

Everyone in the world is blind to spiritual reality.

Whether you are a non-Christian or a Christian,
Whether you're a Christ-rejecter or a Christ-receiver,
Whether you know God or don't know God,
Our humanness traps us in a world that is blind to spiritual reality.

All of us are blind, but we fall into two categories:

The blind who will never see

The blind who will be made to see.

The blind who will never see are those who reject the only One who can give them spiritual sight, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The blind who will be made to see are the ones who, embracing Jesus Christ, have Him as their eyes, their sight, their truth teacher.

Jesus, having crossed the Sea of Galilee, arriving at a place called Magadan, is confronted immediately in verse 1 by the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

They come to test Him, and they really don't want answers. They merely want to publicly discredit Him by asking Him to do a sign in the heavens, believing that He is unable to do it and thus will be discredited publicly.

She read it again and again. Until she had developed such calluses on her fingers that they no longer could sense the letters.

In a desire to have the hunger of her heart fulfilled, to read it again, she peeled the skin back off her fingertips that she might unbare a more sensitive tissue to begin again to feel.

In so doing, the doctor said she damaged the nerves and would never feel again with her fingers.

Broken-hearted with tears in her eyes, one day she picked up that Braille Bible and put it to her lips as if to kiss it farewell, only to discover that her lips were far more sensitive than her fingers had ever been. Spent the rest of her days reading it with her lips.

How hungry is your heart?

To be in that Word illumined by the resident Spirit of God?

What about that one who is blind and will never see?

To plunge into eternal darkness.

Tragic thought.

Story of a Businessmen who wrote an atheist book and his wife and daughter.

You can choose the light, or you can choose the darkness.

Conclusion.

Jesus on Emmaus Road.

Jesus opened the Scriptures and taught them, and as He had departed from them after revealing Himself to them.

Luke 24:32, *And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"*

The burning heart that comes as the Word of God is opened.

Only two kinds of people in the world:

- The blind who will never see,
- The blind who are made to see.

Those of us who pass from darkness to light, from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

I trust that you know Christ and that if you know Him, you have a hunger to know His Word is taught by His Spirit.

A little girl in **France**, and she was blind, and she was given a Gospel of Mark in Braille. She, with her fingers, began to read that gospel and came to know Christ and embraced Him as her Savior. Gospel became infinitely more precious to her.

He said to them you are hypocrites, and you can discern the face of the sky, but can you not discern the signs of the times.

He said to them only the sign of Jonah will be given to you nothing else.

The resurrection of Jesus.

Four things that are characteristic of the blind who never see.

Seek fellowship with darkness.

The Pharisees suddenly brought the Sadducees with them. The blind gathering with the blind and neither able to help the other.

People who will never see always seek the darkness. The blind will seek darkness rather than light.

They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, and coming to the light would expose the evil of their deeds.

They trouble the light.

The Pharisees and Sadducees coming to Jesus Christ was to discredit, shame, embarrass, and to mock Him.

They sought no proof.

They sought no genuine evidence.

They plunge into deeper darkness.

They were not bad at the weather, but when it comes to discerning spiritual reality, they were blind.

They just plunged deeper and deeper into their darkness.

Abandoned by the Lord.

The only sign that did come, the sign of Jonah, which was the resurrection of Christ. It didn't convince them.

They bribed the soldiers to lie about it.

He abandoned them.

We see the other group in **V5-12**, who will be made to see. Equally blind because humanness is a legacy of blindness to spiritual reality.

These are dependent on the sight given to them by One who comes alongside to help.

We find there are four characteristics of the blind who are made to see. They are the reverse of the others.

- 1. Seek the light,**
- 2. Trouble the darkness,**
- 3. Receive greater light,**
- 4. Taught by the Lord.**

¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Nothing gets me more excited than the deep things of God, and the Spirit reveals them to us, to me.

1 Corinthians 2:12, *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

You have in your hand this tremendous treasure.

You have in your life as a believer the resident truth Teacher, the Spirit of God.

As you open the pages of this Book and the Spirit of God teaches you, you find yourself plunging into the depths of the deep things of God.

Profound and exciting reality that we who know nothing, we who are stone blind can see the deep things of God.

Stay away.

Stay away from the leaven that influences you from legalism, or ritualism or ceremonialism, or rationalism, or liberalism, or secularism.

You avoid that.

Isn't it wonderful how patient the Lord was?

Jesus teaches them so patiently until they finally understood He was talking about the doctrine that the Pharisees and the Sadducees taught which corrupt their faith.

Colossian church was being threatened by liberalism, rationalism.

The churches at the Revelation, were literally put out of existence by secularism, materialism, ambition.

The Lord pleads that it not be so.

