

Title: From Blindness to Sight

Passage: Mark 8:11-16

Context of Passage

Chapter 7:

- Feeding of others (5,000)
- Sea voyage
- Pharisee reaction conflict
- Divine intervention / Dramatic healing
- Declaration of faith

Symmetry with Chapter 7 and Chapter 8

- Jesus repeating so disciples can understand who He is.

Compare: Deaf man - Blind man

- To see Jesus, we must have spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear and respond
- Default situation: we are dead in sin, deaf spiritually.
- Needed: intervention from God

EXPOSITION

I. Blindness of the Pharisees (v.11-13)

Mark 8:11

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.

Pharisees' engagement

- Test = Tempt
- Test = positive motivations to bring out best in another
- Tempt = negative motivations to bring out worst in another
 - Pharisees' had their own agenda to assert (know-it-all; put others down)

“Sign from heaven”

- meaning: destruction of Gentiles that leaves Jews to rule the world
 - Expectation: conquer and destruction of enemies
- Contrast: Jesus had just come from feeding the Gentiles
 - Jesus' intent and heart is for the lost - Jews and Gentiles

Mark 8:12

And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

Audience was not there to find a reason to believe in Him but rather why not to do so

- See Mark 3 (healing of lame person - Pharisees still criticize)
- Jesus' reaction to religious leaders: frustration

Matthew 13:15

For this people's heart has grown dull,

and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.'

Mark 8:13

And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

Point: Jesus is willing to cater to our intellectual integrity but not to pander to intellectual arrogance

- If genuinely come to Jesus in humility, Jesus will never turn you away
- If arrogant to find holes in the Gospel, Jesus will to answer

Kingdom of God

- requires individuals to exercise faith
- Contrast: Pharisee' request for evidence (if given) wouldn't require any faith

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

II. Dim sightedness of Disciples (v.14-21)

Mark 8:14-16

Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

- disciples' dim sightedness showed how little they had truly understood about Jesus.
- Forgot of how Jesus had previously fed thousands
- Disciples were too trivial and earthly-minded to understand or see.

Two examples: Pharisees - Herod

- Pharisees: steeped in religiosity in strictly adherence to the Law
- Herod: pride in iniquity of the Law, ignorance and rejection of it
- What's common? Their obstinate refusal to believe in Jesus in spite of the evidence
 - Why? Their love for the world and its riches.
- Common fear: Jesus would destroy their respective kingdoms

Jesus warning

Jesus' admonition:

- Beware of Pharisees of being so caught up in everyday details that forget who God is.
- *Meaning of Leaven*: Unbelief begins to rise like leaven when one becomes pre-occupied with mundane matters and cares of world than things of God.
- See: Parable of Sower - Third soil
 - Duality of heart

- Want to follow Jesus but want security in things that this world can bring

Mark 4:18-19

And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

III. Divine Intervention Needed (v.16-21)

Mark 8:16-21

And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

Unless God intervenes, you cannot understand the Bible and the Gospel

Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

APPLICATION

If a non-believer and want proof of the Gospel according to your standards:

- Yes, use your mind
- But be humble about it
- A cynical and arrogant approach will not work.

If you are agnostic, are you sincere or ignorant (a smoke-screen to truth)?

- Sincere: willing to read the Bible and seek the truth.

If you are a Christian, beware of the dangers of being focused in the things of this world rather than kingdom of God.

- After a commitment to Jesus, we are tempted to look somewhere else for help (other people, earthly methods).
- Instead: we should keep our focus on God.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

If you are a Christian, beware of the dangers of the never-ending pursuit of daily bread distracts us from God’s will.

- eating (any comfort of this world) is not the end.

If you are a Christian, set your minds on Jesus everyday.

- remind that God has provided for you thus far and will provide for you in the future.

Colossians 3:2

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- with promises and assurances in God, we are richer than we know.
- To fear earthly loss is like fearing the loss of a mere penny.

Psalms 145:14-16

The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.