

And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.

His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen.

And you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

And it is they that bear witness about me.

Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

I do not receive glory from people.

But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

I have come in my father's name and you do not receive me.

If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

Do you think that I will accuse you to the father?

There is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me.

For he wrote of me.

But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

Before I begin, I just want to remind us of where we've been throughout this series in John as we're wrapping that up today.

And we'll actually return to a couple of the moments that we've been in already.

In John 3, we saw Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus about being born again.

In John 4, we saw Jesus meet the Samaritan woman and then encourage his disciples to share the gospel there in Samaria.

We also saw him heal the official son, and in chapter five we saw him heal the paralytic at the pool, and then defend his identity as the son of God, the Messiah.

Today we see the conclusion of that argument as he addresses the root cause of the Pharisees' unbelief.

Jesus is going to show them that their hope was in the wrong thing.

They were putting it in Scripture and not in who Scripture was about.

They were even putting it in themselves and not in Christ.

And what we're going to see as we unpack Jesus' indictment of the Pharisees this morning is that genuine faith depends on the object of faith.

Jesus will challenge their belief in God the Father.

He will show that they were actually believing in a false god of their own making.

and not in the one true God.

Because if their faith in God was real, they would have believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

He will challenge their faith in scripture, showing that they've missed the point of what it was saying, but ultimately at the center of his argument, he's challenging their lack of faith in him as their Messiah.

So first, he asks them, do you believe the Father?

He begins by challenging their belief in the Father.

And they really did think that they had genuine faith in the Father.

So it must have been quite a shock to them to hear that this was not true faith, right?

He says in verse 37, and the Father who has sent me has himself borne witness about me.

His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one

whom he has sent.

So first we see the Father bears witness, right?

The Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.

The Father was clear about who Jesus is.

He spoke about him through the prophets,

At his birth, there's proclamations about who this child is.

We see him be spoken about by John the Baptist.

And like we learned last week, Jesus' own works were the testimony about who he is.

The father's witness regarding the son is unavoidable.

The question being posed to the Jewish leaders is not, have you heard?

It's what will you do with what the father has said?

And their response is willful blindness.

his voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

And how can they not have heard or seen when Jesus is right there before their eyes, right?

They saw him with their physical eyes, but their spiritual eyes are blind.

They heard him with their physical ears, but their spiritual ears are stopped.

They don't hear him.

They don't see him.

And this accusation that Jesus is giving the Pharisees is really full of irony because remember when the Israelites returned to the promised land after the exile, they were obsessed with not falling back into idolatry because that was the reason that they'd been expelled from the land in the first place.

Psalm 115 says that those who worship idols, which are themselves blind and deaf and dumb, become like them.

It says, their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

They have mouths, but they do not speak.

have eyes but do not see, they have ears but do not hear, noses but do not smell, they have hands but they do not feel, they have feet but they do not walk, they do not make a sound in their throat, and those who make them become like them, and so do all who trust in them.

So the result of the Pharisees' fight against idolatry was

is that they're no better off than idol worshipers, right?

They still cannot hear what God has said, and they can't see what God is doing.

So they were believing a false god of their own invention.

They had become like the idol that they made, blind and deaf, and their faith is not genuine because it was not in the real father, but in a father that they had to construct to suit their preferences.

We also see that his word is not in them, right?

And you do not have his word abiding in you.

See, blindness and deafness are really just symptoms of a deeper problem.

They weren't filled with the right thing.

When we are removed from the word, we cannot believe genuinely.

When we distance ourselves from what God has borne witness to, and instead we fill ourselves with lies or even unbiblical things, we just can't believe.

And that's the result.

And Jesus puts this forward as evidence for these claims that they're blind and deaf, they don't have the word, is the fact that they don't believe that he is the Messiah.

He examines the fruit of their faith.

He finds it lacking.

And this really is the litmus test, right?

To see if someone might really be a true believer, if a movement might be genuine.

And we ask them, you know, what do you do with faith?

Jesus, who do you think Jesus is?

And if they say that Jesus is not God or not the sufficient savior, then that's a false belief.

Now, these leaders might've responded and say, no, no, no, we're very dedicated to the word of God.

How can you say we don't have the word of God in us?

We're very dedicated to scripture.

And in fact, they were putting on a pedestal higher than it ought to have been.

