and they listened to everything that he said. They knew all of his teaching and his claims. **They knew who he was.** They just absolutely refused to accept him, and that was that. When this man obeyed the Word of God and went to the pool of Siloam and washed... that he was told 'to go and wash'. John is telling us that once the church would come into being - the community of the beloved disciples - that every one of us would be told to go and wash in the waters of Baptism. It was absolutely essential that all of us are born in this condition of needing Jesus to raise us up to Spiritual life. He alone can deal with it. The gift of Baptism does that for us. So 'go and wash in the pool of Siloam' is 'Go and wash in the waters of Baptism'. You would never have thought that the pool of Siloam represented the baptismal font for us!

So now the man is healed: "I went, I washed, and I saw". So, what happens now? Let's have a look at this. First of all, we have the reaction of his family, neighbours and friends; then you have the reaction of the religious leaders. This is verse 8. "His neighbours and the people who had earlier seen him begging said, Isn't this the man that used to sit and beg? Some of them said, Yes, it's the same. Another said, No, he only looks the same. The man himself said, I am the man". This is very interesting because John is trying to tell you that something very significant has happened to this man. For someone who had been born blind; had never seen the light of day, physically, he would look the same, but of course, he was not the same. Now he could see, he could experience life in a completely different way.



While his physique is the same, he is a different man altogether. What John is trying to tell us is that when we wash in the waters of Baptism, externally, there is no difference, but internally, an absolutely extraordinary change has taken place. I just want to say a little Word about this extraordinary change, because the man said, 'I am the man'. Just as Jesus said, 'I am he'. Isn't that amazing? You might pass over it and just simply say, I'm Frances. I am the man. That's very interesting. So, let's look at this. The amazing privilege that's given to us is that the Beloved Son told us that he was **the great I am**. But that each disciple, each person who is born again as a child of God in the waters of Baptism **is an I am in the GREAT I AM**. The way I like to say it is, I am because he is. I'm a little I am in the great I am. I'm not separate from him because I'm born of God in Baptism. So, the 'I am not' of the sinner can be transformed into the 'little I am' of the Saint.

That is what Jesus is trying to tell the leadership of Jerusalem, which I think is very sad. It would be absolutely fantastic if they could hear it, but extremely sad if they can't. That they too can become a little I am in the great I am. And not just them as a nation, but each individual among them can have this incredible privilege. The reason is that each one of us who is born of God in Baptism becomes a replica of the Beloved Son. Saint Paul says it in Romans 8:28-29, "we know that by turning everything to their good, God cooperates with all those who love him, with all those who are called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose long ago and intended to become true images of his Son". That's a vero icon, a true icon. So, it's a little I am, a miniature I am in the great I am. In Galatians 2:20, Paul was able to say, "I no longer live. Christ lives in me". That means I have been transformed into him. So, the mystery we're looking at here, I don't want you to just look at it on the surface, that the man is just healed of physical blindness.

John wants you to hear this deeper message, and this deeper message is incredibly important. When each one of us becomes a 'little I am in the great I am', then just as the Father sent the Beloved Son to the world, so the Beloved Son sends each one of us to the world, and we are given exactly the same mission and privileges as him. This is the message of the second half of the Gospel. So let us look now at the journey that this man begins once his sight is given to him. We know from the man who was healed in Chapter 5, that physically getting up from the ground and walking into the temple, that wasn't it. Jesus had to go and find him and say to him, 'Listen, you must get rid of sin out of your life and come to live in the Kingdom of God'. That's the real healing. This man must make a journey from darkness to light, from unbelief to faith, from not knowing his Saviour to recognising his Saviour and accepting him also.

