



Welcome back to the second week in our **new preaching series: Jesus Headline News**. One of the **BIG IDEAS** of this series is that **every human being is writing a story with their life**. I am, you are, we all are. Jesus did!

All of us associate the phrase “**Headline news**” with *major events, nationally known figures, significant societal changes, terrible tragedies, and occasionally, a heart-warming humanitarian hero*. Most of us would never consider the phrase as appropriate or accurate for our own life stories.

But, I’d like to suggest to you today that **Jesus’ story** found its way into the **Palestinian limelight** by not seeking the limelight, but **focusing instead on his life purpose**. He didn’t come to **MAKE KNOWN HIMSELF**, he came to **MAKE KNOWN THE GOD WHO SENT HIM!** This idea is supported by our series theme verse:

**“You know me, and you know
where I come from. I am not here
on my own authority...”**

John 7:28 ESV

Who, or what, are you busy MAKING KNOWN with your life story? What is our “Headline News” story? What tracks have we been making with our many years on the sod of earth? Christian author, Donald Miller says, **“Good writers show rather than tell. Stories are told in action. Life stories are no different.”**

Today, we explore the **NEWS-MAKING, LIFE ACTIONS of Jesus** and how they **frequently caused jealousy and suspicion among the powerful religious people**. Ever since his resurrection and ascension, the peoples of this world have ***always responded to Jesus with polarizing opinions—both For and against.***

Some say he is godly, while others that he is evil. Some celebrate him, others want to indict him. Some gladly welcome him, others seek to “rid the earth” of ones like him (a reference from Paul in Acts 22:22). In our scripture today, we see two life-stories and two responses to Jesus. Sides are being drawn; hard and probing questions were being posed. I wonder what story would we have written had we been there?

Read Text: John 9:13-34 NIV



<https://stockarch.com/images/technology/two-opposite-magnetic-poles-attracting-8687>
<https://www.amazon.com/Toysmith-TSM7365-Metal-Horseshoe-Magnet/dp/B002P39UY2>

When I was young, one of the things that fascinated me was playing with magnets. Seemed like every boy I knew had one of these popular horseshoe magnets. We were all drawn to the idea of invisible power – you know - Ray-shields, force-fields, transporters and the like! Anyway, we’d pick up nails and tacks, move iron filings and drive our mothers crazy by testing just about every metal surface in our kitchens to see what would stick! It was a serious scientific inquiry!

It doesn’t take long in playing with a magnet that you learn there are actually **two forces in magnetism**, not one: **the force of Attraction and**

the force of Repelling. Not only was it fun to find out what stuck -- but it was equally fascinating to discover what was repelled! In case you need to know, magnetism is due to the motion of electric charges (both positive and negative) in various metal materials where the like poles of different magnets repel each other, and the unlike poles attract each other. In fact, the earth itself is a magnet and, like the earth, all magnets have a north-south seeking pole. ***Using this metaphor spiritually, it turns out it's not just the earth that has a north-south polarity!***

According to the Bible, there is a spiritual form of magnetism; a polarity of **two different responses to Jesus Christ; an attraction and a repelling.** In the text we just read, Jesus has just healed and restored the sight of a man who had been born blind. His actions became the context of an inquiry that became an antagonistic interrogation. One thing was for sure; the magnetism of Jesus was strong and so were the polarizing responses.



<https://hail.to/tui-motu-interislands-magazine/publication/ak395Yu/article/xbqHySk>

The blind man's healing and awakening is such a rich story. It has all the **human drama elements of simple, child-like faith to hardened and calculating prejudice.** It's the story that **Warren Wiersbe** says is summarized as **"The Cure, the Controversy and the Confession!"** The Cure was that this man was blind and now he sees! That's good news! – at least, it should be! The Controversy is because **Jesus' path always polarizes people** (He attracts or repels) and the Confession came from this "seeing-man" discovering that his healer is actually the "Son of Man," the sovereign Lord of history. One man, one story, one circumstance, two

radically different responses! So, **why is it that Jesus is such a polarizing figure?** Check out this head-scratching statement:

“Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, *I have come to divide people against each other!* From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against—or two in favor and three against.”

Luke 12:51-52 NLT

Wow! Shouldn't someone whom history has been hailed as a "good teacher" and a "role model for sacrificial love," one who blesses children, touches lepers, heals the sick, feeds the hungry, and speaks of loving neighbors and enemies alike, be loved and adored by all? What is this about DIVISION? Just previous to this, Jesus had said, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled" (vs. 49).

Most today would assume this person to be an extremist, a terrorist, a destructor of life and a hater of people. Many would think, "This is not the language of love and civility!" What is Jesus up to here? **The truth is, Jesus came to be our LIBERATOR—but in a broken world, liberation brings DIVISION**, because not everyone wants to yield to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And so, as John says in our text today,

“So they were *divided*”

John 9:16b NIV

Why are people's responses so polarizing? Maybe it's because—JESUS CHALLENGES AND CHANGES THINGS! *Life cannot, and will not, remain the same under the governing Lordship of Jesus Christ.* Remember what happened when Jesus cast out the evil spirits from the two Gerasene men and sent them into a herd of pigs that then rushed off en-mass into a lake and drowned? The people were not overcome with joy! The

Bible says, "Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him,

"...they *pleaded with him to leave* their region"

