

Discussion of "Jesus Christ Reviled and Revered"

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[0 : 00] John 9-13-34 Let's continue the story of the man born blind who was healed by Jesus.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight.

And he said to them, He put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see. Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath. But others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such things?

And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, What do you say about him since he has opened your eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 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 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.

[1 : 37] 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 the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore his parents said, He is of age. Ask him. So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. He answered, Whether he is a sinner I do not know.

One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see. They said to him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? He said to them, I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples? And they reviled him, saying, You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.

The man answered, Why, this is an amazing thing. You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

[2 : 43] Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. They answered him, You are born in utter sin, and would you teach us?

And they cast him out. Okay, so three questions. First question. What challenges does this passage present to Christians?

Julie's got her hand up before I could even finish it. Today during the sermon when you were preaching through this passage and you saw the boldness of the blind man increase, I kept thinking to myself, When is he going to say, What are you, blind?

Uh-huh. And so that got me thinking about spiritual blindness. And I think one of our challenges, I want to speak to you too if that's okay.

Sure. Is that being a hog? No, go ahead. I think one of our challenges is that we so easily forget that we were once spiritually blind, that we were once enemies of God, and that we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

[4 : 07] And so I think we always have to be cognizant of that. Then the second thing is it actually pertains to the actions.

You mentioned praying for those. God commands us to pray, or Jesus tells us to pray for those who persecute us.

And I know for myself that's not a state. I altogether find myself naturally. But I thought about that a lot today.

And I think that the reason that we are called to pray for those who persecute us is that when we fail to do so, we fail to acknowledge that God is the one who can save anyone, who can call anyone to himself.

And so you don't know what impact your words would have or whose heart could be changed.

[5 : 13] We don't know who in the crowd, you know, who there in the crowd was impacted by what was said and what was seen. Very good.

Yeah, I think there's a challenge to not become like the Pharisees, to not become legalistic like them, to not look down upon others as they did, the blind man.

Very true. And then also it is hard to pray for those who persecute you and to love them as we're called to. And I think without the Holy Spirit dwelling in your heart, that's not something that you do or would even think to do.

And so I think you're right because, you know, when we're reading like the article I mentioned that was in the USA Today and other things that we see, oftentimes I think our first reaction is, and I need to pray for this person, but to be angry and to want to revile in return.

And I think you hit on something that truly is a challenge for us because, you know, when I read that article I was just, I mean, I was upset, but I didn't stop to think first this author is someone who I need to be praying for.

[6 : 37] Good. Good. Okay, who else? What challenges does this passage present to Christians? What challenges?

Ben, back here. Josiah, now I need your help. I think one of the things that I saw in this is that it's not a typical salvation experience.

I mean, as we look at this blind man, he didn't pray a sinner's prayer, so he obviously wasn't saved, right? But seriously, there is, we see a progression in his faith.

He starts, you know, professing that he was a prophet and then eventually gets to the point where he is calling him Lord. And we don't know the time frame, how quickly that happened, you know, if it was a quick progression.

But I think sometimes we expect that salvation has to happen in certain ways. And when it happens in a non-typical way where somebody kind of moves along slowly and then there's that profession of faith, it doesn't fit as nicely inside our box as what we would expect for, what we would maybe in our mind expect for salvation experience to look like.

[8 : 02] Yeah, good point. You think of some instances in Scripture where a person was saved almost instantly, it seemed like the Philippian jailer, but then here, and then you see others where it's progression.

Nicodemus, who I think was saved, you see a long progression over the course of Jesus' entire earthly ministry, it seems. If he met with Jesus very on, which that's, of course, what Scripture seems to indicate, and then he was there to retrieve his body and be seen in the light, with the Lord doing that, with his body doing that, I think that's a transformation.

So I think that's, yeah, because we want to sometimes say, well, what have you done so that we can confirm your salvation, but it's not, we've got to be very careful of things like that, and not give up on someone who, you know, we say, hey, well, that wasn't an instant.

I shared the gospel with them. They didn't believe. We keep after. Keep hoping that seed gets planted and the Spirit is at work in their life. Good. What other challenges does this passage present to Christians?

Paul? Paul. Paul. Did Jerry, did you have your hand? Okay, go, go, Jerry. Go, Jerry. Sorry, Jerry.

