

## Talks - Jesus vs Religion – myfishbites.com

### Jesus vs Religion – John 9

If you've ever bought a smartphone or any gadgets, you'll probably have read the product's reviews. This talk is based around John 9 and is a 'vs' comparison of Jesus and religious / pharisee type people... You may notice a few differences!!

This talk ends with a link to 'The Cross' produced in 2013 by Billy Graham and friends (including the rapper Lecrae). It's a great challenge and inspiration (29 mins long).

### Let's Set The Scene

Chapter 1 – Jesus is walking and talking with his disciples. They see a blind man. Jesus told his disciples he was bringing light to the world and doing the will of God. He goes to the blind man, spat on the ground and rubbed the mud into the man's eyes and sent him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The blind man was healed. He went back home. Half the people believed it was him, some didn't. They asked what happened and he told them.

Chapter 2 – The man was brought to the pharisees. They wanted to know what happened and he told them what Jesus did. The man called Jesus a prophet. Many people didn't believe the man used to be blind so they brought in his parents to get the answer that he was. His parents were afraid of saying the wrong thing because the pharisees kicked people out of the synagogue ('church') who said or did the wrong thing. Again the pharisees demanded to know what had happened to the blind man. So he said to them 'Look I've already told you. I was blind but now I can see. Weren't you listening or do you want to be his disciples? And anyway, how can you call Jesus a sinner when we all know that only Godly people can heal? And if you know everything, why are you asking me all these questions?' The Pharisees got mad, called him a sinner and kicked him out!

Chapter 3 – When Jesus found out he'd been kicked out he went looking for the man. He asked him if he believed in the Son of man (Son of God). The man wanted to believe so Jesus revealed that He (Jesus) was the Messiah (the saving one, the Son of God). The blind man believed and worshipped Jesus. Then Jesus said that He (Jesus) had come into the world to bring sight to the blind but that those who thought they knew and could 'see' it all convicted themselves because they claimed they knew the truth but rejected the truth.

### 5 things about the religious spirit

First up, not once did the Pharisees praise God or show any kind of happiness that the man had been healed! Imagine that – this man was blind but then he was healed, could see and the religious people didn't care! They were annoyed because the man had been healed on the Sabbath. You get the strong impression that the Pharisees would rather this man had not been healed than be healed on a Sabbath by someone who wasn't one of them. This is the religious spirit – the rules are waaaaay more important than the good that happens! Never be like that. Live, love, be generous, be kind.

Second, the Pharisees said Jesus was not from God because he healed on the Sabbath. They even denied Jesus and this kind of thing is happening today even in some churches where 'experts' deny the Bible or deny Jesus. But like the pharisees they are wrong! The pharisees knew Old Testament verses like Isaiah 42.6-7 which was a prophecy about Jesus from hundreds of years before he was born, *"I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness... to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison..."*

So when Jesus healed the blind man it proved that he was the real deal – the Messiah. But the pharisees didn't accept it because 'they knew better'. They were wrong! Don't miss who Jesus is and what he can do in your life.

Thirdly, the man and his parents were brought before the pharisees like going to court with the pharisees as the big name judges who know everything! (You find a few of them around!) Religious people like big structures where they can strut around thinking they are very important and order people around arrogantly. But Jesus tells us the leadership is about being a servant, being a slave, being humble and being full of kindness and God's love. The pharisees had no love. 1 Corinthians 13 tells us that without love we're like a loud crashing cymbal that drives everyone mad. That's the religious spirit – loud, horrible and without love! Never be like that. The world needs Jesus not noisy finger pointing. The pharisees accused everyone else of 'sin' except themselves!

Fourth, the Pharisees were mad about this man's healing asking, 'how can a sinner do miraculous signs?' You can almost hear their anger because they didn't do the healing or because they hadn't 'agreed to it'. One of the signs of a religious spirit is that only what God does through the 'perfect' religious person is really of God. But God does things differently – using what people think are small or unimportant! That means God wants to use people like you and me! This is the pattern Jesus set saying to his disciples, 'it's better I go back up to heaven for a while. I'll send my Holy Spirit to everyone who believes in me and then you can all go out and spread the Gospel, do miracles and more.' This is the life Jesus calls us to, not one where only 'our church' or 'our pastor' is 'right' and everyone else is 'wrong'.

Finally, the once-blind man was quite a laugh – he made fun of the pharisees and even used their own arguments against them. They hated that! Another thing that the religious spirit hates is humour or being mocked, even in a nice way. Religious people love to mock others but can't laugh at themselves or their systems! The Pharisees were angry and hurled insults at the man. This is totally wrong and where we see people act like this, something is wrong. The behaviour of someone reflects what's behind their behaviour. Jesus put it this way – you'll know people by their 'fruit'. By fruit he didn't mean apples and oranges he meant you'll see in people's lives and actions who they are. Ask God to help you to be more like Jesus. The 'fruit' of being a Christian (Galatians 5.22-23) is things like love, kindness, patience, loyalty, goodness, joy etc. These are things no-one can argue against!

