

Spiritually Blind 2

by Anton Bosch

Spiritual blindness is a result of God's judgment, and it can be prevented by being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, obedient to the Word and Spirit, and willing to listen to correction and criticism.

Scripture: Romans 11:21

Topics: "Spiritual Blindness", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes that spiritual blindness can be a result of pride, selective vision, or God's judgment, as seen in the case of Israel's rejection of God's word. He warns that just as God blinded Israel for their rebellion, He can also blind the Gentiles if they reject His Word. The sermon highlights the importance of being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, obedient to God's Word, open to correction, and continually praying for God to open our eyes to see the truth.

Transcript

Many people are spiritually blind because of pride or because they choose to see only what they want to see. But the scariest reason people cannot see is because they are under God's judgment! That's right - the reason they cannot see is a clear sign of the worst kind of judgment any person can fall foul of - God imposed blindness.

When the disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables He replied by quoting Isaiah 6:9-10 (Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39). This must be a very important quote because it appears in every one of the Gospels as well as a few other books. This is how Jesus quoted the verse in John: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them" (John 12:40).

In case you find that difficult to understand, allow me to paraphrase: "God blinded them so that they could not see or understand." But why does God do that and is it fair? God blinded Israel because they had continually rejected God's word until the Lord gave up trying to reveal Himself to them and caused them to be blinded. Blindness is God's judgment on a rebellious and disobedient people.

We all know that God has rejected Israel and turned to the Gentiles (for a while). He did so because Israel rejected Him. But now He warns that we Gentiles need to be careful because if God dealt so severely with His own people, then He will be equally severe with us, who had no claim to His promises to begin with (Romans 11:21). (The quote from Isaiah 6 appears Romans 11 also.) The warning to us is that if God

could blind Israel, then He can, and will blind the Gentiles also, if they do not receive and obey His Word.

That is exactly why some people, even Christians, just don't get the message no matter how much you explain it, or try to convince them that they need to change. They have been blinded and are under God's judgment. That is a terrible place to be. There are two major forms of God's judgment: His chastening and His judgment. We can see this in operation in Israel, but also in the New Testament. As long as God is chastening someone, there is hope as He is trying to bring them to repentance and to change. But there is no hope when He gives up on them and no longer chastens or even speaks to them.

There is no more hope for people like that, because once God ceases speaking to them, and the Holy Spirit no longer convicts them, they have no way of repenting. They cannot repent because they see no need for repentance - they are perfect in their own eyes. Jesus spoke in riddles and parables precisely because He did not want the Pharisees to hear or understand and when He gave the interpretation, it was only to the disciples (Matthew 13:13-17).

Just as the Pharisees sat in judgment of Jesus and condemned everything He said and did, so modern Pharisees stand in judgment and criticize those believers who are being obedient to the Lord and His Word, thinking that they are the ones with the "light". Sadly, nothing can open their eyes. Even seeing Jesus die and rise from the dead was not enough to open the eyes of the Pharisees and nothing that you say or do will ever open the eyes of those who have been blinded by God.

Trying to convince them that they are in darkness is a waste of time since they will think you are totally crazy. Besides, anything you do to try and open their eyes works against God and will not succeed. All we can do for people like that is to pray that the Lord will have mercy on them to open their eyes. God alone can reverse the effects of this terrible form of judgment.

But, let me also warn you to be careful how you judge. It's easy to see the splinter in someone else's eye and the judgment with which we judge will be applied back to us (Matthew 7:2ff). At the same time, we have all come across people who are clearly stumbling in the dark, thinking they can see when they clearly cannot.

This also needs to be a warning to each of us, to be careful lest we find ourselves in this kind of darkness and judgment. There are a few things you can do to prevent this from happening to you.

First, we need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Because every time we resist the convicting voice of the Spirit, we become a little less sensitive to Him and a little more blind. The Spirit did not depart from Samson the first time he played with sin, but gradually, he became less sensitive to the difference between right and wrong and a little more arrogant and self-sufficient until he could no longer see temptations and traps for what they were.

Second, we need to be obedient to every prompting of the Word and the Spirit. Disobedience leads to a hardening of our hearts and a decreasing ability to see spiritual issues for what they really are. Maybe you've seen those TV programs about people's houses that are a filthy mess and wondered how that ever happens. People's houses become a disaster area because they turned a blind eye to the small messes. Eventually they learn to not see the small messes as well as the big mess that is growing around them. In the same way, people learn to look past the small sins in their lives and when those accumulate and become bigger sins, they are well practiced in not seeing the mess their lives are in. This is sometimes a slow process but it's results are disastrous.

Third, we need to be willing to listen to correction and criticism. Don't just assume that criticism does not apply to you, but take it to the Lord and ask Him if there is truth in it. If so, then repent immediately. When we ignore the small warning signs, it becomes easier to ignore the bigger ones also. When we cultivate a habit of shrugging any and all correction off, we soon find ourselves unable to hear or see those messages the Lord sends our way through our brothers and sisters. Treat every criticism as a potential warning from the Lord and discard them only once you have prayed and made absolutely sure that there is no truth in it. Otherwise what happens is, we develop a knee-jerk reaction to reject criticism without listening to it or, even to attack the messenger whenever the message does not please us.

Finally, pray continually that the Lord may open your eyes that you may see even those things you do not want to see.

"Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him" (Matthew 20:32-34).

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