[9 : 30] You know, I think anyone in this room who has ever tried to share a testimony with someone who doesn't know Christ, they can't understand a spiritual thing that's happened to us.

They'd like to argue with us, just like the Pharisees here who tried to argue with this man. So that's a challenge to try to explain a spiritual experience that you've experienced when they don't know, and it becomes frustrated.

Yeah. And sometimes it becomes a shouting match or an arguing match instead of a... And so that's something I see from this, you know.

But the man was able to see because of what Christ had done for him. Yeah. Yeah. In a sense, when we come to Christ, there's been a veil or our eyes have been opened to a spiritual

experience.

And it's hard to explain and share with someone if they don't want to listen, they don't want to argue. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. The blind man was astounded.

[10:46] You know, they had done their work to investigate that he was truly born blind. They knew that he could see now, and he continued to say, it was Jesus who healed me.

And they understood that, but they still rejected it. They still wouldn't believe. And it can be frustrating whenever you feel like, man, it's just there.

It's so clear. How can you not see this? And there's that continued hardness of heart, that continued rejection. And, you know, what are we doing?

We're encountering a person like that. I think sometimes we can get to a case where, like Jesus said, we can cast our pearls before a swine, and if it's going to get ugly and it's going to get physical, or if we just feel like, you know, I'm getting angry, that's probably a time to step away and to go back in prayer and continue to pray for that person.

There's other times where you will come across that rejection. It may not be like the Pharisees at that point where they're reviling you, but, you know, just using discernment and being prayerful and wanting that person to hear the truth, knowing ultimately it's the Holy Spirit's job to transform them, to save them, and knowing when, okay.

[12:05] Yeah, yeah, knowing when to, okay, okay, I've said this clearly, and I've told you I'm here when you have questions. I'm going to continue to pray for you. And, you know, again, hope that, you know, the Lord has used that.

Someone else will come along later. I think we've all heard stories of that where at first you shared the gospel with someone, they rejected it, but later on in life, that's somebody else. Same testimony, same gospel.

But, again, that progression, you know, kind of like the blind man. Along the way, the Lord was at work in that person's heart until he eventually brought them to salvation. Not all the time, though. Not all the time. Paul? As I was thinking about it again, it struck me that as the blind man became sure of his experience with Christ and became more bold and certain of what he believed about Christ, we also need to be sure of the truth and what our source of truth is because he was persecuted by religious leaders.

Not by, yes, it was by the world, but it wasn't by somebody the world would have called bad. It was by somebody that the world would have lifted up and said, is a religious leader.

[13:21] And if we don't know the truth and if we don't know that our source of truth is the word and that we always need to go back to that, then we are in danger of being led astray by, quote unquote, religious leaders.

And so, persecution doesn't always come from where we expect it. Yeah, that's a good point. Good point. You look through many of the epistles where, you know, preaching a different gospel, some are coming in and they're bringing legalism and traditions along with them and Paul's saying that's not the gospel.

Good. What other challenges does this passage present to Christians? I think one for me, like I mentioned, towards the end and thinking and having young children and realizing that persecution is mounting towards Christians in this nation, though knowing that it's happening all over the world where you just, you know, for a long time haven't faced that kind of persecution or even the, I think, the potential of it.

We're realizing that there's really our society, our culture is organizing itself against Christianity. and when will, should this continue on, you know, what, what, how long, I guess, is what I'm thinking. How long will it be in my lifetime that we experience more intense persecution? If not in my lifetime, will it be in my children's lifetime?

[15:10] I mean, it's going to, I think, continue to mount, but I'm thinking, when is, when are we going to start being severely persecuted, arrested, killed?

My lifetime, their lifetime, my grandchildren's lifetime? And so that was the challenge for me is to think again of how well am I doing to prepare them for that right now?

Am I preparing my children to prepare their children for what is to come? And so that's the challenge for me is to just to continue to do what the Bible calls me to do and Danny to do as Christian parents to prepare them for that as well.

And that's the challenge that I had. Anybody else? Okay. Jordan, we want, yeah.

You can, and a lot of people can, but we want to hear. I think my challenge that I think of when you talk about the persecution is to look at those people groups and those churches that are being persecuted and see how they're handling it and see what they're doing and see how they're fortifying their foundation and establishing themselves in love and compassion and all the things that the Lord tells us to do.