Matthew 8:34 NIV

It was a huge economic loss for them! The life transformation of these two men came at a very high price! Conversely, when the downcast and disheartened disciples (Cleopas and another un-named friend) encountered Jesus on their return trip home to Emmaus, they enjoyed conversation with him and received his teaching. When Jesus was about to depart from them, the Bible says

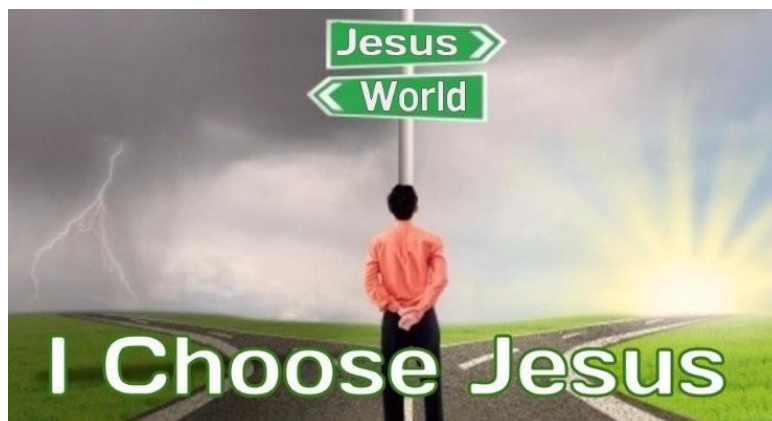
"...they *pleaded with him to leave* their region"

Matthew 8:34 NIV

"They *begged him, "Stay with us!"*"

Luke 24:29a CEV

Some ***plead for Jesus and religion to leave***, others ***plead for Jesus and faith to stay***. Some are repelled -- others are attracted. Why? Is it possible that Jesus is merely a reckless trouble-maker, a loose cannon who creates social and spiritual upheaval everywhere he goes? **Jesus says, "I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken" (John 12:49)**. You've heard the phrase - "Don't shoot the messenger!"



<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/between-world-jesus-i-have-hesitation-choosing-francisco-j-garcia>

What the life of Jesus really means is that his presence will force a choice. You and I are going to have to choose our primary loyalty and learn to make peace between what we expect -- and what God has delivered. When John the Baptist sent some of his disciples to inquire of Jesus if He was the one they have been waiting for. Jesus told them:

"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me" (Matthew 11:4b-6 ESV). Jesus was essentially saying, my presence and ministry is going to bring radical change, major life-shifts are going to occur – be ready to accept that and embrace them – **don't allow yourself to be caught up in a spirit of offense and resentment.**

OFFENSE is exactly what happened with those religious leaders who were in control. They had established a very tight reign over the people. William Barclay reminds us of the "over-the-edge" and "compulsion-gone-awry" Sabbath rules the religious leaders had made throughout history as a protective embellishment to the law of Moses – ones that helped to form this crises. In fairness, they made many "rules" (Initially) in an attempt to keep what they interpreted to be the heart of God's law. But the scripted results (referred to as "Fencing in the Torah") became a prison of spiritual captivity.



<https://www.emethatorah.com/blog/2014/april-18/building-fences>

One of their rules stated, **"A man may not go out on the Sabbath with sandals shod with nails"** (Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Shabbath Folio 60a). The weight of the nails in your shoes would be construed as carrying a burden and carrying burdens was forbidden in the law. It was also forbidden

to heal on the Sabbath. Medical attention could only be given to save a life. Broken bones were not allowed to be set. **"(On the Sabbath) one is not to work on an infant or set a fracture. If one dislocated his hand or foot, he may not pour cold water on it"** (Healing on Sabbath, Mishnah Shabbat 22:6). Just have to suffer until Saturday sundown! **In both accounts, Jesus had breached an established boundary. No working on the Sabbath and no healing on the Sabbath. But, is that really what God intended?**

Can you see how tragic it is when RULES become more important than the RULER? The religious leaders were scandalized and outraged. The "seeing-man" was in fearless in his awe and wonder! The religious leaders were determined to use their power to excommunicate and put out of the synagogue any who believed Jesus was God's Messiah, the Savior. Back then, it wasn't just Sunday morning church. **To be "Put out" was to be ostracized from the whole community.** No one speaks to you. No buying or selling. No right of worship. Your whole identity, belonging, social, cultural and religious life is one the line. The man's parents were evasive, cautious and fearful. The "seeing man" was bold, daring and unafraid – because **he found something better than cultural acceptance through conformity – he found new life in the Son of God.**



How about you? What is your HEADLINE NEWS? What polarity has energized your life? Repulsion or attraction? Stubborn resistance or irresistible grace? Did you know it's never too late to change your polarity! The USGS (United States Geological Survey) has verified that planet earth can and has actually changed (reversed) its magnetic polarity over the ages.

If God can do that for a whole globe, then maybe He can also do it for you and me!

I wonder what your response to Jesus Christ is? The Blind man was set free, not only from darkness, but from sin, fear and the shackles of social conformity. Jesus Christ can set us free too! Let me close with this thought. Jim Elliot was a famous missionary who was martyred in an Ecuador Jungle by the Waorani Indians on January 8, 1956 along with four colleagues. But before he died, he got it right! These were the words he penned in his journal on October 28, 1949:

***"He is no fool who gives
what he cannot keep to gain
that which he cannot lose"***

Jim Elliot's Journal, October 28, 1949

Let go of this world people and cling to Jesus. May this become the corporate HEADLINE NEWS of our life together! Amen!