

**DEALING WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS****MARK 8:14-18, 22-26**

*Intro: We have sympathy for those who are blind because of their disability. Did you know that all of us at times are blind, even when we can see? How can this be, and what can we do about it?*

<sup>14</sup>Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup>Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." <sup>16</sup>And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have no bread." <sup>17</sup>But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? <sup>18</sup>Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?"

*Mark 8:14-18*

**I. We Can Often be Blind to Spiritual Truth**

- **Rewind the tape** – Previously, in Mark chapter 8, Jesus fed thousands by multiplying loaves of bread and a few fish. A great miracle. Then some Pharisees came and questioned Him, and they asked for a miraculous sign. Jesus refused. God doesn't perform supernatural tricks at man's command in order to convince them of His existence. Afterwards, Jesus warned His disciples to watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and King Herod – the yeast symbolizing evil that even in small amounts can permeate and contaminate many people.
- **We can be blind, even though we can \_\_\_\_\_ see** – Like the disciples, we can be "spiritually" blind. We, like the disciples, will often find our blindness sporadic and episodic – it comes and goes. It is not permanent. This can be potentially more dangerous, because we may have lapsed into blindness and not know it!
- **We need to discover the \_\_\_\_\_** –
  1. **Spiritual pride** – When we have a high view of our spiritual maturity, we can become unteachable and blind.
  2. **Personal sin** – Sin in our life blocks our ability to "see" and "hear" God speaking and touching our life.
  3. **Traditionalism** – That keeps us from "seeing" God's new or different spiritual teachings or ways He is working in our world today.
  4. **Hard-heartedness** – Shown by a lack of mercy and compassion to others in need that blind us to opportunities to minister and evangelize in Jesus' name.
  5. **Secular focus** – Seeing, analyzing and making decisions from rational secular and humanistic perspective, thus not being able to take into account God's supernatural work.

<sup>22</sup>Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. <sup>23</sup>So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. <sup>24</sup>And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." <sup>25</sup>Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

*Mark 8:22-25*

**II. We Need to Encounter Christ for Healing of Our Blindness**

- **Christ wants to \_\_\_\_\_ you of your blindness** – The disciples were struck with episodic spiritual blindness, probably caused by spiritual pride and a secular focus on Jesus' "yeast of the Pharisees" teaching. To illustrate their need for healing of the spiritual blindness,

Jesus took the opportunity to heal a physically blind man brought to Him. The miracle solved three needs: 1) physically healed the blind man, 2) brought him to his Savior, 3) taught the disciples.

- **Allow spiritual and caring \_\_\_\_\_ to help** – The blind man couldn't come to Christ on his own – he was blind! He needed the guidance of spiritual and caring friends to get him to the answer to his problem – Jesus. Today we need to allow our spiritual friends to help us with our own areas of spiritual blindness. Sometimes our pride keeps us from admitting we have a problem and need help spiritually. Do you see a friend who is struggling? Will you not be judgmental, and instead by the caring friend to guide with humility and compassion?
- **Be \_\_\_\_\_ to what Jesus wants to do with you** – Often, God will do His work in ways that seem weird and illogical to us. First Jesus led him outside the village for a private miracle. Why not public? Wouldn't that be more evangelistic? Then Jesus spit on the man's eyes. What!? Why? Spit in the times of Christ (where there was little medicine) was believed to have some healing power, He was dealing with a man in a way He could understand. Symbolically, it also indicated Jesus was touching the man in a personal way – with His spit and personal touch. Either way, are you willing to cooperate with God when He wants to touch you in a different personal way?
- **Accept that God's work is often a \_\_\_\_\_** – Why was the miracle a two-stage process, rather than immediate? It wasn't because it was too difficult. Jesus did it in stages to show that God's work would sometimes be a gradual process rather than instantaneous. Also, within the disciples' context, the physical healing of blindness serves as a paradigm for the healing of their spiritual sight which also comes gradually and with difficulty.

<sup>26</sup>Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town".

Mark 8:26

### **III. We Should Use Our New Sight to Serve Christ**

- **We need to \_\_\_\_\_ God's work in our lives** – Once the man could see clearly, Jesus sent him home. Jesus did not warn him to keep quiet. In his excitement about his miracle, he was expected to tell his world about it. In the same way, God expects us to tell our world about what He is doing in our lives. He will direct us where, when and to whom we tell.
- **Don't go where God \_\_\_\_\_ you not to** – Jesus warns the miracle man not to go back to Bethsaida. This seems very strange and counterproductive. Bethsaida was the largest city in the area with thousands that could hear the good news. Why not Bethsaida? Possibly, Jesus did not want to be overwhelmed by sick people and be known only as a physical healer. His mission was first and foremost the cross for the healing of people's souls. It is also possibly because Jesus had previously pronounced judgment on Bethsaida for not repenting after previous miracles (Matthew 11:20-23). Though God is mercifully patient, there comes a time when He turns His back on stubborn and disobedient people. Don't wait to turn to God when He comes into your life. For those sharing the good news, follow God's direction for how, when and to whom to share.

**Answers: I. Physically; causes. II. Heal; friends; open; process. III. Share; warns.**