

“The Gospel of John: Blindness”

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Scripture

John 12:37-43

“But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.

This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"

For this reason, they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM."

These things Isaiah said because **he saw His glory**, and he spoke of Him.

Nevertheless, many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; **for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.**”

Last Week

Jesus talked about His departure and was troubled

But He remained committed to follow the Father’s plan

We talked about Hell and how I’m not sure we even can grasp the punishment of separation from God

Jesus implored us to walk in the Light and reflect the Light to others to bring glory to God

This Week

We speak of blindness -> spiritual blindness

Many of our friends and family are blind -> and they do not know it

Sad thing to be blind and unaware of your blindness

But I was blind once, and so were you, right?

Unbelief

John 12:37

“But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.”

How many miracles did Jesus do?

Apparently, too many to write down

John wrote:

John 20:30

“Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book”

John 21:25

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”

We have many listed in the Book of John -> enough to believe

He changed the water into wine

He healed the centurion's son, the man at the pool of Siloam, gave a man a new set of eyes

He raised Lazarus from the dead!

The Jews knew about all of them, and yet

They would not believe in Him

After seeing so many miracles, why didn't the people believe in Jesus?

Prophecy Fulfilled

John 12:38

“This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: ‘LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?’”

Jesus said their unbelief fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53 is the forbidden chapter for the Jews

Believers know it to be speaking of Jesus, the Messiah – The Suffering Servant

The Jews, instead, describe the suffering servant as the nation Israel

Isaiah 52:13-15

“Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. **Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man** and His form more than the sons of men. Thus, He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.”

Here, we see Isaiah contrasting Israel -> “My people” with the Messiah -> “His appearance”

When we get to Isaiah 53:2, then we see it is talking about the same “His” – the Messiah -> “He grew up”

Jesus applies Isaiah 53:1 to the Jews he is interacting with

“Lord, who has believed our report?” -> certainly not the Jews of Jesus’s time

“To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” -> certainly not the Jews of Jesus’s time

Unfortunately, they are not Kingdom people

Jesus continues explaining Isaiah’s message:

Spiritual Blindness

John 12:39-40

“For this reason, they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ‘**HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM.**’”

God purposely blinded the eyes of Israel in the Old Testament so they could not believe

Jesus says that this continues into the New Testament

God has blinded the Jews’ eyes so as not to recognize the Messiah

Are we good with that?

Jesus explained Isaiah’s words Himself:

Matthew 13:10-16 (right after the parable of the sower)

“And the disciples came and said to Him, **“Why do You speak to them in parables?”** Jesus answered them, **“To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.**” For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. “Therefore, I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

“In their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’

16**“But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.**” For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

God has not granted many to understand spiritual things

But to the disciples, they were given the gift of the Holy Spirit -> they have received the Light

The Holy Spirit is a GIFT!

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God;** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Without the Spirit, natural men see the church as foolish

1 Corinthians 2:14

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and **he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**”

How many of you have friends that simply cannot understand why Jesus and the church is important?

Spiritual blindness is the reason

Why would God do this?

Because He holds the right to choose who He wants in His Kingdom

Some cannot and will never see God's glory, no matter what we say, no matter how many times we say it

Seeing His Glory

John 12:41

“These things Isaiah said because **he saw His glory**, and he spoke of Him.”

Have you ever seen God's glory?

We are to reflect God's glory to the world

That is difficult to do unless we have seen it ourselves

Moses wanted to see it:

Exodus 33:18-19

“Moses said, **"I pray You, show me Your glory!"** And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.”

God is saying, “I will show My glory to those I want to see My glory!”

Peter, James and John saw it when Jesus was transfigured before them on a mountain

Close your eyes as I read from Isaiah 6

Isaiah 6:1-6

“I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. **Seraphim stood above Him**, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And **one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."** And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while **the temple was filling with smoke**. Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; **For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**" Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”

Can you picture it in your mind? -> Can you see the magnificent glory of God?

Continue with your eyes closed as I read Revelation 4:

Revelation 4:1-11

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, **a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.** Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and **day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."**

9And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.’”**

God is to be magnified and worshipped throughout the Earth

How can we proclaim Him without seeing and experiencing His glory for ourselves

He is Lord of lords -> He is the King of kings

Share words of His glory with others, church!

Every knee shall bow to Him -> every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all!

Misplaced Love

John 12:42-43

“Nevertheless, many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

Here we see the worst possible result of initial faith

Basic belief but not confession before men

Baptism is an important component of confession of your faith

It is the first opportunity to confess Jesus before men

But Paul wrote:

Romans 10:9-10

“If you **confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord** and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and **with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.**”

Paul stresses that confession with the mouth results in salvation

Believers will confess Jesus as Lord -> note, Paul does not say confess Him as Savior

Confessing that Jesus is Lord-> He runs your life -> He is the Master of your circumstances -> He controls

If you are willing to confess Jesus as Lord with your mouth, that reflects your salvation

Jesus also thought that was critical:

Matthew 10:32-33

“**Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.** “But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.””

“many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him”

There is some belief that knows that Jesus is the real deal

But these rulers were not willing to confess Jesus out loud with their mouths

Why? -> “for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue”

They chose position over the Lord – they chose financial stability over the Lord – **Sower: “choked by thorns”**

“**for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God**” -> sadly, man’s opinion was important

I’ve seen it several times -> the frozen chosen -> “I don’t want to offend anyone” -> “they might not like me”

It’s about dedication to Him -> over and above everyone else

Where are you in your life of following Jesus?

Prayer - Benediction