

# (John) the Childness of the Critics

by Willie Mullan

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*The sermon explores the contrast between the childishness of critics and the boldness of those who faithfully witness for Christ.*

**Duration:** 57:26

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:2, Psalm 27:4, John 9:13-34

**Topics:** "Criticism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of a blind man who was healed by Jesus. The preacher highlights four key themes in the story: the childishness of the critics, the boldness of the beggar, the fearful net of the father, and the loveliness of the Lord. The blind man boldly explains to the Pharisees how Jesus healed him, confidently stating that Jesus put clay on his eyes and now he can see. However, some of the Pharisees reject Jesus because he does not adhere to their religious laws. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus came into the world to fulfill a mission and by rejecting him, the Pharisees are condemning themselves.

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## Transcript

You remember last week that we finished down at verse 12. We just got through the first 11 verses and finished there after the 12th one, and we're starting at verse 13 this evening, and I'm going right through to the end of the chapter, from 13 right through to the end. And I want to underline for you four very special things in the chapter this evening.

I want to underline for you, first of all, the childishness of the critics. You see, there were quite a lot of critics around the Lord. Every man that gets up to expound God's Word always finds that there are critics in the crowd.

When you're as old-fashioned as I am, you won't bother too much about them. There will always be critics. If you're a leader of people, you must realize that you're anybody.

You just have to take it for granted. But I want to underline the childishness of the critics this evening. And then we're going on to touch the boldness of the battle.

The man that sat and begged the blind man, when he got his sight, point him out as a bold witness for the Lord Jesus, and we're touching the boldness of the battle. We want to touch the fearfulness of the Father.

Perhaps I should have put it, the fearfulness of the family.

For Father and Mother were questioned here, and just because they were afraid of the Pharisees, they dodged the issue at stake. And we look at the fearfulness of the Father. I think he answered for the family.

Then last, but by no means least, in this wonderful chapter, right through, you have the loveliness of the Lord. Just four special things this evening. The childishness of the critics, the boldness of the battle, the fearfulness of the Father, and the loveliness of the Lord.

Now, again, while I have them in order before you in your notes, I'll take the chapter as it comes, and I'll go from one to two and three as we find them, and you can follow me quite easily. We're at verse 13 just now. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

They brought, who brought? And I think the word they refers back to verse 8. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, is not this he that sat and begged? You remember last week how the neighbors, and all those who knew him aforetime, all gathered round because of the wonderful miracle? And now that they have examined him and questioned him, why they thought that they would bring him to the Pharisees? And they brought him who aforetime was blind to the Pharisees. It's just like a young believer coming to some old, dead, religious professor. And my, they have some things to say to young believers.

And when they brought him, the Holy Ghost has a little faith in here, verse 14, and it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eye. You see, when Jesus made that clay and anointed the man and brought sight back to him, it was the Sabbath day. Therefore, then again, the Pharisees also asked him how he had received the sight.

I would like you to notice the word again. Do you see that? You see, he had been asked this before. Of course, the neighbors asked him in verse 8, and now the Pharisees are asking him.

But this word appears in the chapter again and again. You see, verse 17, they say unto the blind man again. See, verse 24, then again called they the man that was blind.

See, verse 26, then said they to him again. You know, these darts and questions, interrogations, investigations, my, they were coming like bullets out of a machine gun. The enemy was attacking the poor fellow who had received the sight again and again and again.

The fiery darts of the wicked, the roar of the lion came into his ear. But you'll find that the Lord held him up in his hour of need. Verse 15, then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.

Now, I want you to notice here the boldness of the beggar. You see the first heading? Boldly explain Christ's performance. Here's what he said to them.

He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see. I think that was a great answer. You know, he boldly explained Christ's performance.

And when some old, dead, religious professor who doesn't believe in this great experience that Christ can bring to us all, begins to question you, you just answer about what Christ did, and about what you did, and about what happened. It was a wonderful answer. He just said, Christ did that, I did that, and this happened.