The great truth in all this passage, and the thing that touches your heart with such profound reality is the ministry that Christ has to those who are His own.

That even in our blindness,

He takes patiently the time and effort needed to teach.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10, *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

1. Seek the light.

V 5, *Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.*

The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ has been around the Sea of Galilee.

We know from this particular portion of Matthew, and He keeps going back and forth across the lake. He has just gone across, after feeding four thousand men plus women and children in Decapolis.

He got in a ship and went across to Magadan.

Arriving at Magadan, He is confronted immediately by the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Then He gets right back in the boat and goes back to the eastern shore again.

His disciples also came to the other side.

The disciples pursued the light.

They were standing at the crossroads in **V 1 -4** because they had been raised in a Jewish society. Having been raised there, they had learned to respect basically two groups of people, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

It was out of the family of the Sadducees that the high priest came.

- They were the aristocracy.
- They were the brain trust.
- They were the leadership.
- They were the rulership.
- They were to be respected and revered for that.

There was the Pharisee group.

- They were the ones who were the interpreters of the law.
- They were the religious traditionalists.
- They were the legalists.
- They were the ones mingling among the people.
- They, too, demanded the respect of people.

So, these disciples had been reared in an environment where they had learned to respect these particular groups of individuals.

When Jesus came along, He was the exact opposite to everything they taught.

Jesus talked about freedom, not law, and all the things the Sadducees denied, Jesus affirmed.

It was very clear to see that Jesus was the very opposite of them, and that is why they were so totally threatened by Him.

neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Philippians 3:20, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

Colossians 3:2, *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

We get so earthbound because we are earth creatures.

This is the reason we have to have the illuminating work of the Spirit because it's what lifts us out of this earthly thing.

Christian must be exposed to the Word of God regularly, feeding on it.

Why?

Because as you feed on it, the Spirit of God teaches you, and as He teaches you, He elevates you out of the physical dimension where you begin to take God seriously.

V 12, *Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

Matthew 6:33, *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

If God takes care of the grass of the field, God takes care of the birds He will take care of you. O ye of little faith.

If you just get up on the spiritual level, God will take care of the physical dimension.

Don't you remember that God provides physical needs?

Just get on that spiritual level.

4. Taught by the Lord to see.

V 11, *How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”*

Jesus took them where they were, and He taught them.
He comes right back and repeats the same lesson.

I am talking about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
I am trying to get your focus on the spiritual dimension.

Matthew 6:19-20, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where*

The disciples stood at a real crossroads.

They stood at a point where they either were to decide that they were going to hang onto the system in which they were reared.

They were going to identify with the darkness, or to follow the light.

They too left Magadan, left the Pharisees and the Sadducees for the purpose of following the light.

When Jesus came to the other shore, they were there!

This is always marks out someone who will be made to see!

The Scripture is replete with statements to this effect, Old Testament and New Testament.

Jeremiah 29:13-14, *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the Lord,*

Here is the seeking heart.

The word disciple, **mathētēs**, basically means learner.

They were learners.

They were following to be taught.

They sought to know the truth.

The disciples had followed Him.
They had followed Him to the light of life.

He was not a light to be seen, He was a light to be followed!

They knew well what the Old Testament prophets had said that the Messiah will come and bring light to the nations.

Psalms 27:1, *The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?*

They knew well that, and they saw in Jesus Christ the light in their darkness. They sought to follow it.

Not all of them who originally were interested in the light were faithful to follow.

In **John chapter 6**, there were many disciples there. Jesus began to speak of the real commitment which He required for a disciple, eating His flesh, drinking His blood.

John 6:66-69, *From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

So, if that was a real problem to the Lord, He didn't want them to go do that, He would just create more bread.

That is the best that their human reason could do.

Jesus gives them this lesson.

V 8, *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?"*

Why are you stuck on the physical level?

V 9-10, *Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? ¹⁰Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?*

Have you forgotten those two occasions?

The two words for baskets are different, and they are consistent with each account.

First was a Jewish word, a small basket.

Second was a gentile basket, which was larger.

Have you forgotten that if it was a physical bread problem, I could take care of that?

Why are you still on that?

If the Pharisees got the best price, buy it, as far as bread goes. If the Mormons have a store that sells cheap bread, buy it cheap.

Who you buy the bread from isn't the issue, but they are on the physical level.

They are way down there. All they can think about is that Jesus is afraid we will buy some kind of defiled bread.

This misses the major point. Because the major point in all of Jesus' teaching is it isn't on the outside what defiles you.

It's not what goes into a man that defiles him. It's what comes out from the inside because religion is internal, not external.

How could Jesus be upset and concerned that they not run off and buy bread from some Pharisee when if He didn't want that to happen?

