**Spiritual Blindness Mark 8:11-26 (6/5/16)**

***What do we need in order to overcome our spiritual blindness?***

**1. Hard Hearts and Unbelief** (v.11-13)

A. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hearts: The Pharisees did not ask to understand and believe but to discredit and disprove.

B. Blinded Hearts: The more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they received the deeper into the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they would go.

* A lack of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cannot be overcome by evidence or proof if we have already made up our mind about what is true.

C. Willful Unbelief: Jesus refuses to give them further revelation and turns them over to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**2. Struggling to See** (v.14-21)

A. A Strong Warning: Jesus warns the disciples about the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ influences that harden our hearts.

B. Missing the Point: The disciples are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with worry and blame so they struggle and fail to understand.

* A hardened heart has been given God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and been shown God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but still refuses to believe.

C. A Call to Hear and See: Jesus reminds them of God’s power and faithfulness and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they begin to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**3. The Touch that Gives Sight** (v.22-26)

A. From Blind to Blurry: When Jesus touches the man he begins to see, but not clearly. His perception is imperfect and lacks clear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

B. Now I See: The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ brings everything into perfect focus, making blind eyes see clearly.

* This man experiences physically what the disciples experienced spiritually as their understanding of Christ came into focus.

***We need God to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so that we can see and understand his truth and respond in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.***

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**Discussion Questions**

* What are some reasons that all people struggle with spiritual blindness? (Eph 4:17-19, 1 Cor 2:14, 2 Cor 4:3-4). Think about your own testimony of coming to Christ. How do you see your own spiritual blindness in retrospect? How do people who are spiritually blind respond to God’s truth and revelation? Why?
* Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign? What was their ultimate purpose? What did they believe about Jesus and his power? (Mark 3:22) How does this illustrate John 3:19? Why doesn’t more information or revelation make any difference? How does that affect how we share Christ with those who are generally not open to the gospel?
* Why does Jesus refuse to give them a sign? How does this relate to Mark 4:23-25? Why does God sometimes choose to give people over to their own hardness of heart? (c.f. Rom 1). Does this mean he is not loving or gracious?
* What was Jesus warning the disciples of when he talked about the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod? What are some of the cultural and religious influences we must beware of that might harden our hearts?
* Why did the disciples completely miss Jesus’ point? What are some things we are preoccupied with that might affect our attention or understanding of God’s revelation? Why do some people develop hardened hearts? How can we avoid this danger in our own lives?
* What do Jesus’ questions teach us about our own spiritual blindness? What is the solution when we cannot hear or see the things of God clearly? Does God’s involvement mean we don’t have any responsibility?
* How does the story in 8:22-26 provide a physical example of what the disciples were experiencing spiritually? At what point did they finally see things clearly? How should that encourage us in our own spiritual walk?

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***What do we need in order to overcome our spiritual blindness?***

**1. Hard Hearts and Unbelief** (v.11-13)

A. Prideful Hearts: The Pharisees did not ask to understand and believe but to discredit and disprove.

B. Blinded Hearts: The more light they received the deeper into the darkness they would go.

* A lack of faith cannot be overcome by evidence or proof if we have already made up our mind about what is true.

C. Willful Unbelief: Jesus refuses to give them further revelation and turns them over to the hardness of their hearts.

**2. Struggling to See** (v.14-21)

A. A Strong Warning: Jesus warns the disciples about the cultural and religious influences that harden our hearts.

B. Missing the Point: The disciples are preoccupied with worry and blame so they struggle and fail to understand.

* A hardened heart has been given God’s truth and been shown God’s love but still refuses to believe.

C. A Call to Hear and See: Jesus reminds them of God’s power and faithfulness and slowly they begin to see.

**3. The Touch that Gives Sight** (v.22-26)

A. From Blind to Blurry: When Jesus touches the man he begins to see, but not clearly. His perception is imperfect and lacks clear focus.

B. Now I See: The touch of Christ brings everything into perfect focus, making blind eyes see clearly.

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***We need God to open our eyes so that we can see and understand his truth and respond in faith.***