Why, that was a great answer. A young fellow doesn't need to go beyond that. Just tell them what Christ did, and what you did, and what happened.

It was a great answer. He boldly explained Christ's performance. And then, watch, it goes on from there.

Verse 16, Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Son of Jai. You see, that was a childish conclusion. That was the conclusion that some of the Pharisees had come to.

You see, I want you to get the hold of this, that these religious professors who were now interrogating the poor man that had received the sight, why they didn't know just what the keeping of the Sabbath meant. That was their trouble. You see, they had yet to learn that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, you know.

They had not to learn yet. They didn't realize that God made man first, and then made the Sabbath to serve the man He had made. For the Sabbath was made for the good of man's body, and for the blessing of man's soul.

But they didn't know that. They didn't know that things that were merciful and a necessity for the benefit and blessing of mankind were allowed by God on the Sabbath day. Oh no, the very fellows who were jumping to conclusions didn't know.

And it was very childish for them to say, this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. It was a childish conclusion. Others said, verse 16, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

You know, it was Bollinger, and you must be very careful when you quote Bollinger, it was Bollinger who first said, all divisions are not evil. And he referred to this one. And he said, all unity is not good.

And he said, the majority is not always right. And he gives some wonderful illustration. You remember the twelve spies that went again? Well, ten of them stood together, and only two fellows were out in the left wing.

But remember the ten that stood together were wrong, and the minority on that occasion was right. And you must be careful, you know. All division is not evil.

And all majority is not good. And always unity is not right. So you've got to be very careful.

Watch verse 17. They say unto the blind man again, what sayest thou of him that he has opened thy eyes? I think that was a childish question. I'll put it down, childish interrogation.

The man that opened his eyes after a lifetime of darkness, what would he say of him? Thy words would fail. He would hail him as the highest. And you know, very boldly he comes out to you.

Do you see the answer? He said, he is a prophet. He boldly exclaimed, Christ is a prophet. What is it? You know, I think that always, when the Lord draws you to Himself, He very gently, very wonderfully reveals Himself to you until you're gazing at the wonder and glory and beauty and majesty that belongs to Him.

You know, when the Lord Jesus came first on the scene here, you remember last week, as He passed by, He saw a man that was blind from birth. You remember how the disciples looked at the problem, not at the

person. They wondered to whom it came.

You remember how the Lord understood the case. My, there was standing one before Him, a friend who understood. And then a man who made an effort, and now a prophet.

Well, that's just exactly what happened at the well. You remember the woman at the well, she said, Why askest thou a drink of me, a woman of Samaria? Thou didst ask a Jew. Remember, she began with seeing a Jew.

And then she said, Sir, give me to drink. And then she said, I perceive thou art a prophet. And then she ended with her arms round them as the Messiah and Savior of the world.

My, you'll find that this revelation develops as we go through. So, he boldly exclaimed Christ as a prophet, that a king, but the Jews did not believe concerning Him that He had been blind and received a sight, until they called the parents of Him that had received a sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your Son, whom ye say was born blind? How then doth He now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our Son, and that He was born blind.

But by what means He now seeeth, we know not. Or who has opened His eyes, we know not. He is of us to Him.

He shall speak for Himself. And then the blessed Spirit of God put them this wonderful verse for our enlightenment. These words speak, His parents, because they feared the Jews.

For the Jews had already agreed already that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. You see, when they called the parents, you can see the fearfulness of the father coming into the chapter now. You know, he was afraid of the Jews.

You know what the old book says, that the fear of man, it brings a snare. And this is one of the occasions in the book where the snare is a public. My, I believe the way it's worded here, that if any man should confess that he was the Christ, he'd be put out of the synagogue.

I believe that down deep in the heart, just because of the wonder of the medical and seeing the joy in their son, they believed he was the Christ. But there was a snare on their lips. I wonder if you've ever been there, never stand in the clouds, feel an opportunity coming to you to witness for him, but you were afraid.

