"BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS, AND HEART TROUBLE"

Matthew 13:9-17
2/25/2018

INTRODUCTION: V. 10

***Do you really want to see and hear?**

What is the condition of your spiritual health?

Observe the contrast of attitudes toward the truth:

I. Some want the Truth and some don't! (v. 11-12)
(The reason for parables)

II. Some don't want the Truth (v. 13-15)
(The problem of defective eyes, ears, and hearts)

III. Some want the Truth! (v. 16-17)
(The blessedness of open eyes, ears, and hearts)

CONCLUSION:

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Review the parable of the sower, seed, and soil.

Note: V. 9

The disciples knew that the multitudes did not understand the messages. Because they were concerned that their Master's words be received and that the people not miss the lessons, they question Jesus.

"Unto them" - The disciples noticed that Jesus did not speak plainly in public like He did to them, so they were curious as to the reason.

"Parable" - was an analogy taken from everyday life used to illustrate a spiritual truth. The word literally means "to cast alongside." It describes a teaching method whereby the teacher, in order to explain a truth, would place a story or example alongside of the truth in order to make the truth clear.

A parable required explanation in order for it to be rightly understood. For a particular reason, Jesus would often leave the crowd "hanging" -- that is, he would not give them the interpretation of the parable, like He would to His disciples (EX: V. 18ff).

He would speak parables in public, then would explain them in private.

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(The reason for parables)

V. 11

The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" - formerly hidden truths about God's Kingdom, which are now revealed.

"But to them it is not given" - Jesus is saying, "I am speaking in parables because it is not permissible for them to comprehend the truth I am giving."

In effect Jesus is saying that parables are given more to conceal truth than to reveal truth.

The Lord was actually being merciful by concealing the message from those who really didn't want to hear it! Reason: To hear the Truth is to become accountable for that truth. They would have heightened their condemnation every time they heard a clear presentation of the gospel yet rejected it.

The parables would either "turn some people off" or incite the interest of others who would inquire as to the meaning.

Many times we come up against a difficult passage of Scripture. It is at times like that, that we should seriously beseech God for the right interpretation.

The parables were given to:

--Stir up the interest of those who were diligent enough to seek out the meaning and
--To prevent the understanding of those who could "care less" about the meaning.

Throughout life, a person either gains or loses. He either misses out on great opportunity or cashes in. This is a law of every realm:

--It is the law of nature: "The early bird gets the worm"

--It is the law of man: Energy and effort are rewarded with productivity. Those who labor, are diligent and persistent, see, hear, and learn. They are in a position to get more and more. But the disinterested, neglectful, and lazy lose out.

V. 12

God throughout history used language as a form of judgment: Examples -

1) The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) (Gen. 11:6-8 -*And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.")*

2) Foreign languages spoken to Israel (Is. 28:11-12 - *"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.")*
Cp. Dt. 28:19-50; Is. 33:19

3) The sign gift of tongues (I Cor. 14:21-22 - *"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.")*

"Whosoever hath" - hath what?

Whosoever hath eyes willing to see, ears willing to hear, and a heart willing to accept (cp. v. 13-16).

Whosoever hath a willingness to absorb, believe, embrace, and apply the truth, Jesus says, I will give that person more truth.

In a parallel passage, Jesus said: *"Unto you that hear shall more be given"* (Mk. 4:24)

Again, He said, *"Take heed how ye hear: for whosoever hath to him shall be given. . ."* (Lk. 8:18).

Do you know who the Lord can teach? He teaches those who have a desire to learn, a hunger for truth, a zeal for spiritual wisdom. They are willing to believe and obey the truth they learn.

"Whosoever hath not" - Whoever does not have a receptive eye, ear, and heart will lose the truth they were given (this is a description of verse 4 - The unreceptive heart that would not take in the seed (*"Word"*) had the seed taken away!)

"One of the most tragic sights in all the world is to see people sitting under the most glorious message, and fall asleep or be listless, inattentive, disinterested, or willfully hardened and close-minded" (The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, Matthew, Vol. 1, p. 296).

