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THE PHARISEE: ALIVE AND WELL

Words to live by from the Gospel of John Chapter 9

People who flee man's local institutional churches out of obedience to Christ and the Scriptures are in a double-bind. In the very process of fleeing from the oppression that comes from being part of that system, they are terrorized by the threats of the leadership and various members - threats of dire consequences, punishment from God, financial ruin, and even eternal damnation.

It's not only the Jehovah's Witnesses who are told that upon leaving the Watchtower Society, you will be destroyed in Armageddon or the Church of Christ cults who are told that upon leaving them, they will be condemned to eternal torment in Hell, but it's the mainstream Christian cults as well.

Baptists, Reformed, Presbyterian, and other sects will imply that you were never really Christians in the first place. There will be the warnings and congregational meetings vilifying, condemning, and setting you up as an example to be avoided in order to put the others who remain in fear.

Leaving a "church" can be an emotionally charged, life altering event. What a truly sad and pathetic state of affairs.

I'm reminded of the eerie similarities in **John Chapter 9** with the incident of the man born blind.

The blind man was about to discover that eyesight comes at a heavy personal cost. He was going to learn that through weakness, shame, and humiliation that the works of God would be displayed in him. **John 9:3**

All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12

It's a persecution that is more often than not, at the hands of *religious church leaders*, just like it was with Jesus and just like how it was recorded in the Book of Acts!

Be encouraged though, that through weakness and shame, we draw closer to Jesus Christ and a whole new realm of revelation opens up in understanding the "*mystery of Christ*." **Rom.16:25; Eph. 3:4; 6:19; Col. 1:16; 2:2; 4:3.**

Watch how this blind man's understanding of Christ grows as the opposition mounts.

"They said therefore unto him, How then were your eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight." **John 9:10-11**

At the beginning, all this man knows is His name - Jesus.

After the first interrogation by the Pharisees, the blind man's answer moves forward in understanding: *"They said therefore unto the blind man again, What do you say of him, in that he opened your eyes? And he said, He is a prophet."* **Verse 17**

Even though we are very well aware of our weakness amidst the verbal contempt of the "*church*" religious leaders, Jesus is sending us on to our *pool of Siloam* where He opens our eyes to see who He is!

What treatment can you expect from Pharisaical church leaders if Jesus has opened your spiritual eyes?

Remember, Pharisees, and their modern day counterparts, are quick to judge you as a sinner for breaking their rules. For example, they are self-proclaimed champions of Sabbath Day keeping. But they blindly accused the Creator and Lord of the Sabbath as being a law breaker of it!

"Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man (Jesus) is not from God, because he keeps not the sabbath." **9:16**

"So they called a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner." **9:24**

And so, as they judged Jesus, so they also wrongly judged His disciple: *“They answered and said unto him, You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?”* **9:34**

The Pharisaical church leaders love to rule by fear.

In addition to their Gestapo-like tactics to rule breaking, they motivate obedience by severe penalties.

“The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight, and asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind?”

How then does he now see? His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now sees, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself.”

“These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.” **John 9:18-22**

In other words, *“Obey us or we’ll kick you right out of this place!”*

Don’t ever fear leaving or being put out of a church. The best is yet to come! Watch what the blind man loses compared to what he gains in the end.

“And they reviled him and said, You are his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses.” **John 9:28**

Pharisaical church leaders are trained experts in public vilification.

Be prepared for this heaping abuse on you upon leaving the local institutional church. And the more influence you might have there, the greater the reviling to discredit and smear you, seeking all the more to bring you into disrepute before the group.

All of this reviling and smearing is achieved by adorning it with spiritually high-sounding words.

“Give glory to God” - **9:24** *“We are disciples of Moses”* - **9:28**

While taunting their supposed biblically based arguments to the congregation, they boldly assert themselves as expert sin identifiers. *“You were born entirely in sins.”* **John 9:34**

Pharisaical church leaders will brand you a sinner, even though Jesus says the opposite.

“Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” John 9:3

What really inflames a Pharisaical church leader though, is a “nobody teaching them” aura.

“They answered and said to him, You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us? And they cast him out.” John 9:34

Here we have a man born blind and a beggar to boot; a bottom of the rung individual sort of speak; proclaiming the truth of God’s word.

Pride in their religious training, their degrees, their experience, and their elevation in the people’s eyes deafened them to listen to ANYONE they deemed beneath them!

Sound familiar? You bet it does!

Now for the good news!

Was all of that reviling, smearing, slandering, and being damned from the community worth it all?

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Do you believe on the Son of God?

He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?

Jesus said to him, You have both seen him, and he it is that speaks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” John 9:35-38

Pharisaical church leaders may revile you and cast you out, but that’s when Jesus seeks you out and finds you. How tender. How comforting.

Christ gives further revelation of Himself to the outcast. This “*Ex-Church Member*” receives greater Christ-centered faith and enters into a new realm of true and living worship.

Don’t fear Pharisaical church leadership. This fear of man will only bring a snare. Jesus is waiting **outside** the “*church doors*” to welcome you to Himself.

You may lose your name and reputation, but you have Him.

“Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ.” **Philippians 3:8**

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- 1) [**"Breaking Free"**](#)
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