And the fear of man made you a spiritual dummy when you ought to have been standing up for Christ. Do you remember Israel long ago, and God brought them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea and through the wilderness, to a place called Kadesh Barnea. And as they stood on the height shander, they looked into the promised land.

And God had said, every place that the soul of your foot shall tread upon, I'll give it to you. But as they looked in and were about to step in, you remember how they saw the high walls from the mighty people of Canaan. And the good faith, they were afraid.

And the fear of man brought a snare on their step. My, they didn't go forward. Now, when you don't go forward in this life, you go backward.

Did the fear of man ever keep you from going forward for God? Do you remember the day when Israel faced the Philistines, and they were about to take the possessions that really belonged to them? My, their

hands were about to lay hold on those possessions that were really theirs. They were in the land now, and coming strolling down the mountainside as one called Goliath. And the fear of man put a snare on their hands.

The fear of man can put a snare on your lips. The fear of man can put a snare on your feet. And the fear of man can put a snare on your hands.

And you neither speak for God, nor walk for God, nor possess that God has given you. Always be careful about this. And here do we touch for every young believer.

If you think, my dear young believer, that you'll get help always at home, you may learn your lesson now. Because father and mother let him down, when the light had stood up for him, just because of a little faith, they let him down. And don't, for any sakes, believe in your men, whether they are parents or pastors, because they'll fail you in your hour of need.

You'll need to learn to lean upon the Lord, and only the Lord. Can't you see the fear, fullness of the Father? But let's go on. Verse 23.

Therefore said his parents, he is of age after him. See, they were dodging the issue. They were afraid of what would take place.

They might be cast out of the synagogue. So they threw the whole thing onto the law again. Then again called they the man that was blind and said unto him, give God the praise.

We know that this man is a sinner. You know, I think that this is childish persuasion here. You see, they seem to get this idea.

This is what one of the great scholars sees here. You see, they took the father and mother into the council, and they questioned them. Then when they let them go, they called the man again.

And they said, you know, we know. We know now. You know, they're sort of thinking that we've got news about this fellow, and you'd better give the glory to God.

They're putting him on his own now. We know you just give God the glory about this thing. But my dear friends, they didn't realize the boldness that was in this young believer.

What's this? Here's the answer. Verse 25, He answered and said, whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.

And he boldly expressed Christ's power. You see, he wasn't going to stand on the other side just because the Pharisees were dictating and saying they knew. He was going to let them know what he knew.

They're trying to tell him that they know something. Well, I'll tell them what I know. And one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I can see.

No, any young believer here could answer like that, couldn't you? My inner believers are people who really know. I know whom I have believed. I hear the text being quoted wrong at times.

Some of the young believers in prayer quote it so let me correct you. They quote it like this, I know in whom I have believed. There is no in there.

The book says, I know whom I have believed and I know whom I have believed. I know he was the son of God who left the heights of glory. I know he became the Lamb of God.

I know he's my Savior. I know he's my shepherd. I know he's my shelter.

I know he's my supplier. I know he's my sufficiency. I know he's the satisfier of my soul.

I know. And I know that my redeemer lives. I know that too.

And I know that when he comes again and I see him, I will like him. Oh, I tell you young believers, my we ought to know. We ought to be able to give to the world a reason for the hope within us.

We ought to be able to say, I know, never mind what you fellows know, I know. No man can little you out of your age. Twenty-seven years ago I was a tramp with no shoes in my feet and I was drunk every night.

Twenty-seven years ago I lifted my heart to this blessed Christ who came and died and rose again and tremblingly made him my own and personal Savior. I've never been drunk again. My chains fell off.

I've got new life, new teeth, new power. I've become a new creature. I'm on my way to the new Jerusalem.

I know. It's been twenty-seven years now. So I asked him, I know, that was bold, wasn't it? Now watch again.