He could just create bread like He just created enough for fifty thousand people. Both times that He created enough for the feeding the feeding of the twelve.

These were the ones who sought the light. They followed the light.

They knew they needed help in seeing.

They knew that the psalm expressed their own situation, **Psalm 119:18**, *Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.*

Psalms 119:33, *Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end.*

Psalms 119:36, *Incline my heart to Your testimonies, And not to covetousness.*

Psalms 119:73, *Your hands have made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.*

You are the One that put me together. You know what I need, now give it to me.

They knew they didn't know on their own and couldn't know, and so they sought the light!

They turned their back on the incorrigible Pharisees and Sadducees.

2. Trouble the darkness.

They turned their back on those who brought them only deeper darkness.

They are the hungry hearts.

They are the eager learners.

They are the ones who, when asked, “Will you go away?” said, “No, there is nowhere to go. You have the words of eternal life that we must hear.”

It isn't that they, by some inherent ability, are able to see on their own.

It isn't that they are any better or any different than the rest.

It is that they will pursue the light and curse the darkness instead of pursue the darkness and curse the light.

Jesus calls them many times oh you little faith.

Matthew 8. Matthew 14. Matthew 15.

Again, in **Matthew 16.**

They needed help in seeing.

They were dull.

They seemed unable, on many occasions, to receive the things the Lord was saying.

They were raised under the dominion of the Herodian dynasty, which included Herod, who ruled in Galilee.

They needed to make sure they cut that stuff off.

- Don't let the world influence you.
- Don't let legalistic religion influence you.
- Don't let liberal religion influence you.

Those are the extremes of false systems.

Stay pure.

What was their reaction?

V 7, And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.”

This is the best that human reason can do.

They had a little meeting, got all their brains together.

Because they lived on the physical level, they said that our conclusion is He said this because we have taken no bread.

They thought that Jesus is afraid we will buy bread baked by a Pharisee or Sadducee. That would be defiled bread.

Jesus is worried that because we don't have any bread, we are liable to run out, and we will buy bread from a Pharisee.

Sad, isn't it?

Beware of legalism.

Beware of ritualism, ceremonialism, externalism, where there's no heart for God.

Beware of the leaven of the Sadducees which is no resurrection.

The leaven of Herod was political ambition, materialism, and secularism.

Lord is saying to the disciples now that you follow me and you pursue the light and you curse the darkness, make sure you don't drag any of that stuff with you.

Don't take any of that leaven to leaven your new lump.

Avoid the legalism, the ritualism, ceremonialism, the externalism. Avoid the liberalism, the scepticism, the rationalism, and avoid the secularism.

In other words, He wants a pure loaf!

He was teaching them a profound spiritual lesson in very graphic terms.

Cut the cord!

Have nothing to do with that former life.

The disciples were raised to respect the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Matthew 13:10-17, *And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"* ¹¹ *He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.* ¹² *For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.* ¹³ *Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.* ¹⁴ *And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;* ¹⁵ *For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'* ¹⁶ *But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;* ¹⁷ *for assuredly, 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.*

What is amazing about that?

The fact of the matter is, they didn't understand the parable any better than the Pharisees did or the other people who were there.

Then in verse 18. He says, "Hear therefore the parable of the Sower" and He explains it to them.

The difference between the blind who will never see and the blind who are made to see is not that the blind who are made to see suddenly get some natural ability to see in their humanness, the difference is the Lord teaches those that His.

The doctrine of illumination.

When you want to know Jesus Christ go to the Word of God, you not only have the Word of God, but you have the God of the Word resident in you who opens to you the Scripture.

While the disciples were on the earth, Jesus taught them.
He taught them!

3. Receive greater light.

Jesus taught them and He knew they were dependent on that teaching.

Repeatedly Jesus told them, “Don’t you yet understand? Have I been so long with you, and you still don’t know who I am?”

Jesus patiently taught them.
That’s the difference.

We were all blind, but those who are made to see are made to see because sovereignly, graciously, the Savior teaches.

From the bread of Egypt, don’t take a piece to start the bread of the of the new people of God in their new land. Don’t do that. Cut that thing off.

The unleavened bread symbolized that.

Leaven came to mean influence.

It mostly means evil influence.

Although, in some cases, could mean a good influence. A permeating influence.

You need to beware of the permeating influence of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Mark 8:15, *Then He charged them, saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”*

What is the leaven of the Pharisees?

Luke 12:1, *In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy.

It is phony religion, externalism without the heart, legalism, ritualism, ceremonialism. Everything on the outside, nothing on the inside.

What you really need to be concerned about is not whether you have physical bread, but whether you are being influenced by the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What is this idea?