[16:35] Because, I mean, we have Voice of the Martyrs here. Obviously, they know so much of what is happening around the world, but I think a lot of people from America are going to those persecuted nations to minister and then now they're saying, it's coming your direction.

Like, it's happening whether you want it to or not and here's how we can help each other. And so, my challenge, how I was challenged is to actually learn more.

Good. Good. Thank you, Jordan. Nick. I was challenged by this passage to be more like the man who was born blind, who actually told the truth, as opposed to his parents, who just slid back into this gray neutrality.

Because I know that there's always that tendency in myself towards cowardice when pushed. I want to tell the truth and I want to stand as opposed to just being lukewarm and safe.

good. Cameron? I think mine just kind of goes along with a lot of that was, you know, sometimes it's funny how when God's really trying to challenge you, it comes up multiple times.

[18:11] and when I was teaching Wednesday night for the youth, we were going over the armor of God and how to stand firm and stuff like that, and I was talking about Voice of the Martyrs, and it's like it just convicted me out of nowhere, and like I almost got emotional trying to teach the youth because it was hitting myself so hard, and it's like I tell the youth all the time, I said, every time I'm teaching, I'm teaching myself just as much as I'm teaching you guys, and so it's really been hitting me hard the last few weeks of standing firm for my faith and the fact that I've talked about it a lot, that I'm in a corporate job where it's very much focused on inclusion and diversity and LGBTQ and we're one of the lead sponsors of the pride parades and stuff like that, of how I get a little nervous about things I say at work, and it just really, you know, a couple weeks ago, it kind of started hitting me, Wednesday night it really hit me, and then today again, it just, it hit me again of, hey, why you see, you know, like Jordan was saying,

Voice of the Martyrs is right there, I'm seeing everything that goes around in this world and yet I'm a little nervous to say what I want at my work, you know, just because of, I might miss a raise, I might get reprimanded, you know, like I'm scared of that, but these people are getting put in jail and beat, and so I think it was, it was just another kind of, you know, poke in my side of, hey, you've got some more learning to do and, and growth and, and challenge yourself in, in how you're standing firm for your faith.

Good. Challenges are comfortability over to Wes, I think what both of you guys said, I mean, I think we all feel that way that, you know, things have been comfortable for us, still are comfortable for us, if we're honest, compared to, again, the Christians and the persecution in the world and what we know.

So, yeah, I mean, challenge that, to the realization that, you know, what comfort we had or we felt is, we're losing that.

but, and that'll go into the next one and I'm not, not going there yet, Wes, but, it could be, I think, a very great thing for us, very great thing for our world that we stop being so comfortable.

[20:49] Wes? I told myself I was not going to speak tonight, but here I am. A couple things that as, as I was this morning and then hearing testimony here, I think about, you know, Pastor Mike, you're talking about where we might be in the future, where we're, where you think of people in other nations where their, their church service is hiding in their house, you know, away, not out in the open, that, that is potentially coming our direction.

I think a challenge that we might have with that would include really memorizing scripture because I don't know how many times I've seen VOM pictures, people getting their first Bible ever and they're crying and hugging it like it's a gold brick or something and with the way some of the censorship is happening nowadays and they're, they're pulling, you know, you can't read Dr. Seuss anymore and I mean, who knows what's next where the Bible, it's against homosexuality and, you know, you can't be anti-LBG2QAYZM4F73628GY, whatever it is.

They got like a 700, some different genders now, but anyway, where they make the Bible something that's illegal and all of a sudden they, they won't, they don't print them anymore maybe and so, there's, there's several different things you can do to, to memorize scripture.

There's apps on your phone that you can memorize. Julia Crouch showed me a really good one but, other ones with flashcards or something but we might get to the point where your Bible finally wears out, Shirley wears her Bibles out all the time, she's flipping through them so much, we, you might just not be able to get another one and NIV just, probably about two years ago, they started making their Bibles gender neutral because they were trying to, you know, appease and kowtow and it's really, it's getting kind of scary so I, I think we really need to read our words so much that you just envision if you're in a prison cell somewhere and you have no Bible or anything to read, you've got this in your head and you've got the scripture memorized or you know promises that God has made and it's going to help us endure if we get to that point so.