Verse twenty-six, Then said they to him again, What did he do to thee? How opened thee thine eyes? And I put down this childish repetition. You see, they're just going over the question they began with now. You know, they're wanting him to make a slip, just to make a mistake in what he's answering so that they'll get a catch of him.

But watch now. He answered them, I have told you already. And ye did not hear.

Wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? That's boldly examining Christ's persecutors. Do you see the boldness of this young man? He boldly explained Christ's performance. He boldly explained Christ as a prophet.

He boldly expressed Christ's power. He boldly examined Christ's persecutors. Will ye be his followers? Well, that's the way to put them in the corner.

My dear friends, I wish that all the young believers would be inspired by this man who had just received his sight. That no matter where we are, we may be able to tell men and women the hope that is within us, and that the world will know whose we are. They had to stand up for Jesus.

Why, it's a privilege to stand up for such a wonderful Lord. But look again, verse 28, Then they reviled him, and the words had a meaning, that they came near and took him. You see, they were losing their temper now, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses.

It's very easy to put somebody's name, you know, and say that you're a follower. There are a whole lot of boys, and they're modernists, mind you, tearing pages out of this book. They don't believe the book of Genesis.

They don't believe Daniel. They don't believe Jonah. And they call themselves Calvinists.

Take a fellow's name, you know. And if Calvin could reappear, he would strip them. And you know, there are a whole crowd who call themselves Wesleyans.

And if godly, saintly John Wesley appeared, he would haunt them to take their name, you know. And there's a whole crowd who call themselves Baptists. And if the Baptist, who was a poor, forthright preacher appeared, he wouldn't associate himself with them.

It's very easy to take a name. They said, We be Moses' disciples. Verse 29, We know that God speak unto Moses, as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eye. Now we know that God here is not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, then he hears. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind? If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

He's boldly exalting Christ's position. Why, I tell you, this is great for this young man. You know, he's just been brought out of darkness, and this is his first day of life, and he's been brought into the presence of the old Pharisees, and they're trying to tie him up in the notch.

But can't you see him boldly explaining, and expressing, and exclaiming, and examining? Can't you see him boldly exalting Christ? Oh, brethren and sisters, a standing up for the Son, this is what we need, you know, in this country. Young men and women, to stand in the factory, to stand in the street for the Lord, to stand before these half-dead, half-damned old Pharisees. I know where there's a minister tonight, and he told a young fellow who got saved not so long ago, there's no such thing as salvation.

I wonder what he preaches on Sunday. Does he ever read this book? So many times is the word salvation and saved in the Bible. Maybe he doesn't know it.

Well, it's up to the young fellow to open his mouth, and just tell him exactly what happened, and exalt Christ, and it may come your turn and mine. I hope in that day that we'll be found standing up for Jesus. So, where do you see what happened now? Verse 34, He's out of the synagogue now.

Cast him out. You see, that child is excommunicated. You know, if you don't always say amen to what they say, they'd put you out.

Why, they would. And you know, there are quite a lot of so-called eloquent orators, and if you didn't just say amen to what they say, they'd say, you know, you're only a lamer. You never were at college or anything like that.

Don't you dare talk to us. They don't even have enough gumption to know that God can pick a beggar and make him a servant to glorify Christ. They don't know that, of course.

They live in God. So, they cast him out. Why, that was the best day of his life, when he got out from a crowd like that.

He should have found blessings, freedom, this happy condition, free from the law. That's what I was thinking about, my dear friends. Now, watch what happens now.

Here's the lovely bit of the gospel. I want you to see me out. I think I should take time to say this, that there was no fear in a Jewish heart more horrible than being cast out of the synagogue than death itself.

It was second to death. Because when they put you out, you were finished with the commonwealth of Israel. You were scorned.

You were an outcast. No one would associate with you. There he was, he's out, all alone, scorned and scoffed.

Cast out. Cast out. I can almost see him, you know, wandering alone.

