

CANeelled – Don't Drink the Kool-Aid

5/30/21

John 9:1-38 | Romans 12:2

Sunday AM

I'm not sure if you know it, but we're quickly approaching my least favorite time of the year – the time when the new slate of TV shows is released and I discover which of MY shows have been **canceled**. How dare they cancel the shows I enjoy b/c apparently there's not enough people out there who like what I like or agree w/ my preferences. Instead, I have to watch all those dumb shows others like – leaving me to find some new show to keep me entertained! **It's a conspiracy – and one big vicious cycle.**

**Too make matters worse** – this idea of canceling isn't only about TV shows anymore, but anyone/anything we don't like or agree w/ – it's called Cancel Culture.

CC is form of ostracism where a select group of people use their collective influence to express their disgust and disapproval for someone/thing by exerting social pressure to silence/exile that person or issue.

**And this is nothing new.** The roots of CC have been present thru-out history. Nearly all societies have punished people for behaving outside of perceived social norms for centuries... CC is just another variation, an extension of a much bolder set of social processes we see as a form of banishment – designed to reinforce a new preferred set of social norms. Jill McCorkel, prof sociology/criminology – Villanova

This AM, I want to begin a discussing what it means to live for Christ in a CC. What's my responsibility? How do I avoid being swept away by the mob mentality of culture, but instead, swim against the flow of culture for the cause of Christ?

**Let me begin by offering a few guidelines:**

- (1) I'm not trying to make a political statement, but a Gospel statement – my goal is to point us to Jesus
- (2) Peer pressure isn't always evil/bad, but any PP used for a godless, self-agenda is seldom good
- (3) We're not living in a CC for any other reason than we're living in a post-Christian culture where people are pursuing life absent of the truths of God
- (4) My focus will be on what we CAN do and not on what we CAN'T do as Jesus-people
- (5) Whether we living in a Christian/post-Christian world, the Gospel and the mission hasn't changed

In John 9, Jesus/12 come upon a man blind from birth. His condition puzzled the disciples who ask what took place for this man to be blind. Meanwhile, Jesus was putting mud in the man's eyes made from His spit, and then told the man to go/wash His eyes in the pool at Siloam – and he was healed. After being healed, the man is brought to the Pharisees who are scheming to cancel Jesus – and see this man as a means to an end.

*They brought the man who'd been blind to the Pharisees. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore, the Pharisees asked him how he'd received his sight. The man said, "Jesus put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man isn't from God, for He doesn't keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So, they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man said, "He is a prophet." Still, they didn't believe he'd been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. They asked, "Is this your son? Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it now, he can see?" They replied, "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he'll speak for himself." His parents said this b/c they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." A second time they summoned the man who'd been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth, we know this man is a*

sinner.” He said, “Whether he’s a sinner or not, I don’t know. What I know is – I was blind but now I see!” So, they asked, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” He replied, “I’ve told you and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?” Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You’re this fellow’s disciple! We’re disciples of Moses! We know God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don’t even know where He comes from.” The man said, “Now that’s remarkable! You don’t know where He comes from, yet He opened my eyes. We know God doesn’t listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does His will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man weren’t from God, he could do nothing.” To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out. v. 13-34

While this is one of my favorite stories in Scripture, until recently, I’d missed a major element in the story. I wonder... **did you see it?** It’s the idea of **canceling**. B/c the Pharisees couldn’t control Jesus, they tried to cancel Him. And when this blind man stood w/ Jesus – they tried to cancel him too.

**I said it earlier, and I’ll say it again** – CC is nothing new. In fact, **canceling** is what most of us do when we’re too lazy/arrogant to listen to others who disagree w/ us or who do things we don’t like. It’s often nothing more than a passive-aggressive 2-yr old tantrum either wanting attention or trying to get our way.

Canceling began back in the garden when the serpent tried to get Adam/Eve to cancel God. It quickly reappeared w/ Cain canceling Abel. We also see it w/ Joseph being canceled by his brothers and later by Potiphar’s wife. TBH – canceling occurs all the time where one person uses their influence to control, contain, and cripple another to affect their agenda.

What’s different today in CC is the speed, reach and bleeding-heart climate being fueled by mob rule that’s pushing an agenda void of truth, absent of discretion, and emotional charged w/ personal preference.

**W/ this said**, how do we as the Jesus-people thrive in a culture wanting to cancel Jesus, cancel Scripture, and cancel those who follow Him?

I Be **ALERT** of the Ways of Men

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus said, “Neither. This this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

**Note the assumption of the disciples** – Who goofed? Who’s to blame? **Too often we’re short-sighted to the reality of life and the movement of God.** Too often, like the (12) we’re conditioned to seeing w/ eyes of flesh first, instead of w/ spiritual eyes – and like the (12), ***we’re more blind than the man being healed.***

**As God’s children, not only must we be alert to this tendency w/in us, we need to be alert to the ideology around us.** We can’t forget that the world we live in wants us to think and agree w/ them even when many of their beliefs/values are contrary to God’s Word.

I think this is why the Apostle John wrote:

*Do not love the world or anything in it. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world. 1 John 2:15-17*

Or consider the words of Paul to the church in Rome:

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2*

**IOW** – If I'm to live God's will, I can't be stuffed into the World's mold; I must be shaped by God's Word.

What interesting is both **conformed/transformed** are **passive imperatives**. Meaning either the world is stuffing us into its mold from the outside in or God is shaping thru His Word/H.S. us from the inside out.

