



GUEST SPEAKER: REV. KEN RUSSELL

Sermon Notes

Text: John 9

Introduction:

Powerful encounters with God are often met with opposition and antagonism.

Acts 2:12-13 "Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

6 Reactions to this God Encounter (John 9)

1. The Opposition of Logic (the reaction of the disciples)

John 9:2 "Rabbi, who sinned, this man of his parents, that he was born blind?"

This reaction:

- Tries to explain the miracle as a natural phenomenon
- Ignores the presence and power of Christ and focuses on the problem.
- Studies the cause and effect of the problem
- Establishes a committee to research the problem
- Keeps people busy with rationalism, research and intellectualism.

2. The Opposition of Contempt (the reaction of the neighbours)

John 9:8-9 "His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man'"

This reaction:

- Focuses on past failures and disappointments.
- It's often the voice of tradition - "never done it that way before."
- The voice of contempt introduces doubt and uncertainty.

3. The Opposition of Religion (The reaction of the Pharisees)

John 9:13-16 "Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others asked, 'How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?' So they were divided."

This reaction:

- Religious people are locked into rituals
- The religious spirit is bound by protocol, man-made routines and ceremonies
- The religious spirit is harsh and judgemental.
- God-encounters don't always fit into a box of religion.

4. The Opposition of Unbelief (The reaction of the Jews)

John 9:18-19 "The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind?' How is it that he can see?"

This reaction:

- The Jews refused to believe until the miracle was validated by tangible proof.
- The spirit of unbelief is a thief.
- The spirit of unbelief is the voice of scepticism, suspicion, pessimism, sarcasm.
- They did not believe because they refused to believe - not because they could not believe.

5. The Opposition of Fear (The reaction of the parents)

John 9:20-23 “Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.’ His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.”

This reaction:

- Fear of rejection by the Synagogue
- Fear of the loss of reputation
- Fear of sympathizing with Jesus
- Fear undermines the power of a God encounter

6. The Response of Experience (The reaction of the formerly blind man)

John 9:25 “He replied, ‘Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know...I was blind but now I see!’”

This reaction:

- You can’t argue with someone’s experience
- You can’t argue with a demonstration of God’s divine power
- Jesus performed a miracle!
- “I was blind - now i see”

Life Group Discussion

1. Warm up: Have you ever witnessed or personally experienced something you would consider to be a miracle? Explain.
2. Read John 9:1-34 together. What stands out to you about this passage?
 - What point from the sermon was particularly interesting, perplexing, confusing, or amazing?

- Is there anything you notice in this passage that wasn’t talked about during the sermon on Sunday?

3. Consider the five opposition reactions. Honestly assess which of those reactions you would tend to have if someone claimed they had experienced a miracle. Why?

4. Read John 9:35-41 together.

- How do physical blindness and spiritual blindness relate?
- What point is Jesus trying to make?
- Physical blindness is easy to diagnose. How do we diagnose spiritual blindness?

5. Pray together:

- a) Pray for those who need a miracle.
- b) Pray for spiritual eyes to see what God wants us to see.
- c) Other requests:
 -
 -