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Don't Miss The Opportunity

JOHN 8:12-21

Introduction

1. Have you ever missed the opportunity — You know, that “once in a lifetime opportunity” to do something or to purchase something?
2. I imagine we have all heard the sales pitch:
 - a. A special opportunity to buy something on television — “if you call within the next few minutes” you too can have this special item.
 - b. Memorial Day weekend is one of those times when various vendors from furniture to cars will be pushing for you not to miss their big sale.
3. But there are other opportunities, which, if we miss them will never have the privilege again.
 - a. This past December 21st, several of us witnessed the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the night sky — it will be March 15, 2080 before these two planets are this close to each other again.
 - b. On February 9, 1986, Halley’s Comet reached its closest point to the Sun as it traveled through space — this will not happen again until July 28, 2061.
 - c. On January 3, 1818, the planet Jupiter was hidden from view by Venus — it will be November 22, 2065 before this happens again.
4. In each of these events, if you were a middle aged adult and missed the event when it took place, it is very unlikely that you will live to see it the next time it occurs.
5. In John 8:12-21, Jesus responds to a charge and a question from the Pharisees telling them that if they miss the opportunity, it will never be afforded to them again.
6. Let’s look at what these men failed to recognize in order to make sure we don’t

miss the opportunity offered to them and to us as well.

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I. The Light They Failed To See

A. JESUS' CLAIM TO BE "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

1. In Jewish thought and language, the word *light* was often associated with God:
 - a. In Psalm 27:1, David had said, "The Lord is my light . . ."
 - b. In Isaiah 60:19, the prophet Isaiah declared, "the Lord will be your everlasting light."
 - c. In Job 29:3, God's faithful servant said, "by His light I walked through darkness."
 - d. In Micah 7:8, the prophet said, "Though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me."
2. Jesus claim was that He was the Messiah.

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B. THE PHARISEES HOSTILE REACTION

1. It was for this reason that the Pharisees reacted the way they did.
2. They rightly understood Jesus' claim to be that He was doing the work that only God could do.
3. Such a claim was unacceptable to them.

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II. The Witness They Failed To Accept

A. THE REASON FOR THE PHARISEES' REJECTION OF JESUS' CLAIM

1. It was backed by insufficient witness — Jesus was serving as His own

witness.

2. To them, Jesus' claim to be "the Light of the world" was backed by His word alone.
3. The Law required that any statement, in order to be considered as true, must be founded upon the testimony of two or more witnesses:
 - a. "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness" (Deuteronomy 17:6).
 - b. "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Deuteronomy 19:15).
 - c. "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true" (John 8:17).

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B. JESUS' REASONING FOR THE TRUTHFULNESS OF HIS TESTIMONY

1. His own witness was enough.

"Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going." (John 8:14)

- a. Because Jesus was conscious of His own authority, no other witness was necessary.
- b. This was not pride or self-confidence, but something we see every day:
 - 1) The surgeon who is aware of his own skill and ability doesn't wait for someone else to make a decision in surgery.
 - 2) The judge who is depended upon for his own interpretation and application of the law.
- c. Jesus knew that His relationship with God gave Him the authority to make claims which no one else could.

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2. He had a second witness — God.

“ Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me” (*John 8:16–18*).

a. How does God bear witness to Jesus.

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b. The witness of God to Jesus is seen in . . .

1) *Jesus' words.*

- a) No one could speak with such wisdom unless God had given it to him.
- b) Following Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Matthew indicated that the reason the crowd was amazed at His teaching was because “He was teaching as one having authority” (*Matthew 7:29*).

2) *Jesus' deeds.*

- a) No man could do what Jesus was doing unless God was acting through him.
- b) Nicodemus acknowledged such when he met with Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (*John 3:2*).

3) *Jesus' effect upon men.*

- a) The changes which Jesus brought about in men was beyond what human power could accomplish.
- b) The fact that Jesus could make bad men good was a sign of God's power at work (e.g., the man formerly known as “legion,” *Mark 5:15*).

“They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been

demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened.”