And so he tells them that not only had they constructed a false idol of the Father in their minds, they'd even made scripture an idol too.

He says, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

And it's they that bear witness about me.

Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

I do not receive glory from people, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

I've come in my Father's name and you do not receive me.

If someone comes in his own name, you will receive him.

And how can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

He's begged the question, do you believe the Father?

And he's shown that they do not.

So now he asks, well, do you believe me?

Do you believe Jesus Christ?

And he begins by acknowledging their deep dedication to the scriptures, right?

He's not telling them to disregard the scriptures.

He's not saying that they're not useful or important.

He's saying that they were missing the point of what the scriptures are about.

They're not there to glorify themselves, but to glorify Jesus.

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but it's they that bear witness about me.

So searching scriptures alone does not guarantee life.

They didn't make the connections that it's not the scriptures themselves that guarantee life, but that they lead to the life giver who is Jesus.

And Jesus will say over and over again, especially in John, that he is the giver of life.

He even is the life or even the living water.

If we peek ahead to chapter 10, we see the Jews basically having the same conversation with Jesus and they challenge him and they say, how long will you keep us in suspense?

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.

And Jesus answers them, I told you and you don't believe.

The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand, and I and the Father are one."

So even five chapters later, after having seen and heard even more of Jesus with their physical eyes and ears, they're still spiritually blind and deaf to who Jesus is.

They say, how long will you keep us in suspense?

I mean, what do they mean?

Jesus has been saying the same thing from the beginning.

I and the Father are one.

Again, belief is tied to really truly hearing God's word.

The sheep hear Jesus' voice.

They can see and hear the shepherd.

But the Pharisees are deaf and blind to the shepherd.

Even though they're spending all this time and effort in scripture, because they don't really hear his word and listen to his voice with their spiritual ears, his word is not in them and they don't believe.

And so they can't have eternal life.

So searching the scriptures gives life only when it leads to the life giver.

They'd been searching in vain, groping around in darkened silence with blind eyes and deaf ears.

And now at this point, we might feel kind of some sympathy for the Pharisees and say, well, if they were really blind and deaf spiritually, is it really their fault that they can't see and hear what Jesus is saying?

Well, Jesus clears that right up and reminds us that this blindness and deafness is willful, right?

He says, you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

And this might be a silly illustration compared with the gravity of what Jesus is saying here, but have you ever ignored your GPS?

What if I had done that when I traveled here to meet you all for the first time?

What if when I was coming up from Pennsylvania, and my GPS told me to turn onto Route 219, and I ignored it?

And it's not like my GPS was lost somewhere that I had to find it.

It was right there, and it's not like it had to be deciphered.

It's very clear.

And it tells me, you know, turn on to Route 219.

It might even show it on the screen and announce it and interrupt my music.

And instead of listening to it, right, I reach over and I turn the screen off and I turn the volume down.

And I say, I know how to get there.

I don't need any directions.

I wouldn't have ended up here.

I'd have been in Ohio in a few hours.

And so that's what they're really doing.

And it's not like they were going after something wrong.

They were searching the scriptures for eternal life.

That's a good thing.

They wanted the right thing.

They were even looking in the right place.

But when faced with the truth of who Jesus actually is,

they willfully blinded themselves and stopped up their ears.

Instead, they thought the roadmap was the destination.

They thought they'd get there by just studying the roadmap, and they didn't think about who gave them the map.

And the map wasn't wrong.

It had been lovingly communicated to them, and it showed them who Jesus was.

It was supposed to lead them straight there.

But instead, they decided they would trust in the map itself to get them there on its own power.

And they didn't realize that they actually had to trust the God who had given it to them and follow those directions to Jesus.

And life isn't in the scripture itself, it's in the one that it points to, Jesus.

Searching scripture only gives life when that search leads to the life giver.

Now, Jesus starts to talk about receiving glory.

He pivots this new problem where he says, I do not receive glory from people, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

I've come in my father's name and you do not receive me.

If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

So he begins this new part by contrasting himself with them.

He says, I do not receive glory from people.

And when I first read this, I was a little confused because I thought, well, of course Jesus receives glory.

He's God.

But that's not really what he's talking about.

He's addressing this practice they had of receiving and giving each other glory and honoring one another.