The rest of this text is a five-step journey that this man takes into real sight and into real light. This is what John is trying to say to us, that each one of us must take this journey as well. The first stage that we looked at was that something incredibly important has happened to him, and people can recognise this. Of course, people say one thing and then say another. Let us take up in verse 9. Some people said, "No, he just looks like the man that was there. The man himself said, I am the man. So, they said to him, But how did your eyes come to be open? How come that you see?" And he said - and this is step one - the man called Jesus, made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, 'Go and wash in the pool of Siloam', I went and I washed and I saw". You're going to hear this testimony over and over again. The more they challenge him to find out how it was that he was transformed, the more he journeys into the

truth. This is the beautiful thing about it. He answers all questions with testimony, which is a very important headline for us.

Obedience to the Word of God: 'I went, I washed, and I saw'. Now, he doesn't know it is obedience to the Word of God. All he knows is that a man called Jesus told him to do this, and he did it. He hasn't got the insight that I'm giving to you, so, let's come to stage two. They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes. So, when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said - and again, he gives exactly the same testimony, 'he put a paste on my eyes. I went and I washed and I saw'. Then some of the Pharisees said, "this man cannot be from God". Why? Because he's a Sabbath breaker! It was forbidden to make paste because that was work on the Sabbath. It was forbidden to heal on the Sabbath because that was considered work. The Pharisees would not accept that Jesus didn't heal as we do, but in this particular case, he did because he actually rubbed the paste into the man's eyes, and they considered that working on the Sabbath.

So here they have, again, the very same accusation against Jesus that he breaks the Sabbath. Now, he has told them back in Chapter 5 that, 'My Father goes on working, and so do I'. God goes on creating and maintaining creation on the Sabbath, and the redeemer goes on redeeming and recreating on the Sabbath. Also, the Holy Spirit goes on sanctifying on the Sabbath. That's why we have our church meetings on the Sabbath to let the Holy Spirit do his work of sanctifying us as well. So, I want you to notice that we've had this before in chapter 5 where the Pharisees have no eyes for a wonderful work of God. Jesus had said back in verse 3, that this man is blind so that the works of God could be seen in him.

The Pharisees have no eyes for that whatsoever. They give no praise to God for a man who has received his sight for the first time in his life. They have no eyes - and no heart to rejoice that this man suddenly can live. There's no love in them. It's really sad. The only thing they can see is the fact that the Sabbath has been broken; a law has been broken. This man is a breaker of the Sabbath. He couldn't be from God, and that's that. Is that actually true? You've got to go back to Nicodemus in chapter 3 where Nicodemus, speaking on behalf of the leadership, said, '**We know that you are a prophet from God because** nobody can do the work that you're doing unless he comes from God'. Now, what would Jesus call them? Liars. We have this confrontation between Jesus and the leadership continuing. They will make a big fuss simply because Jesus has broken the Sabbath. They didn't succeed in using the woman in chapter 8 to bring Jesus down. They want to use this man to bring Jesus down as a Sabbath breaker! They put the man on trial, and bring in his parents along as witnesses; they try and put psychological pressure on him.

Now, this man has been begging at the gate of the temple all his life. He has never seen the inner precincts of the temple. It must have been horrendously difficult for him to go into this big chamber and face all of these important people. John wants you to see the human side of it as well as the divine side. That's actually very important. The reason is that in all the persecutions of the Church, ordinary little people, who may never have seen the inside of a courtroom are suddenly on trial for their lives simply because they are Christian - or they are brought before some strange leader whom they have never seen.



They may have heard of them, but they may have never seen them. It can be very difficult for the Christian to go and bear witness who they are now in Christ. This is what you're looking at here.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes. This is verse 16. Then some of the Pharisees said, This man cannot be from God. He does not keep the Sabbath. So, this is where we're starting in this trial. Others said, "how could a sinner produce these signs?" Now, a sinner means somebody in rebellion against God's Will. Someone in rebellion against God's will not be working miracles. It's that simple. Throughout the whole of this Gospel, Jesus says, "I only do what my Father tells me to do. I only I say what my Father tells me to say. I only teach what my Father tells me to teach. I and the Father are one. I always do what pleases him". We have had these statements dotted throughout the Gospel. The people who are saying that a sinner couldn't produce these signs are right, so, there was disagreement among them. They spoke to the blind man again. They are putting the poor man under real pressure. "What have you What to say about this man yourself now that he has opened your eyes?" This is step two for the healed man. He declared that Jesus has to be a prophet; a prophet is somebody who has been sent by God. A prophet is someone who speaks in God's name. A prophet is a person who does prophetic actions in obedience to God.