Good, challenge to be prepared, to get prepared now. You know, and as I was, as I was driving up here tonight, that was kind of a thought I had is you know, think of a day where Highland Park Baptist Church still meets but not in this building, they meet in a home or in homes, still Highland Park Baptist Church, still faithful but you know, perhaps because of the persecution, we lose the building and the other things that have come along with it.

[23 : 28] What can we do now to prepare for that, for those who, you know, maybe it'll be in our time, maybe it will not be. That's what the small groups is practiced for.

Amen, and that's exactly true. I mean, you know, we've got to look to our kids and our teenagers and prepare them because that could be the way that they have church in the future.

That was how the early church, yeah, we're just going back to the way that it was in Acts. Question two, what hope does this passage provide for Christians?

What hope? All right. Up here, okay. Well, Josiah, come up to Julie and we'll give you your exercise and then we'll come back to Wes.

What hope? Thank you. The hope that I saw in this passage was, as I think Nick spoke to, the evolution of the blind man.

[24 : 34] Here's a man who's been blind all his life. He's been marginalized. He's been overlooked. No telling what his life has been like. And as this progresses, he gets bolder and bolder and, you know, as, I don't know who it was back here, talked about, you know, called him Lord.

And I just, I just think it shows the hope that is ours in the gospel of Jesus Christ. that it's apparent immediately.

So. Yeah. Very good. Yeah. Complete transformation that the blind man goes through from blind and begging being, you know, in, in that state of life to meeting Jesus and to be completely transformed.

And that's what we see. and, you know, how many days pass in this text from when Jesus first meets him until when he meets him again? Not totally sure, but a short amount of time.

And you see that he is totally different. And the difference is Christ. I do have a question. Okay.

[25 : 53] And then when you went to 39 and 40, Jesus sought him out. Is that your understanding?

There you go. Verse 7. So, yeah, he's blind. Here's Jesus. And Jesus spits on the ground, makes the mud, applies it to his eyes, tells him to go and wash.

He went and washed. He came back seeing. And then verse 8, the neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying. So, somewhere between verse 7 and 8, Jesus is no longer on the scene but comes back into it in verse 35.

So, you know, and you can tell me what else you see but I, you know, I'm speculating that when he came back seeing, he came back to Jesus and at some point in time, Jesus moved on.

or, or it could be, or it could be, or it could be, maybe that Jesus heals him from what I'm reading and correct me if I'm wrong, you guys look too, this is awesome.

[27 : 22] I like this. I hear, I heard some pages of Bibles moving, that sounds good. Or it could be he went and washed, came back seeing and Jesus is moved on and then comes back in verse 35, hearing that he had been cast out, goes to him, do you believe the son of man?

He answered, who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? But then, you know, is it, is it, is he so interested to know what Jesus has to say because he knows that physically this is the man I saw when I came back, this was the man who healed me?

Or maybe when he came back. I just think it makes his experience more powerful that he could not even see. Hmm. Hmm. Any?

So the question was, when the man was blind and came back, did he know that it was, I mean, he knew that it was Jesus who healed him, but had he seen Jesus before Jesus came back to him

after he had been cast out and asked him these questions?

That's the question. When he came back seeing, did he, did he, he knew that Jesus had healed him, but did he know what Jesus looked like? Or was it not until verse 35?

[28 : 43] Yeah. I think that when you look at verse 35 and the way that they have this conversation, he is so eager to hear whatever Jesus has to say.

He's already starting to revere him. Do you believe in the son of the man? He answered, Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? I want to, because I know that you're from God, because I know that you're the one who opened my eyes.

Jesus said to him, you have seen him, is he who is speaking to you? He said, Lord, I believe. And so I think that he had, yeah, yeah. Blessed are those who believe and have not seen.

Yeah, blessed are those who believe and have not seen. Good. Shirley. I can read John MacArthur's notes on this if you like. John, he says, Since the blind man had never seen Jesus, from verse 7, nor met him since he went to wash in the pool, he did not recognize Jesus at first as the one who healed him.

That's my Bible. Perhaps. Perhaps. It's hard to argue with John MacArthur. Yet still, I mean, you know, perhaps.

[30 : 05] I think, bottom line, as Doyleene said, I'm going to ask when we, I think you've got to be careful not to supply things that aren't clearly there.

