SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS (John 9:13-34)

A. John 9 is about a blind man who could see, & sighted people who were blind.

1. Chapter 9 is about a kind of sight that is more important than physical sight, & a kind of life that is more important than physical life (John 6:39-40, 51, 57-58, 63).

B. When you have an eye exam you are given a glaucoma test to see if you have the signs of that disease, which can result in physical blindness.

1. Well today, we want to examine the signs of spiritual blindness.

2. What keeps people from being able to “see” Jesus as the Son of God & Savior of men.

3. What keeps people from being able to “see” to Truth as it is clearly stated in the New Testament.

[How do we recognize spiritual blindness? What are the symptoms or signs of unbelief? If we can identify those signs then we can take measures to treat them, which will prevent us – or someone else – from stumbling in the darkness of sin.]

I. UNBELIEF EXALTS HUMAN LOGIC ABOVE GOD’S WORD (9:13-17)

A. Jewish logic or “tradition” prohibited most activities on the Sabbath, e.g., even medical treatment was forbidden unless a life was in danger.

1. So when Jesus made the clay to put on the man’s eyes, He violated Jewish logic.

2. Regardless of what God’s law said about the Sabbath, Jesus contradicted their logic.

B. Spiritual blindness is characterized by those who place their logic above God’s word.

1. It seemed logical to King Saul to make the burnt offering (1 Sam 13:11-12).

2. It seemed logical to Naaman to wash in the rivers of Damascus (2 Kgs 5:11).

3. It seems logical to many people to accept Darwin’s theory of the evolution of man & the Big-Bang theory of the origin of the universe (cf. Gen 1, 2; Mark 10:6).

4. It seems logical to many churches to do things for which there is no NT authority.
a. To worship with instrumental music because it was used in the Old Testament (Col 2:14).

b. To build organizations that tie together the work of local churches (Eph 4:11).

c. To add social programs to the spiritual work of the church, which is to spread the gospel & edify the saints through teaching God's word (Eph 4:12).

d. But the word of God teaches that God will only be with us when we follow the “traditions” set forth in the NT by the apostles (2 Thess 2:15; Phil 4:9).

5. It seems logical to many that the reason (or mode by which) you are baptized is not important.

a. But the word of God teaches that baptism is for the remission of past sins, & it is for those who hear & believe the gospel, & it will lead one toward eternal salvation in Christ Jesus (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet 3:21; Gal 3:27; Eph 5:23).

If human logic does not become subservient to Divine Wisdom, the word of God, then it will result in spiritual blindness.

II. UNBELIEF LOOKS FOR REASONS TO REJECT TRUTH (9:18-23)

A. The Jews couldn’t deny that a miracle had been done, & so they looked for a reason to reject this truth.

1. Their reason: “Maybe this man never was blind.”

2. And they were so intent on proving it - that they called in his parents to testify, which didn’t help their case.

3. The parents’ attitude was not one of love for their son & joy over his healing, but a pathetic timidity & fear of men.

   a. Their reason for rejecting the truth was their fear of being “put out of the synagogue.”

B. Spiritual blindness is characterized by those who look for reasons to reject God’s word.

1. The top reason people reject God’s word is their fear of the consequences of accepting the truth: family, friends, and occupation.

   a. But Jesus took away that fear by placing before us a greater fear (Matt 10:28).

[People who look for reasons to reject the truth are suffering from spiritual blindness (unbelief).]
III. UNBELIEF IS PREJUDICIAL (9:24-25)

A. These Jews were prejudiced against Jesus before He ever restored this man’s sight.

1. They said, “We know that this man is a sinner”.

B. Spiritual blindness is characterized by those who will not change their minds even when presented with the facts.

1. Prejudice is often something learned (racial).

2. It takes a person of high moral character to change his mind about Jesus, His word & His church when that person has been fed lies (& vise versa).

[This formerly blind man didn’t allow himself to be bullied into spiritual blindness by accepting the prejudices of others.]

IV. UNBELIEF HEARS ONLY WHAT IT WANTS TO HEAR (9:26-29)

A. These Jews didn’t want the responsibility of what they were hearing, so they stopped listening.

1. From that point on, the only thing they could hear was that which agreed with their plans.

B. Spiritual blindness is characterized by those who will only listen to the truth with which they agree; they don’t want all of the truth.

1. People don’t usually want to accept something that is going to turn their whole of world upside down.


b. And this once blind man was willing to accept the high cost of being the Lord’s disciple. He said to his detractors, “Do you also want to become His disciple.”

[Those who suffer from spiritual blindness live by the principle of hearing only what they wish to hear.]

V. UNBELIEF DISMISSES WHAT IT CAN NOT EXPLAIN (9:30-34)

A. The Jews cannot defend their prejudice, so they excommunicate the formerly blind man.

[Everyone who is spiritually blind will eventually come to this point; he or she will cut off everyone who reminds them of the truth of Jesus Christ & His teaching.]
CLOSING

A. Now that we have discussed the signs of spiritual blindness, what is the cause?

1. For the Jews, was it a lack of evidence? No.

2. Was it that someone failed to present them with the truth in a loving manner? No!

3. In every case of unbelief (spiritual blindness) the cause is internal to the person who does not believe.
   a. They are in a test of wills against God, & sadly, they will lose that contest.

B. The real tragedy of spiritual blindness is that one can reach a point where they are blind to their own condition.

1. That was the case with these Jews.

2. That is the case of anyone who closes his heart to something clearly taught by Jesus or His apostles.

C. Peter said, “The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

1. But Jesus is not going to MAKE a person willing.

2. The Lord is NOT going to give spiritual sight to those who do not wish to see.

3. He is the “light of the world”, & only those follow Him can avoid the “darkness” & have “the light of life” (John 8:12).

4. At the beginning of this lesson I mentioned that if you or someone you know is spiritually blind, then there are steps that can be taken to prevent it.
   a. The preventative measure is to come to the light & do the truth (John 3:21).
   b. Talk to those who have been walking in the light for most of their lives & ask them if they would ever have chosen another path.

WHERE ARE YOU TODAY?

- Are you walking in the light OR the darkness?
- Are you standing with the once blind man OR his parents?
- Are you standing with Jesus OR in the Jewish leaders?
- Are you following the Savior, as His disciples were, OR are you pretending that He doesn’t exist?
- From John chapter nine, the Lord Jesus Christ calls you this day to decide whether you want to see or remain in your blindness.