

## Spiritual Blindness

Mark 8:11-21

June 16, 2013

### Introduction

Spiritual blindness is a problem for all of the people since Adam. Every person since the Fall of Adam has been born blind. It is total blindness. They live in total darkness. The only way out of this darkness is through Jesus Christ alone.

**John 8:12** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

However, Jesus as the light of the world shines upon the darkness, but darkness did not understand it.

**John 1:5** *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

There are 5 degrees to this spiritual blindness.

- It is in the human's nature to be blind.

**Ephesians 4:18** *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.*

This characterizes every human: hard hearts, ignorant minds, and darkened understanding

**Psalms 82:5** *They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness.*

- Sinners love their sins.

**John 3:19** *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

- Humans are blinded by Satan

**2 Corinthians 4:4** *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- God has blinded people

**Luke 19:42** *and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes."*

When God has shown you the truth, and you reject it, it will be hidden from you. Thus Jesus was saying "If you had known that I was here and the peace with God that I came to bring, but now they have been hidden from your eyes."

- Eternal blindness

**Matthew 25:30** *And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

All of us are blind, but we fall into two different categories: Permanent blindness and temporary blindness. For one group, one is forever blind, and the other is blind for a short time. Which one are you? Mark gives us a barometer with which we can identify ourselves with.

## I. Permanent Blindness

**11** *The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test Him, they asked Him for a sign from heaven.*

- The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus
  - They are in attack mode...harassing Jesus, dogging His steps
  - Their questions are intended to trap Him
  - They are relentless in their pursuit
  - **Matthew 16:1**—Sadducees are included in this group
- To test Him
  - If He refused to do the sign—then He is a liar
  - If He tries and fails—then He is a false prophet
  - They refused to look at His work
    - Raising people from the dead
    - Blind can see, deaf can hear, lame can walk, mutilated completely healed
    - Feeding the 5,000 men (25,000 to 30,000 people) with 5 loaves and 2 fish
- Asked Him for a sign from heaven
  - Asked—they were seeking to seize control from Him
  - Sign from heaven
    - Jewish superstition—devil does earth miracles and God only does sky miracles
    - Joshua—sun stands still; Elijah—fire from heaven
    - They are convinced that Jesus has a demon
- Total blindness

**12** *He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it."*

- He sighed deeply
  - Frustrated sigh
- Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign

**1 Corinthians 1:22a** *Jews demand miraculous signs.*

**Note:** Context is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is foolishness to the world—and the Jews who demanded signs of Jesus were totally blinded to the reality of the cross.

- I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it
  - They were not interested in the truth
  - I am not going to give you any more signs
  - He has given them plenty of evidence for them to consider His person and claim

**John 3:1-2** *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know You are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with him."*

**John 5:36** *I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given Me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent Me.*

**13** *Then He left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.*

- Then He left them
  - He abandoned them—this would be the last time Jesus meets with the Pharisees in Galilee
  - From this point on—Jesus is the condemning Judge to their hypocrisy

## II. Temporary Blindness

**14** *The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.*

- The disciples followed Jesus, forsaking the Pharisees and Sadducees
- Forgotten to bring bread
  - Temporal
  - Focused on the now--hungry

**15** *"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."*

- Be careful
  - Sharp command repeated twice
  - This is a warning to take seriously
  - This is a warning for believers so they can sustain their commitment to the Lord!
- Watch out for the yeast
  - What is yeast?
    - One of the main ingredient for bread
    - Causes bread to rise
    - Little bit used
  - Scriptural use of yeast
    - Negative connotation
    - Unholy corruption and influence = danger
- Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

**Matthew 16:6** *"Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."*

- Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians
  - Their teaching, hypocrisy, and lifestyle
  - Pharisees—legalistic
    - Theologians of the people
    - Committed to the Law of God
    - Hated Greeks and Romans
    - Separatist—avoided contact and socialization with anyone they considered undefiled
  - Sadducees—liberals
    - Did not believe in the supernatural (resurrection and angels)
    - They were temple operators (High Priests)
    - Increased sacrifice prices sky high
    - Forced coin exchange due to "impurity"
    - Worked with Rome
  - Herodians—seculars
    - Loved the Greek and Roman culture
- Warning that you do not get trapped into their world
- Their influences are super dangerous

**Ephesians 4:14** *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.*

**16** *They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."*

- They thought Jesus was talking about physical bread
- Preoccupied with lunch/dinner

**17** *Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?"*

**18** *Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?*

- Jesus is basically asking
  - Why are you thinking about lunch when there is a greater danger to your soul?
  - The point He was making is that these people have completely rejected Him as the Messiah
  - They hated Him and wanted Him destroyed
  - By ignoring them or overlooking them—we are in danger of staying blind

**19** *When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied.*

**20** *"And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven."*

**21** *He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"*

- He reminds them gently of what He has done
- He reminds them who He is
  - God and Creator—the Savior
  - Depend on Me, and I will take care of everything

**Matthew 6:33** *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

- They understood finally!
  - Because they were in the light, Jesus explained further

**Matthew 16:12** *Then they understood that He was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

## Conclusion

We can see very quickly that Judas Iscariot did not heed Jesus' warning to watch out for the damning influences of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Herodians. He allowed their unholy influences to overcome him (in fact, the gospels said that Satan has entered in Judas—he has completely given over to the yeast of their money). He betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He remains in darkness—the outer darkness for all eternity, weeping and gnashing his teeth. He was permanently blinded by the lure of “success” and “power” and “prestige” and “wealth” that the earthly Messiah could bring him.

However, the Eleven followed Him and never walked in darkness again. They might have been temporarily blinded by their own hunger and wanting food, but they denied Jesus to the damning yeasts of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Herodians.

Do you embrace Jesus as your Savior and the light He brings? Or do you remain in darkness? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.