And, you know, so it's, but, but, I'm saying for me because I was saying that he came back and I think he saw Jesus but it doesn't say that. So I think we've got to be careful too whenever we can, some of these things where it's not clearly stated, that's why I try to say, like for me, if you hear me say, I think, or I believe, or it could have been, or perhaps, because it's not explicitly stated there, maybe he came back and saw Jesus and knew that was him.

Maybe it wasn't until Jesus came back a second time to him. I'm going to ask when we get to heaven. Okay.

Wes has the microphone and then Jordan. Back to the question, what hope does this passage provide? I think of how this guy, he didn't see Jesus before but now he's seeing him face to face and that Jesus came back looking for him, asking him, do you believe in the Son of Man?

Was it? And so, we believe without seeing but someday we're going to see Christ face to face. So the hope that we have is we believe and he was even testifying about no one has ever done this kind of a feat before making a blind man who's blind from birth to come to see again.

[31 : 37] So he's already giving Christ a lot of credit for the stuff that he's doing and stuff. And I mean, he said he's a prophet and he goes on from there. But anyway, so he's believing but someday we're going to get to see Jesus as well too.

So that's my hope is that even though I'm spiritually blind or was and now I believe I'm still, I can see the world but I haven't seen Christ yet and then all of a sudden there's going to come a time we're going to see him face to face and it's going to be a wonderful thing.

But that's the hope that I have in that passage. Amen. That's a great hope. Okay, Jordan? I guess I'm the new female Wes. Sorry.

I was going to say and this is a tough one but when he was being persecuted he didn't persecute back. And the hope for me is that it's possible.

It's possible to speak the truth and speak truth that he had just learned from his own experience and not just stab him right back.

[32 : 45] Amen. And I think there's a very thin line that we are going to be and we are seeing. I mean if we go anywhere in this country a very thin line between persecution and obedience.

People who are being obedient or are calling for obedience in that can persecute others. And so we have to be really, really careful as believers that we aren't persecuting back just because we think we know the truth.

So the hope is that it's possible. Amen. But the challenge is don't do that. Yeah. Amen. And we laugh but I think that's great. That's a great hope to glean from this because yeah, I think again talking about our desire for comfort and you know to think well if I was in that situation what would I do?

What would I do? Well, you know here we have a great example of the blind man and it is possible to just continue to state the truth continue to state the facts not return reviling for reviling.

Does he get a little sarcastic? I think that he does but he's not calling them names. He's just he's shocked by their disbelief. He's experienced a complete transformation and it's clear and it's surprising and it should shock us too and surprise us too.

[34 : 07] It's like man it was they had done their homework and they still rejected and reviled Christ. Who else?

What hope does this pass you? Evan. Yeah, so yeah, every time we say washed or he went and washed and we see that he physically washed his eyes and he received sight.

We saw that he was saved and it makes me think of 1 Corinthians 6 or do not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor many practice homosexuality nor thieves nor the greenie nor drunkards nor violers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God and such were the sum of you but you were washed you were sanctified and you were justified in the name of Lord Jesus Christ by the spirit of our God.

And so I think the hope there is just praise you Jesus. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Yeah, revering when others revile we revere in increasing measure.

Nick? I think it's important to remember how significant being cast out of the synagogue would have been for a first century Jew. Absolutely devastating.

[35 : 36] And so this guy has just suffered an absolutely terrible social blow that he might never recover from. And I take hope from the fact that Jesus comes and finds him in his suffering.

And it made me think of the Exodus account which I was just reading about in Exodus 2. It says, During those many days the king of Egypt died and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help.

And their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. God saw the people of Israel and God knew. And it's like the thing that stood out to me was just in the suffering of his people Jesus is present. Jesus comes and he seeks him out. He doesn't just let him suffer for Jesus. Jesus comes and enters into the suffering with him. Good.

Very good. Very good. Anyone else? That's the awesome thing here about this text and the whole Bible is all of the layers there.

[36 : 43] All of the layers. Anybody else? Okay. Question three.

This one's important. What action is God calling Christians and we can take out Christian also I think and insert you here.

Hopefully you are a Christian. What action is God calling you Christians through this passage to take? What action?

We've read this right? There's an application. What is the application that you are that you are getting from this text to apply to your life?

Cameron. I took that I need to be spitting in the dirt and rubbing it on people. Yeah. That would be a bad application.