Leaven, when you made bread, you took a piece out of the lump of dough before it was baked, and you put it aside. It fermented and became sour, and then you put it into the next lump. It fermented or caused a yeast reaction, and it causes the bread to be large and so forth.

We know how it works.

Yeast or a leavening.

Leaven then came to mean influence, something held over from the past applied to the present.

That is why, when Israel left Egypt, they were not allowed to have leavened bread.

God was saying to them.

Don't take anything that you knew in Egypt out and put it into your new lifestyle. That's in the past. Cut the cord. There is nothing of that that you need. Don't bring any influence from that part of your life.

When the Lord anticipated leaving, He wanted to teach them so much, and so He taught them.

Even after His resurrection He was with them for forty days and taught them.

Acts 1:3, *to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

Jesus just kept opening their eyes, letting them see.

Jesus kept opening their ears, letting them hear.

Jesus kept opening their heart and letting them understand.

Because it was so important that they have all this truth.

John 14:26, *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

When Jesus goes away the Father will send Him, and the process will continue unbroken.

Because we are dependent on that.

John 16:12-13, *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak*

on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Jesus was saying that I am going to teach you until I am gone. When I go, the Father will send the Spirit, and He will take it up.

A great promise.

The promise is given to the one who seeks the light, that he will be given greater light because not only will he be given the Word of God, but he will be given the Spirit of God, indwelling, to teach.

A marvellous intimacy in that concept that we are not sort of taught in a big classroom. We are not a big gang of people.

As I am articulating to all of us, the Spirit of God is working in and applying and elucidating in the heart of each one of us in the most marvellous intimacy of commitment as He is our resident teacher.

1 John 2:20, *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.*

1 John 2:27, *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

The Lord's encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees is fresh in His mind, and he wants to warn these men.

Why?

Because Jesus is going to be gone, and they are going to be on their own.

For a period of time between His death and resurrection when they scattered and flew all over the place. They are going to have to go out and bear the message.

He warns them about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, trying to get them off the physical level onto the real issue, which is the bread that they are dispensing, not the physical bread.

Worry about the church today because it's so physical.

We worry about what we wear, what we look like, our hair looks like, kind of car we drive, and we worry about all the clothing, and we worry about the shape of our bodies.

We look at people and judge them by how they appear.

The disciples were down on that physical level where most of us live most of the time, and Jesus wanted to lift them.

We can tell a mature disciple because he is one whose reactions and whose interactions, perceptions, and perspectives are on that divine level.

The Lord just takes this opportunity with their preoccupation with not having bread as a point to teach them profound truth.

V 6, *Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."*

What is Jesus saying?

They were worried about bread.

The Lord uses that as an opportunity.

Don't be concerned about bread but be concerned about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Get up on a spiritual level. We are facing a tremendous crisis. Christ now is months from the cross only, and He wants them educated spiritually.

One day without food isn't a major problem. Most of us live on physical realm all the time.

We are very physically oriented.

We tend only to see the physical things.

We don't have that spiritual sight, even though we are redeemed people.

We are all wrapped up with the resident truth Teacher, the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5, *And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

We see that not only does the resident truth Teacher speak to us in our hearts, but He speaks to us through the voice of His spokesmen.

1 Thessalonians 1:5, *For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*

We are taught by the teachers whom God has empowered with His Spirit uniquely to teach and by the resident truth Teacher dwelling within us.

We are led to greater understanding and greater light.

We can pursue the riches of the truth of God as we open His Word because of the Spirit's ministry.

Let us see how the Lord used this occasion to teach these dull disciples' greater truth.

V 5, *Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.*

They forgot to take bread.

This is important because in those days, there were no fast-food restaurants. It's not easy in the wilderness to get the right kind of thing to eat.

So, they needed to plan ahead on that.

They had failed to do that.

They may have left a little hurriedly after the confrontation with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark 8:14, *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat.*

That would be like one flat cracker.

That would not be enough to handle these twelve apostles and the Lord Himself.

They were very concerned because they had forgotten to take bread.

They functioned only on basic physical level. They are just like us.

They are in the presence of God Himself, who has just created enough food to feed fifty thousand people in the last few weeks.

- Five thousand men plus women and children in the in the Jewish area.
- Four thousand men plus women and children in the gentile area of Decapolis.

They have just had massive miracles of reproduction of food. They get to the other side, and they say, "we don't have any bread."

Really on the physical level and seeing only the physical need.

The Lord takes every one of their extremities as a divine opportunity to teach truth.

Do you want to know how you make a disciple?

You reproduce a disciple.

You build someone to maturity by getting alongside of them.

Walking through life. Interpreting life in terms of its spiritual significance.

Taking the struggles, the anxieties, the situations, the happenings of life on a day-to-day basis and interpreting them on a divine level.