They developed this culture of just being obsessed with being recognized and glorified by other men.

And Jesus is saying he's not looking for that kind of empty glory.

And remember, he doesn't need to because by the very nature of being God, Jesus is entitled to and in the end will receive every ounce of glory that is due him.

And he doesn't need to beg for it.

So he's saying that you have this problem, right?

In verse 44, how can you believe when you receive glory from one another?

So they missed giving Jesus glory.

We're going to come back to verse 42 where he says, I know that you do not have the love of God within you, but first let's see how he defends that claim.

So their biggest problem wasn't just this quest for adulation or this obsession with being honored by others.

The big problem for them is that they aren't giving Jesus glory.

Like verse 43 says, they're not receiving him.

And at first glance, this section might kind of feel sort of parenthetical or he's kind of taking a big right-hand turn here from what he'd been talking about, about being testified by God and the scriptures.

But really he's bringing up this glory problem because they've missed the fact that they're supposed to be giving him glory and they've missed it because their eyes are blind.

they won't receive Jesus, but he says they will receive false messiahs or really even antichrists.

He says, I have come in my father's name and you don't receive me.

If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

And in fact, in the years following Jesus' resurrection, there were several proclaimed messiahs that the Jewish leaders really entertained as possibilities.

Maybe these are the messiahs because they'd missed that Jesus had already been there.

And again, we're reminded they're not looking for the wrong thing and they're not looking in the wrong place.

They were eager for the Messiah, but Jesus wasn't the Messiah that they expected or wanted.

They expected the Messiah to arrive and to be glorified and honored by the Messiah, right?

They thought he would show up and just praise them for their dedication to the law.

And Jesus comes and he says, no, you missed the point.

The point is me, right?

And so they reject him.

We see that they won't even receive the glory that comes from God.

And that glory that comes from God, we'll see, is Jesus.

He says in verse 44, how can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

So seeking glory isn't the problem.

It's that they were seeking the wrong glory.

So what glory should they have been seeking?

Well, they ought to seek the glory that comes from God and not the glory that comes from each other.

So that begs the question, what is this glory that comes from the only God?

And in short, that's Jesus.

And I know that might feel repetitive.

You know, we keep saying it's Jesus.

They miss the point.

It's Jesus.

It's Jesus.

But think about it this way.

Jesus didn't have to say these things over and over and over again.

He could have been really short with them.

But instead, he gives them grace.

And this repetition isn't dressing down.

It's really a grace.

He's so gracious that he repeats himself in many different ways.

He says, I'm the point.

I'm the glory.

I'm the Messiah.

I'm the giver of life.

It's me.

Don't miss it.

And we have to thank God that he is so gracious that he gives us this truth over and over again.

And kind of as a side note, this is what I really came to learn this year in my Bible reading plan.

I was feeling really bogged down in the Old Testament prophets.

And I was saying to myself, how many times and in how many books and through how many men and in how many centuries does God have to say the same thing over and over and over again, right?

And then I realized that this is just a testament to God's grace, his forbearance, right?

His patience.

Because he knows that we are slow to understand.

And he knows that we are hard of heart and hard of hearing and we can have blind eyes.

And so he says things to us over and over again.

So in verse 44, right, he says, how can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God when you don't seek me?

They missed it.

They were so obsessed with man's empty praise that they didn't welcome Jesus, the Messiah, the glory that comes from the only God.

So now that we've seen that, we're really ready to go back to verse 42 and understand why he says, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

Just like they didn't have the word of God within them, and so they couldn't believe, they can't believe because they don't have the love of God in them either.

They love themselves too much.

Had they loved God and had they had the love of God, the kind of love that God has in them, they would have given Jesus glory because the Father loves the Son.

That's the kind of love that God has.

And if they'd had that kind of love that the Father has for the Son,
then they would have received the Son.

And this is the same thing that Jesus said earlier in chapter 3, right, to Nicodemus.

He says, Again, we see that idea of eternal life, and that's what they were after.

And it's not a wrong pursuit.

It's just they missed the source.

It's whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

But they refused to believe in Jesus.

So then Jesus concludes this section of his speech by reminding us that true belief coincides with receiving glory from the right source.

Not from each other, but from God.

How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

We cannot truly really believe if we are seeking our own glory and not seeking Jesus.