Remember back in chapter 4, very quickly, the Samaritan woman said to Jesus, 'you have to be a prophet'. You are not like other people. So, he has already reached this stage. Let's pick up in verse 18. "However, the Jewish leaders would not believe that the man had been blind and that he had gained his sight without first sending for the parents and asking them to identify this person". So now they are trying to put even more pressure on the man; they bring in his parents as witnesses. The parents have to declare in front of the Sanhedrin whether this man, a) was their son, b) that he was born blind, and if so, how come he can see? Well, the parents don't know. They weren't around. They were at home when this miracle happened. So, all they are doing is putting more and more pressure on the healed man. In verse 20, the parents answered, "we know that he's our son. We know that he was born blind, but we don't know how he came to see. So, they are all telling the truth. We don't know who opened his eyes.

The parents back off and they say, 'we don't want to be involved. There is a very important reason for that, which I will tell you in the end. They are brought in; they simply acknowledge, 'yes, he is our child', but nothing else, and then they say, "he's over 40, he can speak for himself", so, they opt out completely. The parents said this out of fear of the leadership because the leadership had agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. Now you know why they backed off. The parents don't want to get involved. They don't want to be persecuted, so they are not going to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ. There's a very good reason for this, but I won't tell you now. This was why they said, 'he's old enough. Let him speak for himself'. So, since the parents won't get involved, the Pharisees have to put more pressure on the healed man. So, the Jews again sent for the man, and they said, "Give glory to God". That was their way of putting him under oath to speak the truth.

"For our part, we know that this man is a sinner". We know is the heavy ecclesiastical 'we' of the Sanhedrin. They are calling Jesus a sinner because he's done this on the Sabbath. The man answered, "I



don't know if he's a sinner. I only know that I was blind, and now I see". The wonderful thing about this man is - and he's given to us by John as a model of how to testify - he says, 'I don't know what your theological arguments are. I don't know what you're getting at. All I know is this is what happened'. So, he answers all their arguments with facts. He answers all the criticisms with testimony. This is the headline that John is giving to all of us. This is how you do things. They ask him again to tell the whole story, which the man has told them several times already! In his innocence, he comes to a conclusion that I think is really funny. Instead of telling them the story for the third or fourth time, he said, "Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

Now, this is a layman speaking to the Sanhedrin! I think it's absolutely fascinating. He has never seen them before; he's been blind all his life. He's never been in this situation before, and the more pressure they put on him, the more he grows. So, we reach step three: 'Do you want to become his disciple?' All of a sudden, the man himself realises it's time to become his disciple. I have received all this life from him. I have received this incredible gift from him. What response am I going to give to him? It's really fascinating. But of course, the Sanhedrin aren't going to take any headline from a layman, because you heard back in chapter 6 that they absolutely despise laypeople: "That rabble, they know nothing". So, since they absolutely despised laypeople, they hurl abuse at the man. This is verse 29. They said, "You can be his disciple! We are the disciples of Moses". Now, when they say that, John wants you to go back to chapter 6 and 7, and to remember that Jesus said to them in the controversy, is that 'you claim to be disciples of Moses, but you don't keep the law'!

So, what's the point in claiming to be a Christian if you don't live Christianity? It's useless. Absolutely useless. Anybody can claim. But you remember I said to you before, if I claimed to be a Christian, could it be proved in a courtroom? Do I have the evidence that could prove to somebody that I truly am Christian? This is the very important stage we're at here. The man has moved, he has shifted as the pressure was put on him. So, at this particular point, I'm going to stop here because I will pick up the next stages in the next episode. Thank you for listening. God bless you.