(Mark 5:15)

- 4) The *reaction of men to Jesus*.
 - a) Whenever and wherever the cross of Jesus is proclaimed in all its glory, there is a response in the hearts of men.
 - b) That response is the Holy Spirit of God working in those hearts, enabling them see God in Jesus.
 - c) In Philippi, as Paul was speaking to the women who had assembled at the riverside to pray, “the Lord opened [the] heart [of Lydia] to respond to the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 16:14).

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C. JESUS' RIGHT TO JUDGE

“You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me” (John 8:15-16).

1. Earlier, Jesus had said to Nicodemus that God did not “send [Him] into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:17).
2. Here, He said, “I am not judging anyone” (v. 15).
3. He then adds, “even if I do judge, My judgment is true” (v. 16).
4. Our reaction to Jesus is in itself judgment because if we reject Jesus, we condemn ourselves.
5. Here, makes a distinction between two types of judgment:
 - a. *One is based on human knowledge and human standards.*
 - 1) This is limited to what can be seen from without.
 - 2) It never sees below the surface.

- 3) This was the judgement of the scribes and Pharisees.
- 4) It is also the judgment to which we are limited.
- b. *The other is based on knowledge of all the facts, even those hidden from view.*

- 1) This judgment belongs only to God.

“God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

- 2) Since Jesus is one with God, He knows all the facts.
- 3) He sees the sins within us which are hidden from human eyes.
- 4) Jesus, like His Father, has perfect knowledge of all men.

“But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men” (John 2:24).

“And Jesus knowing their [scribes] thoughts said, “Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?”” (Matthew 9:4).

- 5) The question for each of us to ask ourselves is this: “When God looks within me, what does He see?”

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III. Their Missed Opportunity

A. “WHERE I AM GOING, YOU CANNOT COME” (JOHN 8:21)

“I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in you sin; where I am going, you cannot come” (John 8:21).

1. Jesus told the Pharisees that after He was gone, they would realize what they had missed.
2. They would then try to search for Him, but would be unable to find Him.
3. There are three things which you and I may take from this:

- a. *There are certain opportunities which come and do not return.*
 - 1) To each of us is given the opportunity to respond to Christ as our Savior and Lord.
 - 2) If we refuse that opportunity, we lose it.
- b. *Our life and time are limited.*
 - 1) You and I have an allotted time span in which we must make our decision for Christ.
 - 2) That time is limited, and none of us knows how long his or hers will last.
 - 3) Therefore, we must not delay in making our decision.
- c. *Just as we have opportunity in life, we also have judgment.*
 - 1) The greater our opportunity to respond, the greater our judgment if we refuse it or fail to take advantage of it.
 - 2) In Jesus' words, we see not only the greatness of our opportunity, but our limited time in which to respond.

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B. "YOU . . . WILL DIE IN YOUR SIN" (JOHN 8:21)

1. Failure to take advantage of the opportunity which God affords us means that we will die in our sin.
2. There are two things here of which we should take note:
 - a. The first has to do with *the word Jesus used for sin.*
 - 1) The Greek word for sin, *harmartia*, originally meant *a failure to hit the mark (target)*.
 - 2) The failure of the Pharisees to accept Jesus as the Messiah meant that they would miss their opportunity, they missed the mark.
 - 3) If you or I reject Jesus as Lord and Savior, we have failed to hit the one target in life which we must not miss.
 - 4) We will die without having realized our true goal and we will miss our opportunity to enter the home which God has prepared for

those who love Him.

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- b. The second has to do with the *essence of sin*.
 - 1) It separates man from God.
 - 2) For us to die in sin is to find ourselves at enmity with God.
 - 3) Those of us who have come to Christ in obedient faith are already walking with God.
 - 4) Death for us, only opens the door to a closer walk.
 - 5) Those who refuse Christ are strangers to God.
 - 6) Those who come to Christ are friends of God — in that friendship, there is no fear of death.

Conclusion

- 1. The question for each of us tonight is simple, “Will you come to Christ, or will you reject Him?”
- 2. To reject Him is to miss the opportunity to have “the Light of life” (John 8:12).
- 3. If you have already come to Christ, then may your life be one abundantly blessed by Him, and may you find your eternal home to provide more than you ever imagined.
- 4. If you have not yet come to Christ, make the decision to do so tonight — do not miss the opportunity which our Lord is extending to you — it may not come to you again.