It's possible to come to the Bible with the wrong intention and completely miss the point of what it's saying.

Some of the things we come to the Bible for are not even wrong things in and of themselves.

But remember, the Pharisees, right, they were after eternal life and the Messiah, which are good things.

But unless we approach the Bible to welcome God's glory and to see the person of Jesus, we're going to miss the point.

So we need to come to Scripture seeking Jesus and God's glory and not to make ourselves great.

And that kind of approach to God's word leads to it really being in us, and then God's love will be in us, and then we will believe.

Now Jesus asks them one more question.

He questions one more belief.

He's asked, do you believe the Father?

Do you believe me?

Now it's, do you even believe Scripture?

Right?

He's told them that they don't believe the Father, and he's acknowledged their lack of faith in himself, and now he doubles down on their lack of faith even in the Scriptures.

He says, do you not think that I will accuse you to the Father?

There is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you've set your hope.

For if you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me.

But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

Now at this point, I imagine the Pharisees are pretty red in the face, right?

He's really made some bold accusations against things that they really were proud of or held very close to.

So Jesus steps back and he says, no, I'm not the one that's condemning you, right?

Moses is the one that is condemning you.

You're already condemned.

And remember Jesus' words to Nicodemus just a few chapters before in 317, right?

He says, for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Jesus is not the one condemning them.

Moses already did that.

Do not think that I will accuse you to the father.

there is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

So Moses gave the law, which anticipates the Messiah and shows our need for his sacrifice, and the law itself condemns them.

It shows their need for Jesus, but they are rejecting this message.

Paul really fleshes that idea out in Romans 3, starting in 19.

He says, now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law.

so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes the knowledge of sin, right?

Paul's saying the law is there to show you that you need a savior, to show you that you need Jesus.

And he says, but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it.

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

So the law and the prophets bear witness to the fact that the law is not enough to save anyone.

It anticipates a final, sufficient sacrifice that comes in the person of Jesus Christ.

And all of this is right there at the Pharisees' fingertips, right?

And they willfully ignored it.

And their condemnation for their ignorance came not from Jesus, but from the law itself.

We also see that they've misplaced their hope, right?

They put their hope in the law, not the law giver.

There's one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you've set your hope.

But Moses has no power to give eternal life.

And the mere words, the ink on the page of your Bible has no power to save you.

It's by hearing these words, by understanding these words, by believing these words that we find Christ alone who gives eternal life.

Just like Romans 10 and 17 says, so faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

But they couldn't see God and they couldn't hear God and they didn't have his word or his love in them.

They willfully plugged their ears to God's word when really they needed to listen and believe.

And they misplaced their hope, really shielding their eyes and ears from the one who actually could give them eternal life.

And we can misplace our hope.

We can put it in our own abilities, in our own righteousness, in our family, even in our country.

But our hope is in none of these earthly things.

It's in Jesus.

And anything less than Jesus will let us down.

He also says they didn't believe who they thought they believed, right?

They really thought that they believed Moses, that they believed the law.

And he really goes for the jugular and he says, for if you believed Moses, right?

He's saying, but you don't.

If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me.

He doubles down and he rephrases what he said originally.

And he says, listen, you don't even believe in Moses.

You think you do, right?

But you think Moses and the law are going to give you eternal life.

You think that you'll find life there.

But you're really lying to yourselves.

And actually, you don't believe Moses.

Not really.

If you did believe Moses, you would have understood what he said, and you'd believe me.

And again, we see that their lack of faith, just like it was with the father, they had to construct this false law or this false Moses in their minds that they put their hope in.

Because if they actually believed in the real Moses and the real law and sought what it said, it would have led them to Christ.

So we have to acknowledge this amazing ability that we have to deceive ourselves.

And if we look at the fruit of the Pharisees' faith, we see self-righteousness, blindness, deafness, lack of love, lack of seeking God's glory.

And so we know that the root of their faith has to be as dead as that fruit is.

They can't possibly have actually believed in the scripture.

Because true belief in the scripture leads us straight to Jesus.

Moses wrote of Jesus.

See, the roadmap was there, but they had turned their GPS off.

So Jesus leaves them with this challenge.

He says, but if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

If we don't believe scripture, then we can't believe Jesus.

Their most serious problem is that they don't believe Jesus.