The Lord can teach those who are faithful stewards of the truth He has already entrusted to them. (EX:" The Parable of the Talents - Mt. 25:14-30 *V. 29)

II. Some don't want the Truth (v. 13-15)

(The problem of defective eyes, ears, and hearts)

V. 13

--How does one see, yet not see?
[They saw Jesus yet did not see Him for who He was]

--How does one hear, yet not hear?
[They heard Jesus speak, but did not hear what He said]
[Their ears heard sounds, but never understood the message]

V. 14

This prophecy, given to Isaiah to forewarn him of the hardness of the people he was to preach to. He was to preach to Israel, yet they would not comprehend or know what he said.

V. 15

"Waxed gross" = lit. to thicken. It describes a callousness which results in a dullness of feeling.

Their hearts became impregnable; could not be penetrated.

"Dull of hearing" - to become hard of hearing; to become practically deaf to the truth. (ILLUS: those Jews who heard Stephen, stopped their ears - Acts 7:57).

It's a sad state to be able to hear, yet to not get the message.

"Their eyes they have closed" -

--They chose to not see the truth.
--They deliberately decided to remain spiritually ignorant.
--They of their own will made up their minds that they didn't want to see God's way.

NOTE: To ignore the truth will not change the truth. EX: Children will often play the game of blocking their eyes and thinking that you can't see them, or that you are not there.

People can avoid the Word of God and His ways in 101 different ways, yet that will not alter it or make it go away.

"Lest at any time" - for fear that something they don't want to see might slip into their spiritual vision, and they might have subsequent feelings of guilt or responsibility because of that which they saw, they keep their eyes shut.

"Converted" - to turn around; to change your direction of going away from God, to going toward Him (Is. 55:6-7 - *"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon")*

Many are afraid of being "converted." They are afraid of having to lose out on their own way. Some are fearful of giving up their sin. Some are fearful of becoming "religious."

However, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

All you lose is:

--Your present status as an "orphan" -- you become an adopted son
--Your present status as an "alien" -- You become a citizen of God's kingdom
--Your sin, guilt, and eternal condemnation (Rom. 8:1)

"And I should heal them" - They had everything to gain!

ILLUS: of someone who has the symptoms of a serious illness, but is afraid to find out what it is, or is afraid to go to the doctor.

Jesus is the Great Physician who can heal the sin-sick soul.

He wanted to remove their spiritual cancer. He wanted to replace their defective heart with a new one. He longed to give sight to their eyes and sound to their ears, but they did not want it!

III. Some want the Truth! (v. 16-17)

(The blessedness of open eyes, ears, and hearts)

V. 16

"Blessed" = fortunate

How wonderful it is to see and hear; how much more wonderful it is to see and hear the Gospel of God; to discern God's plan of salvation; to comprehend His Word

Your eyes and ears are either blessed, or they are not. The opposite of blessedness is to be under a curse.

Many saints of the Old Testament longed to see and hear the Messiah. They hoped that theirs would be the generation that would have the great privilege of welcoming the Christ. (I Pet. 1:10-11 - *"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."*)

What an awesome privilege I have had. I am so fortunate to have heard the gospel as a 16 year old boy, to attend a fundamental Bible-centered church, to enjoy a Bible college and seminary that were committed to God's Word without compromise.

CONCLUSION:
ILLUS: of Olympic athletes who had an "I want it" attitude and won!

Even believers need to search their hearts to make sure that there is an openness to receive the Word, and to make sure there are no obstacles to prevent the Word from being understood.

ILLUMINATION: THE PERCEPTION OF THE BIBLE

Illumination describes - the Holy Spirits' enlightenment of man's mind to comprehend the written Word of God.

The Bible's Teaching on Illumination:

1. Illumination is needed by the unsaved.

a. The unsaved man has a blinded mind
"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

b. The unsaved ("natural man") is without spiritual understanding.
He views spiritual things (as revealed in the Bible) as foolishness:
"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14).

2. Illumination begins at salvation.

a. Heb. 6:4 - "once enlightened"

b. Heb. 10:32 - "ye were illuminated"

3. Illumination is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit

a. The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:7-11).

b. The Holy Spirit is our guide into all truth (Jn. 16:12-13).

c. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Word only to believers (I Cor. 2:9-10)

d. The Holy Spirit reveals the "deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10)