Pitched down by the pharmacy. Here's what it says now. I think this is beautiful.

Verse 35, Jesus heard that they had cast him out. I wonder who saw that. You see, I think that's put in, in a very wonderful way.

Because it's not his own sovereignty that should work here. As God, he knew everything that was happening, you know. But actually, it's worded so that you and I can see, somebody came and told him what was happening.

My dear friends, I think this is wonderful. I wonder, do you go and tell him when some of the believers are in trouble? Wonder how many of us have been lifting our brother Hamilton and his wife to the Lord. They're in the storm.

They're in the darkness. Did you tell the Lord about it? Or did he just go tickle-tattling and told the Lord? Oh, that somebody was really wonderful. He was a friend of the outcast.

Lord, they've cast him out. He's all alone. And you know, there was a sympathetic ear.

The Lord listened. He said, Jesus heard. Yes.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And look at this, when he had found him. Oh, I think that's brilliant.

My dear friend, if you just stand up for him, he'll just stand up for you. My, he wasn't long out on the pathway alone, was he? Until some saintly soul went to Jesus with a story. And the sympathetic ear was bent.

And now the Master's was round the feet. And he will be. My, you'll never be alone when you stand up for Christ.

Oh, the Pharisees, my thoughts are out. He was in the best company I know. He's never been in.

My, you couldn't see him in the church. Come round and found him. Put his arm round him.

Said, it is who you are. Well, let's walk together. Can't you see them walking together? My, there was the sympathetic ear.

There was the seeking and the finding. And now the Lord puts the question to him. Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

You know, he was coming very near. He didn't always do this, you know. He did it with a woman at the well.

He said, He that speaketh I, that speaketh unto thee, am he. And he's saying the very same to the man who's saying, You know, I'm the Son of God. Why, I tell you, friend, if you just take your stand for him, although the whole world may disown you and cast you out, and for a moment you may be tested as you walk seemingly in the dark, but out of this tunnel, will come a friend that's thicker, closer, and a brother, and you'll see him like you never saw him before.

Remember John on the Isle of Atmos? My, they put him away yonder in prison, yet on a barren island, and as the poor aged disciple stood in the shadows, he heard a voice, and turned to see the voice, and saw one like unto the Son of Man, then with their robes down to the foot, the great high priest, the hair white as snow, the ancient of days, the eyes as a flame of fire, what a wonderful revelation of the Lord he got. He saw him like he never did before, and it's not always like that. You just take your stand for Christ, and if the devil, and flesh, and the world, through everything they can at you, and you go into the shadows, in the shadows you'll see Christ, like you never did before.

You needn't be afraid, I have been there a whole lot of times. Many a time I was cast out. My dear friend, don't be afraid.

He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do. You know, I think there's a wonderful revelation here. Do you notice the next verse? And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.

That's a beautiful word. He's falling down now, and he's worshipping him. I think there came to this man a wonderful revelation.

When he sat in the darkness, without any hope, without any help, a poor beggar in the dark, perishing, he heard someone speaking who understood him. Someone who understood. He said to the crowd, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents forgot the works of God.

It should be made manifest in him. And then he found someone who stood down to make praise, and lifted up before his eyes to bring him light. You know, I was just thinking today, it was a foolish thing to step in the sand and make an end to a praise, and then stick it on the fellow's eyes.

It looked a foolish thing, didn't it? That's a silly way to get anybody's sight. And I'll tell you this, that when our Lord came down and took upon him the form of a serpent, and remember we're only clay, and was lifted up in Calvary, by the preaching of the church, he surrendered faith to him there. He understood, he met a Savior who undertook.

And then, I want you to notice this, that he not only saw one who understood, and one who undertook, but one who was indeed the very messenger of God to us all, a prophet, a friend, the stick of torture, and a brother, a friend who broke into the darkness. He's saying something more now. The one who understood, the one who undertook, the one who was the prophet, the one who was the friend, the one who was the messenger of God, is God himself.

