



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Read Mark 8:14-26

## 1. Jesus Cares About Spiritual Blindness As Well As Physical Blindness

In the first part of this passage Jesus was yet again deeply frustrated by the disciple's lack of faith and understanding. Though they had seen his miracles and heard his teachings, they were still spiritually blind. In the next part of the story, Jesus engaged with a physically blind man and was able to heal him because he cared deeply for him, but he also used the miracle to teach the disciples about their spiritual blindness.

## 2. We Are All Spiritually Blind To An Extent

How did we become so blind?

- I. We were born into blindness – we sin from the time we are born, we do not need to be taught.
  - II. We behaved into blindness – we seem to be unable to do what we know we should do at times and instead we do the exact opposite (Romans 7:19). At times we think/respond/behave sinfully because we actually love the sin we engage in and instead of rooting it out, we justify why we can keep doing it. If we do not deal with these areas of our lives we will become blind to its consequences, blind to our consciences and blind to the truth.
  - III. We are deceived into blindness – Satan uses deception to blind us to the truth of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). When we are deceived we are following Satan's voice and not God's voice anymore.
  - IV. We can be given over to our blindness – If we keep resisting Jesus, there will come a time when he will stop pursuing us. It happened to Herod. Don't let that happen to you.
- ❖ Q: What are some common sins that we suburban Christians are generally blind to? (Here are some examples: comfort, the love of money, being workaholics, gluttony, gossip, obsession with looking good...etc.)
  - ❖ Q: Why do you think we love these sins so much and therefore do not want to let go of them?
  - ❖ Q: What are some of the possible consequences that could result if we do not root these sins out of our hearts and lives?
  - ❖ Q: Since the nature of deception is that the 'deceived' do not know that they are being led astray, how do you think we can avoid being deceived?
  - ❖ Q: What role do you think our gospel community can play in making sure that none of us continue to walk in deception?

## 3. Being Blind Like The Disciples:

The disciples were spiritually blind because they were faithless. We are often just as faithless as they were and it is manifested in our lives in when:

- I. We are quick to panic and slow to pray – we believe the Bible to be true, we have seen God do amazing things in our lives before and yet our lives are marked by stress, anxiety, worry and fear.
  - II. We hear lots of truth but practice very little of it – we have great theology but we don't live it out.
  - III. We are despondent most of the time – we know we are faithless and we don't know what to do about it because it doesn't change.
- ❖ Q: When things present a major challenge in your own life, are you quick to panic or quick to pray?
  - ❖ Q: What does being quick to panic reveal about our faith?
  - ❖ Q: When last did you hear a convicting truth in church and *apply* it to your life?
  - ❖ Q: If you are despondent most of the time because you know you are faithless, what can one do about it?

## 4. Being Blind Like A Pharisee:

Jesus warned the disciples to not be like the Pharisees who had misdirected faith. We act like them when:

- I. We are governed by sin and not by a saviour – when we think we keep God happy by keeping the rules, we become obsessed with keeping the rules.
- II. We are quick to judge others and quick to justify self – when we think that our rule-keeping can keep us in God's "good books" we tend to pretend to be better at it than we really are and we end up comparing ourselves to how others are doing, while self-righteously judging their every move.
- III. We are angry most of the time – being unable to keep the rules and being totally frustrated at not being able to. This often leads us to pretend we are doing better than we are and we focus on other's sin in order to take the spotlight off our own failings.



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- ❖ Q: Are you motivated to live a godly life by trying to keep the rules or out of a love for God?
- ❖ Q: Do you find yourself looking at the things others are doing and judging them in your own mind, thinking that you would never do such things?
- ❖ Q: What is the difference between confronting someone who is not keeping the rules and lovingly correcting a person who is walking in sin? (How do we know if the person doing the confronting is rule-obsessed or gospel-driven?)
- ❖ Q: Which of the 3 marks of a “blind Pharisee” do you most identify with and why? (Being governed by sin, being quick to judge or being angry all the time).

## 5. Jesus Takes The Blind By The Hand And Lovingly Leads Them Towards Sight

- I. Personally – Jesus led the blind man out of the village before healing him. He would have walked by his side and directed him each step of the way. This is a good picture of how God walks with us and leads us step-by-step throughout our lives.
  - II. Progressively – Jesus performed the healing in two stages as a lesson for man being healed and for the disciples. There was still so much more faith in them that needed to grow. Our faith in this life is incomplete. We cannot know everything there is to know about God, but we will when he returns and we meet him face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12).
  - III. Persistently – Jesus finished the healing, he did not leave him partially blind. He will also continue the work of faith in our lives and bring it to completion (Philippians 1:5-6).
- ❖ Q: What do you imagine when you think of Jesus leading the blind man out of the village? What is the scene like?
  - ❖ Q: What do you think the blind man thought when he could partially see the first time round?
  - ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus did not just heal the man immediately in one go, and of what benefit was it to the blind man that he did it this way?
  - ❖ Q: What encouragement can we take away from this story to apply to our own lives?

