



SERIES: John Believe
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Tuesday, February 7, 2023
Scripture: John 9:18-23
TITLE: Don't Be Manipulated

Manipulation and coercion are terrible tactics for compliance. Yes, you can get the result you want, but for how long? What are the long-term effects of this behavior? You see manipulation in the workplace. You find it at home in families. And, unfortunately, you can find it in religion.

Let's keep walking with Jesus in John 9 to see this terrible behavior.

A blind man has been healed by Jesus. This man has been blind since birth, but now he's healed! And the religious leaders aren't happy about it. The culprit is Jesus. He's done the healing and on the Sabbath. The Pharisees questioned the man. They aren't happy with him or his answers. That's where we pick it up in verse John 9:18-23.

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

What is the Pharisees' problem? Why can't they let this go? I mean, the man was healed. Or was he. The Pharisees don't like the answers they've received. So they go to the parents because maybe this wasn't the man who was blind. And if it was, maybe he really wasn't blind.

So they go the parents and ask 3 questions: Is this your son. Was he blind? How is it he can see."

The parents are put into an unnecessary predicament. If they answer wrong, they will be humiliated, shamed, and ex-communication from the synagogue. That's manipulation and coercion.

However, they feel fine answering the first two questions: "Yep. That's our boy. Yep, he was born blind." But when it comes down to the question of healing and Jesus' part, they plead the fifth. They say, "Don't ask us. We weren't healed. Go ask him. He isn't mute. He isn't deaf. Go ask him yourself."

Why won't they answer? It's because they were afraid of the Pharisees. They knew the wrong answer meant punishment. The right answer means inclusion. Horrible. Ungodly. Wrong. This

incredible moment which should have been full of rejoicing and celebration, quickly became a moment of pain and abuse.

The Pharisees didn't want the way to God. They wanted to be the way to God. That was the game. It was just a game of religion with a different colored bow.

Former Bible Teacher Warren Wiersbe said, "What they failed to understand was that Jesus Christ had fulfilled all of this ceremonial law and was now bringing in something new. In Moses, you have preparation, but in Jesus Christ, you have consummation."

Friend, whenever we add works and religion to salvation by grace, we defile the Gospel. We bring coercion and manipulation to the Good News. Today, remember, Jesus Christ did what we could not. No church, pastor, religious authority, influential person, or leader can change that. No matter what they say or threaten.

Today, rest in God's grace. Do not fear man. Trust God. When we do, we will win the day!