Do you remember when he calmed the storm and made the waves lie down? It says that all they in the boat worshipped him. John McNeill says, there wasn't a blessed Unitarian in the boat. They don't believe he's God, and you can only worship God.

Jehovah's witnesses can't worship him. You can only worship God. But this man, the one who understood, the one who undertook, the messenger of God, the prophet of the Lord, the one who's the stick of torture,

and the brother, is God himself who came.

And then, watch this, verse 39, on Jesus' head, says, for judgment, I am come into this world. Now, I thought that the book taught that he didn't come to judge. I think that's exactly what John 3 and 17 said.

God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world's rule might be said, I came not to judge, he said in one occasion. But now he's saying, Jesus said, for judgment, am I come into the world. We must get this balanced out.

And I think it's perfectly simple. Let's get the hold of this. The mission that Christ taught as he came into the world was this mission.

Christ, Jesus, came into the world to save sinners. That was the mission. That's what he came for.

He came to save sinners. But let's get the hold of this. As he stepped out of the glory, and took upon him the form of a servant, and began to walk before men, even by his preaching, by the display of his power, by everything that he performed and spoke before men, the attitude of men left themselves judged.

His father Caesar had said things about him just in this very chapter, under this very man. And by opening their mouth about the one who was in their midst, they were condemning themselves. And your attitude to the Christ will condemn you.

Don't forget that. He didn't come to do it. But the very fact that he's passing by, and your attitude to him, will condemn you.

My, these fellows said they could see, didn't they? Here's the whole statement. Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. Some of the Pharisees which were with him had these words and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sight.

But now you say, We see. Therefore your sin remains. I would like to just say this to every unsaved friend in this building.

Friend, what thinketh thou of Christ? I'd like every unsaved man just to take a moment and answer this question. What do you think about Christ? Do you believe that he's the Son of God who left the ivory palaces and came into this world of war? Do you believe that he was the spotless, sinless, faultless, harmless, crimeless Son of God who lived down here? Do you believe that he went to Calvary to make that great sacrifice for sin? My, I know that every unsaved soul in the building believes all this. And the very fact that you nobodies find it easily.

You say you see all this? My dear friend, you go into outer darkness or into the depths of outer darkness for all eternity because of your attitude to Christ. Oh, to think that you'd rise from your seat and turn your back on Him and go into the world again without Him, a Christ-rejecter as you go through the door. God forbid, you're condemned already.

And may every footfall that hits the street tonight as you go home, may it echo, condemned already. But you know, if you'd only come and stand before Him or fall before Him, and put the arms of your faith round Him, and take your stand for Him, no matter what the world or the Fathers may say, friend, you'd have light, and peace, and joy, and fellowship, and life. God bless you, saints.

May you be found standing for Christ the Lord. God bless you, sinners. May you come out from condemnation into salvation.

And may that one who understands, the one who sticks closer than a brother, the one who stood to save us, the one who lives to walk with us, the one who is our Savior God, be more precious. I don't think we'll sing any more this evening, just let us take a moment or two. Wonder, have you been standing up for us in all the crowds that you mixed with? Are you snared? Are you a spiritual dummy in the ultimate speaking up? Are you going forward into blessings? Or backward into the wilderness? What way are you going? Are your hands of faith snared? Are you laying hold on the possessions that really belong to you? Are you bold in your witness for Christ? Let God examine you that the unshaved soul in the building, because you say, we see, mister, we see.

Are you condemned already? Lord Jesus, thou wonderful Son of God, thou Savior of the world, thou who art the light of this dark creation, Lord, draw near to us. We only crave for one thing. Let us walk, O Lord.

We care not, Lord, who scorns, or spits, or curses, or crushes, only let us walk with thee gently down the stream of thy Savior. Let me walk, part of, in thy field, and with thy blessing, through Jesus Christ, O Lord.

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