

That the Blind May See

Acts 9:1-19

2/ 23/ 05

Intro

We met Saul last week as he was giving his approval to putting Stephen to death. Now, in chapter nine, Saul is breathing threats and murder against the church.

It seems that he is on a personal mission against the church. He has asked for authority from the Jewish leaders to make a house to house search in order to find believers in Jesus Christ. His purpose is to drag them out of their homes and bring them back to Jerusalem to face the same fate as Stephen.

You can see the hardness of his heart in that he has little regard for women; he would drag them out and have them stoned as well.

Saul is spiritually blind. God has been trying to get his attention, but Saul has refused. He has been kicking against God. He is hard of heart; no light can enter his soul.

It's good to consider the spiritual condition of our own soul. If we are spiritually blind, then know that God wants to get your attention.

These are the principles of leaving spiritual blindness and allowing the light of truth to enter our hearts.

I. Many Have Eyes But Cannot See

A. Some do not want to see

- Many people know that God is trying to get their attention, but they close their ears spiritually because they know they will have to make changes in their lives.

Illus – They are like children that hold their hands over their ears and close their eyes and starting making noises so they can't hear or see.

Revelation 3:17-18, Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

- Stephen in his famous speech called them stiff-necked and always resisting the Holy Spirit.

Acts 7:51, 53 "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did... you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

- But in the next verse it says that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. Which would you rather have written about you, that you resisted the Holy Spirit or that you were filled with the Holy Spirit?

B. God keeps sending more light

- God doesn't give up. He will keep sending more love and more light. You will either become very hard of heart or soft of heart.

John 12:37-38, 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?"

John 12:39-41, For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, “He has blinded their eyes and He has 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.

- What was God’s response to their hard hearts?
He sent His own Son as the greatest act of love.

Romans 1: 18-22 God has made Himself known

Illus – God had been trying to reach Saul. It even says of Stephen that he had the face of an angel, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the truth.

II. Open the Eyes of Your Heart

A. It begins with knowing you’re blind

- In verse 4 the Lord asks him, “Saul, Saul why are you persecuting Me?” **Why are you doing this? What’s driving you? What do you hope to accomplish?**
- In the three days of blindness that followed, he must have thought about that question many times. *Why? What was driving me?*

Illus – It was like when God called to Adam in the garden...where are you? God knew where He was, he wanted Adam to know where he was.

- Knowing that you’re blind is the first step to spiritually seeing.

Matthew 13:16, “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.”

B. Truth must be written on the soul

- To hear the truth is not enough, but it must be written on the soul for any change to come into our lives.

II Tim 3:7-8, “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth,”

Illus – It’s very interesting that the word photography comes from Greek words which mean light + written. There is an interesting parallel to Saul experience.

- Jesus became written on his soul. That was when he was changed.

Jeremiah 31:33, “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

III. Our Lives are Changed When We See

A. He is the Lord; we are not

- Saul first response was, “Who are you, Lord?”
- He immediately had Saul’s respect.

Verse 6 - “It shall be told you what you must do.”

Illus - Up to this point, Saul has done what he wanted to do. He gave the orders, now God would be giving direction.

- This is an essential part of a changed life; that Jesus be Lord.
- **We must come to the place of understanding that He has the right to be Lord.**

Luke 6:46-48, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock;”

B. Then we become His instrument

- This is the greatest purpose that brings the greatest fulfillment in life... to do what God wants you to do and to be used of God in the doing of it.

II Timothy 2:20-22, “Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

Illus – God used Ananias when He didn’t need to. God uses us accomplish His purpose; that is our greatest privilege.

C. Suffering also comes

- “I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.
- Why is that true? Because love suffers. Anyone with children knows this is true.

I Corinthians 13:7, “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

- When we follow Christ, we also follow in His love and that will cause us to share in His suffering.

Romans 8:16-17, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

Conclusion

My prayer is that we would have hearts that are soft of heart before the Lord. He desires to do great things in us, if we would only open our eyes to see.