We must also be alert to the tactics of our spiritual enemy who's always trying to cancel us and get us to swear our allegiance to him instead of to God.

**Lest we forget**, Satan is a roaring lion roaming around seeking to kill, steal, and destroy. He loves nothing more than wreaking havoc and then dumping shame and guilt to render us spiritually incapacitated. His goal is to **cancel** the value of our lives towards the blessings/direction of God.

**Thru-out this story**. The disciples, the crowds, the Pharisees, and ultimately, Satan, were trying to force this man into their mold. And when he wouldn't fit their narrative – they tried to cancel him. The same will happen to us when we seek to follow Jesus too.

II Be **ASSURED** of God's Miracle in You

**May I state the obvious** – the most powerful tool in your faith arsenal is what God has done in/thru you.

*After saying this, Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud w/ His saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. He said, "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam." So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing.*

No one had to convince this man of Jesus – nor could they deny the reality of his story (although they tried).

**v. 8** – *His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he insisted, "I am the man." They asked, "How were your eyes opened?" He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So, I went and washed, and then I could see."*

**v. 15** – *The Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. The man said, "Jesus put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see."*

**I love this** – they asked, "What happened?" He says, "I don't really know. All I know is – I was blind and now I can see – and Jesus is the reason!"

**Can I share an observation** – other people may not like you; they may not agree w/ you; they even may want to silence you – but no one can steal away/alter what God has done/is doing in your life unless you let them – **b/c who you are in Christ is who you are!**

**Listen** – If God has entered into your life by His grace thru your faith, then the greatest miracle has already taken place in you – you've been **SAVED!** God has removed the spiritual blinders, so you can see! He's cleared your spiritual hearing, so you can hear! He's healed your crippled soul so you can walk w/ Him. He's transformed, and is transforming, your life into something new from the inside out b/c you're His.

*If any man is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old is gone! Behold – all things are now new. 2 Cor. 5:17*

**B/c you're now in Christ**, you're more than who you were before. You have a calling/purpose on your life that's greater than what others say/think about you. You have the blessing/favor of God upon you. Don't believe me – come take a stroll w/ me thru **Romans 8**.

*There's now no condemnation for those who are in Christ, b/c thru Christ the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin/death... v.1-2*

*For those who are led by the H.S. are the children of God. The Spirit you received doesn't make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies w/ our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we're children, then we're heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs w/ Christ... v.14-17*

*What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors thru Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that's in Christ Jesus our Lord. v. 31-39*

So long as you never lose sight of who you are in Christ, you can never actually be  **canceled**  by anyone.

III Be **ADAMANT** in Your Convictions

**Look back at v. 26** – *So, they asked, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He replied, "I've told you and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You're this fellow's disciple! We're disciples of Moses! We know God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't even know where He comes from." The man said, "Now that's remarkable! You don't know where He comes from, yet He opened my eyes. We know God doesn't listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does His will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man weren't from God, he could do nothing."*

Notice, this man was so assured about the miracle that had taken place in his life that he was in no way going to back down from the Pharisees/anyone else who were trying to cancel Jesus or cancel him.

**To be sure**, this man didn't go looking for this fight – but he wasn't about to cower to the mob/Pharisees. But notice, he wasn't angry, belligerent, or mean-spirited – yet neither was he milquetoast/lackadaisical about it either. He calmly, compassionately, and rationally engaged the Pharisees. He didn't back down and he kindly w/ certainty backed up his claims.

**Listen** – the way we must engage CC isn't by barking Jesus at people or howling at the moon. Nor will it prove beneficial to fight fire w/ fire. Rather we must be calm in our resolve, steadfast in our compassion, and consistently rational w/ an unbending conviction,

The Apostle Peter spoke of this in 1 Peter 3:15-18:

*In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that's w/in you. Do this w/ gentleness/respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. 1 Peter 3:15-18*

Notice the 3 keys to standing your ground in a CC:

- Set Christ apart – give Jesus His rightful place on the throne of your life – make Him your priority
- Be prepared to bear witness of Jesus in you
- Do so w/ a gentle/respectful compassion

**Listen** – following Jesus isn't for whimps, but you also don't have to go looking for a fight. I can promise you that when you live for Christ in our post-Christian world, you're going to have plenty of opportunities to give an account of the hope w/in you.

Just ask this VA school teacher who was suspended this week for refusing (b/c of faith convictions) to say, "A biological boy can be a girl and vice versa." He took a kind stand, and still, the fight came to him fast.

Even still, in such circumstances, *we must be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain.*

Let me close w/ a critical reality that we often forget in the church – God didn't come into our world and die on a cross to make things comfortable/convenient – He came to seek and to save the lost. He came to lay down His life to give life to everyone.

To those who've receive this grace and become the children of God, He has called us to live on mission to be His messengers (His ambassadors) no matter whether Christianity is in vogue or not.

To do so in a post-Christian society will require the same conviction we see in this man healed by Jesus. We will need t:

- Be **ALERT** to the ways of men
- Be **ASSURED** of the miracle of God in us
- Be **ADAMANT** in our conviction

**One thing is certain** – we must never drink the Kool-Aid of culture but daily taste/see that the Lord is good.