## Jesus – the opposite Spirit to the pharisees!

The spirit of religion and the nature of Jesus are completely opposite to each other! Here are seven reasons (it has to be seven as this is the 'perfect' number!) ...

First up, Jesus told us his call and our call, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me." Jesus tells us that we should be doing God's will. What is God's will? To find that a good way is to look at the life of Jesus and the Bible. Jesus gives us evidence of what is of him – light, hope, joy, healing, life. The man was blind and then he could see. This is so like Genesis 1. What do we see there? God taking what was dark and empty and bringing light and life. This is our calling!

Second, we see who Jesus really is. On two occasions, Jesus went to the man (he even went searching for him). Jesus does this for us. If we don't believe in Jesus, he's out looking for you, wanting for you to believe in him because he loves you so much. He wants to touch your life as well. If we are Christians, Jesus still searches us out and uses us to witness and testify about him (just like the blind man did). Jesus clearly had compassion for the blind man and went to him. Then Jesus acted by doing what God did in the beginning, he took dirt from the ground, added his breath (spit) and applied it to bring new life (in this case to the man's eyes). The man then went and washed, maybe symbolizing baptism. This shows us how God works in people's lives.

Third, the man was so changed that people couldn't recognise him. This is a sign of the change that Jesus brings. This man was so transformed that people didn't recognise him! In Acts 17.6 the Bible reports a media report that went out in Greece about the apostles (the people spreading the news about Jesus) saying 'these men who've turned the world upside down are now here'. You can almost hear the panic! This is the kind of thing that happens when Jesus is spoken about – some people believe, some don't and others who hate God start to persecute and silence Christians. This is exactly what is happening in the UK and most nations. But just like the man who was blind but who could now see, we have to keep testifying about Jesus.

Fourth, another example of the counter-cultural Spirit of Jesus... The Pharisees kicked the man out of the 'church' because he'd been healed by Jesus and testified to this, despite their pressures and threats. Jesus, on the other hand sought out the man when he heard he'd been thrown out of the synagogue. Jesus came to seek and find the lost. Jesus simply asked the man a question "Do you believe in the Son of man?" The man wanted to know who that was so he could believe in him. Jesus, responding to the man's faith and hunger replied that, "You have now seen him and in fact he is the one speaking with you." This was no arrogance, but Jesus knowing who he was. The man said, "Lord I believe" and his response? He worshipped Jesus. Matt Redman says worship is our response to the revelation of who Jesus is and what he's done for us.

Fifth, when the man was healed the people couldn't find Jesus. Where was Jesus? The man didn't know. This is so counter-cultural to our world, even the Christian world where we can sometimes make celebrities out of people. I love GOD TV and Christian media but they'd be running promos and shows called the 'Jesus revival' if this happened today. But Jesus was focused on obeying God, sharing the Gospel to others who needed to hear it and training his disciples. Let's never get caught up in the importance of what we're doing over actually doing the work of God! Never think you are 'it' or that you are somehow 'better' than anyone else. Stay humble – be as happy sweeping the floor as you would be leading worship for hundreds of people!

Sixth, the Pharisees wanted to bring people before them in judgement. In this case they ordered him to speak and made his parents full of fear. But Jesus isn't like this, he's not like some screaming preacher waving a finger at you shouting 'dooooom!!'. We stand in awe of God but it's not fear in that way! Here's an example of Jesus... In John 8, a woman was caught in adultery (sleeping with someone else's husband – a very bad thing). The response of Jesus wasn't to rule bash but to love without conditions and (as the Bible teacher Joseph Prince says) Jesus said to her "I don't condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." Too often religion says "Leave your life of sin and then I won't condemn you." (The wrong way round).

Finally, Jesus also prophesied of how he'd come into the world for judgement, "so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees overheard and asked if they were blind. Jesus replied, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains." Jesus came into this world to offer people a choice: believe in him or not. The Bible and the message of Jesus is offensive to people as it confronts them with their own sin. It forces people to choose Jesus or reject him.

## The Challenge

So here's the challenge – have you accepted Jesus in your life? Have you said 'yes I believe in Jesus'? Jesus is calling you to make a decision today. Will you say yes to Jesus?

If you do believe in Jesus, are you living a life of love for Jesus? He is also asking you whether you will testify to people about Jesus and be part of the solution for the world?

## The Cross – to leave you inspired and challenged

Direct link – <https://youtu.be/bba2Dqaw6SI>