And that's how we get life, right?

Is we get eternal life by listening to Jesus.

Faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

But if we plug our ears and we've refused to listen to the word, we cannot have faith.

We've talked about this a few sermons ago where Calvin says our minds are idol factories, right?

We create these idols in our minds to worship instead of Jesus.

And they'd made in their own minds

their own father, who was not the genuine article, and they would believe false messiahs, and they even had constructed in their minds this false scripture to study and believe.

Had they believed the real thing, they would have acknowledged the truth about Jesus' identity.

Instead, they created idols, and in doing so, became like those idols, blind and deaf and empty.

They missed Jesus.

Even when the GPS was screaming at them, right, turn right, turn right, here he is, believe him, they reached over and silenced it.

Scripture is the path to Jesus.

How do we hear Jesus' words?

Well, we read them in our Bibles.

And that's even more true for us than it was for the Pharisees, because they actually had the benefit of meeting Jesus.

They had the privilege of meeting the Word of God, the glory of God, the Son of God, face to face.

They actually beheld the way, the truth, and the life in the flesh.

But we have access to Jesus through the Bible, his word.

And if we don't believe it, we cannot find him and we cannot have life.

So we need to study his word to see him.

We need to seek out his glory there.

And when we do, we find Jesus.

We find eternal life.

We find God's glory.

And I know it can feel like we really harped on the Pharisees a lot, but Jesus is really kind of cutting to the heart of why they didn't believe, right, to their unbelief.

And he's showing them that they're really missing the point.

They're missing Jesus.

But we can't think of ourselves as better off than the Pharisees.

We need to stop and assess our own hearts and ask ourselves, have I missed Jesus?

Have I made a false God in my mind?

And these are really sobering questions.

Do you believe the Father?

Do you believe Jesus?

Do you believe scripture?

But I think it's healthy for us to occasionally ask ourselves these kinds of questions in all seriousness.

Because remember, Jesus didn't come to condemn the Pharisees.

That had already taken place.

His words are gracious.

They're a warning, yes, but they're a grace.

They remind us to commit ourselves to Jesus.

To bury ourselves in scripture, not for our own glorification, but to seek the glory that comes from God, Jesus.

The problem is not that the Pharisees had an insufficient amount of faith.

It's that their faith was in the wrong thing.

They put their faith in the law and themselves and not in Jesus.

Genuine faith depends on the object of faith.

And it's kind of like this.

What if you were leaving for church this morning, you turn on your car, and you see on your dashboard your tank is almost empty.

And instead of filling up your car with gas on the way here, you said, no, no, I really believe in this car.

And I have faith that this car is going to get me to church.

Right, it's not going to make a difference, right?

The faith in your car isn't going to change the level of gas that's in it.

And that's what happens when we put our faith in the false gods we make in our own minds.

No amount of faith in that empty gas tank is gonna get you to church on time.

The object is the problem.

We have to put our faith in Jesus, the glory of God.

So this morning, as you examine your heart and mind and you reflect on these questions, if you say, yes, I do believe Jesus, I am seeking him, then praise God for blessing you with faith.

Thank him for opening your eyes, for unstopping your ears, for softening your heart, for putting his word in you, for putting his love in you, that you could see Jesus, the Son of God, the glory of the Father.

And then boldly share that truth with those around you, right?

Like the woman at the well say, come and see a man who told me all I ever did.

Can this be the Christ, right?

Seek his glory and not your own.

But if you say, well, I don't know if I have genuine faith in Christ.

Well, then pray that God might open your blinded eyes, unstop your ears, that he may put his word and his love in your heart, that you would see Jesus in the scriptures and

Because when you search there, you will find him and you will believe and you will have life.

The worst outcome today after hearing Jesus so carefully and clearly proclaim his divine nature would be to miss him.

So don't miss who Jesus is.

Don't willfully ignore his claims.

Wrestle with them and believe.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word.

Thank you for the truth that it clearly says.

Thank you for giving us the ability to see Jesus, to see your glory in your word.

Allow us to come to your word with humility, day after day, seeking you and your glory.

Give us the power and the strength to do that because we know that we are weak and hard-hearted and hard of hearing and blind without your grace.

And so we ask that you would give that to us this morning.

We ask all of this in Jesus' name.

Amen.