[37 : 42] So maybe that's not what I took from it. but I think it's just when you see him talking to the Pharisees I think you know you see him get a little maybe sarcastic with it or ornery with it but you don't really see him backing down and kind of that standing firm and so I think God is throughout the whole Bible and you know blessed are those who are persecuted for my name I mean he tells us it's coming and so I think the action of this passage is kind of the action we see throughout the whole New Testament and all the martyrs we see throughout the Bible is persecution is going to come as a Christian and so I think the action is we've got to constantly be in and it probably goes back to what Wes was saying about memorizing scripture and being in the word and so that we are prepared for when those times come that we are able and have that foundation to stand on and so I think it's just a pretty clear cut action going forward of just being in the word being in our church body being with our fellow brothers and sisters encouraging one another so that when it comes and it's not if when it comes we are ready good thank you what action is God calling

Christians to take Wes I think being really solid in your apologetics it might not necessarily be the spiritual leaders that are challenging you or even people at Phillips 66 and you can't talk like that but the opportunities that you have to witness to somebody or they're in a wrong kind of religion and you can explain something to them and be standing firm on what you know is true in the Bible you've read it several times you understand what it means so that you can come off convincingly to those people that it's not just I'm parroting something I know this when you read about the swoon

theory and the stolen body and all that stuff in the resurrection this is not Lee Strobel's thing you can really stand strong on Jesus rose again they didn't steal the body they didn't get the wrong tomb he didn't swoon they weren't on mushrooms that he really is alive again he had 500 witnesses at one time that saw him and that's going to really increase your witness to other people as if you're solid and you're not wavering you really know this is what it says this is God's word and you can just kind of stand on that good and I don't think the guy was being sarcastic either

I think he's like really amazed like you're asking so many questions do you want to be his disciples too and then he came back and was firm saying you know no one has ever done this before and if he's doing these kind of things he is from God and really put those guys in their place and they're the ones that got upset and they cast them out and my study Bible was talking about it wasn't something where it was church discipline and you need to fix these things you're doing wrong and it goes up you know one step after another like church discipline does and they finally

excommunicate him they just got ticked off like you're you're out of here and just just threw him out right away so yeah could be yeah they canceled him they canceled him as we see happen right now they banned him get out of here we don't want we don't want to hear it anymore we don't want to think about it anymore yeah prepare preparing yourself to give a defense when the time comes that's a great action to take to yeah be prepared for the questions that will be asked of you we know that you know should we undergo the same kind of interrogation

Jesus has given us his promise that when that comes don't worry about what you'll say the Holy Spirit will give you that that word to say I think that that is true I think also though yeah to prepare ourselves to arm ourselves to abide in God's word be able to give a defense not every time when we give a defense will it be in a in that kind of a situation where we're being interrogated by a group of men just one on one just being able to give a defense okay good Linda right up here in the middle Josiah I guess my observation is maybe not an action but I have to evaluate if I'm timid now timid now with my testimony and we're talking about persecution coming then what makes me think that when that occurs that all of a sudden I'm going to be this brave able to defend my faith you know

I have to it's easy now there's no one to tell me I can't or at least not to the point of being imprisoned or something so that's what I have to take away from it I can't be timid in an easy time and then expect to be strong in a difficult time yeah and that was one of the things I wanted to mention about hope too is persecution and suffering are used by the Lord to sharpen us to separate the wheat from the chaff to purify his church his bride to separate the I think truly converted from those who are falsely converted and I think like we mentioned what Jordan said with the blind man we have hope here that when we are the ones faced with that persecution as we've talked about and Nick mentioned the Lord will be with us we have that promise that the Holy Spirit will give us words to say

[43 : 53] I think Christians are a lot more bold and courageous than they are when the time comes I believe that those of us who have truly been saved we will stand and we've seen that in so many different situations haven't we we you know the voice Fox's book of martyrs all the stories that you all hear out at VOM of these people who they may seem like just a regular person like you and me and yet they knew they were saved they continued to stand for Christ and we're hearing these you know stories of their life that continue to inspire us and yet the glory doesn't go to them and they wouldn't want it for themselves it goes all to God okay Wes I gotta show Jordan what she's up against

I was gonna say also that Linda for you or anybody really is the answer to situational ethics where what you do is you think about what you're gonna say and do ahead of time and you you you play it in your mind what I would say what I would do how I would react and you play it and play it and play it then when the situation comes up you're just doing something you've done a bunch of times already instead of waiting until it happens and then how am I gonna act oh I should have said this or I should have said that know what you're gonna say you know even plan out you know I believe the Bible is God's holy word and I believe what's in and how are you gonna start your testimony or your witness have it planned out so that when it comes you're ready to go because you've practiced it a bunch of times just in your mind and you're ready to go yeah we can learn from the example of the blind man who simply and clearly stated the truth of what he knew had happened and what he believed no matter what the opposition was no matter what they might do to him because he knew what God had done in him nothing could take that away or change that and and yeah

I think he saw how blind these religious leaders were and I think that's part of the action for me is I heard a listen to a sermon this past week it's not an old sermon I don't even remember what year it was preached but it was one Paul Washer preached and it's entitled God's Church God's Way and you know a lot of the things that he was preaching were things that I they weren't new things but it was convicting and encouraging which I think you know that's what preaching should accomplish conviction and encouragement and and it was just a reminder to me that you know men are fickle men have always been fickle they're sinful but God is faithful God is always faithful trust God be in his word be in prayer fill your time with Bible study and prayer Bible study and prayer and don't don't try to be a man or a woman or a person who pleases men but seek to live your life to please God and you will not have wasted it and so in like in case in point with what we're experiencing in our society to appease them those who revile

Christ they're just going to keep coming I think we've seen this in so many different situations in so many different organizations when they come especially in the name of equality that they get that organization take the Boy Scouts for example to change their policies and now what is the Boy Scouts they've come in and you know that's what that's what they do is they just they corrode the organization from the from the inside out completely falls apart and it's destroyed and and I think Christian institutions I really do it was you know Al Mohler and his briefing Abby pointed that out she listened to the briefing Al Mohler's podcast that he was saying you know in regards to this ORU article our Christian institutions are at the front line of this and it's going to keep they're going to keep getting hit with it they're just going to keep getting hit with it we'll find out whether they will stand or whether they will bow down but then once they've been targeted and they get whatever they want out of that they're just going to keep coming it's just going to keep coming and so I think that's why it's so important that we are not running away from the challenge I think there's some things that we do we pray for those who persecute us and really we need to pray for them and love them as the Lord has called us to pray for their salvation pray for a revival to take place it's not too late the Lord can definitely do that he's capable of doing anything if he wants to as far as revival and you know hope and trust in God and his sovereignty that he has a plan that he's in control that he sees all that is going on and though we may suffer that he sees us in our suffering and no matter what they may take from us it will be of this world they can never take away our salvation they can never take away our eternal security and in the meantime we take action which I think is to prepare for this to be in the word to be in prayer to look to the generations that are coming up to prepare them as well

[49 : 57] I think also you know in the nation that we live in there's some things that we can do to support Christian organizations that fight for the right that we have according to our constitution to meet and to gather as God's people and to pray and so I think that we continue to do what we can whatever we can certainly we can pray for them and encourage them and you know if possible even give to them for what they're doing but yet you know the action that we should never take is to revile those who revile us and the ultimate example we have of that is you know the Lord he's our ultimate example of all things and while he was on the cross he prayed for his persecutors and so so should we be that there is all the truth that can be gleaned from just this passage just these few verses

Lord we pray that we would be preparing ourselves for whatever is to come trusting in you but being in your word being prayerful praying for those who would persecute us praying for our nation and its leaders and God we do that right now we pray for those who are persecuting your church in this country God I lift up to you the author of this article Lord we pray for her salvation God we pray that you would have mercy on her that you would be gracious towards her God these things that she sees as being regressive and indecent and father in the way that you do as you did for the blind man as you've done for us and so many others that you would open her eyes to see the truth and that she would revere Christ as her Lord and Savior and we pray that for for those who we know are in our community

Lord they revile you and we pray that when we encounter them that we would not revile and return but that God you would help us to be overly and excessively gracious and merciful to them caring for them praying for them wanting them to be saved and to share in the salvation that we have received from Jesus Christ God help us to be found faithful to you and the life that you've given us to live Lord that we would use the you'd be pleased with what results from our lives and from your church we ask these things in Jesus name Amen