

Our Lord in the Parts of Dalmanutha and in Bethsaida Matthew 16:1-12

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon explores the spiritual lessons from Jesus' interactions with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the healing of a blind man in Bethsaida.

Scripture: Matthew 16:1

Topics: "Spiritual Blindness", "Faith and Understanding"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who, despite witnessing Jesus' miracles, demanded further signs, revealing their hardened hearts. He contrasts this with the healing of a blind man in Bethsaida, illustrating how faith and the gradual revelation of truth lead to spiritual sight. Torrey warns against the 'leaven' of false doctrine and encourages believers to recognize the signs of the times and the sufficiency of Christ's resurrection as the ultimate sign. He highlights the importance of understanding spiritual truths and the need for divine intervention in overcoming spiritual dullness. Ultimately, the sermon calls for vigilance against formalism and skepticism in faith.

Transcript

(Compare Mark 8:10-21; Mark 8:22-26)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. An Evil and Adulterous Generation Seeketh for a Sign, Matt. 16:1-4 What was the attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees toward one another? (Acts 23:6-8.) In this lesson what do we see them combining to do? What led two parties so hostile to one another to combine their forces? What was the constant attitude of the Pharisees toward our Lord? (9:11; 12:14; 15:1, 2; 22:15, 34; 27:62, 63.) What was the attitude of the Sadducees toward Him? (22:23.) With what other hostile party did the Pharisees combine on another occasion to entangle Him? (22:15, 16.)

What was now their purpose in asking Him to show them a sign from heaven? What did they mean? Did they ask a sign from Him on any other occasion? (12:38, 39; Mark 8:11-13; Luke 11:16, 29, 30.) Had He already given them any sign that He was the Messiah? Why then did they ask a further sign? Have we any sign from heaven today that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God? (Acts 2:33; 5:32.) How did this demand of the Pharisees affect our Lord? (Mark 8:12.) Why did He sigh deeply? How did He answer their

demand?

How was this an answer? Are there any today who can read the signs in the physical world but who are blind to the signs in the spiritual world? Who can never understand spiritual things? (1 Cor. 2:14.) What were the signs of the times to which He referred? What abundant signs of the times had He given them? (Matt. 4:23; 11:5.) What did He say that their demanding a sign showed them to be? Are there any today who demand a sign? (1 Cor. 1:22.) What is sign enough to a real seeker after truth?

Had He ever told them on any other occasion that seeking after a sign was itself a sign of an evil and adulterous heart? (12:39.) What was the only sign that they should be given? What did He mean by the sign of Jonah? (12:39, 40.) Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ a sufficient sign from heaven to prove His claims? What does it prove? (1 Peter 1:21, R. V.; Acts 2:24-36; 17:31; Ro. 1:4; 4:25; 1 Cor. 4:14; Eph. 1:18-20.) Having refused their demand for a sign, what did He do?

Why? (Matt. 7:6; compare Gen. 6:3; Hos. 4:17; Acts 18:6.) Does He ever leave men today? (Heb. 13:8; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Ro. 1:24, 26, 28.) What is the worst misfortune that can befall any man? (Hos. 9:12.) 2. Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, vv. 5-12 Where did our Lord and His disciples go? (Mark 8:13.) What did the disciples forget? What did He say to them? What did He mean (vv. 11, 12)? Is leaven ever used in the Scriptures of anything good? (Ex. 12:15-19; Lev. 2:11; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9.)

In what way is leaven an expressive figure to describe false doctrine? What was the leaven of the Pharisees? (Luke 12:1; Matt. 15:1-9, 11-18; 23:13-26.) What was the leaven of the Sadducees? (22:23; Acts 23:8.) Are formalism on the one hand, and rationalism on the other hand, things against which the church and the individual believer need to be on their guard today? Did the disciples understand His words? What did they think He meant? Did they often misunderstand His words?

When at last did they come to understand? (John 16:12-14.) How alone can we understand? (1 John 2:20, 27.) How did He know that they said among themselves: "We took no bread"? (John 2:24, 25; 6:64; 16:30.) How much that we reason in our hearts does He know? (Heb. 4:13; Rev. 2:23.) What does this prove Him to be? (2 Chron. 6:30; Jer. 17:9, 10.) What did He call His disciples? (Compare 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Mark 16:14.) Of whom might He well say it today? What memory might have relieved them from all anxiety about their having no bread?

What memories might relieve us from all anxiety in apparent need? By thus rebuking them what did our Lord show? (3:19.) What does He show when He rebukes us? What searching question did He put to them? (See first eight words of v. 11, R. V.; Mark 4:40; John 8:43.) Has He ever occasion to put that same searching question to us? 3. The Healing of the Blind Man Near Bethsaida, Mark 8:22-26 What other instance in the life of our Lord occurred near Bethsaida? (6:45; Luke 9:10; John 1:43, 44; Matt. 11:21.)

Did the blind man come to Him of His own accord? Why not? How did those that brought him show their earnestness? What did they ask our Lord to do? What was their thought in asking Him to touch him? Did His first touch heal this man? Did His mere touch ever heal? (5:27-29; Matt. 8:3, 15; 9:29.) Why did not His mere touch heal in this instance? What did He do more than merely touch him? Can we dictate to our Lord just how He will exercise His healing power? What did He do with the blind man?

Why? (7:33-36.) Did He use spittle on any other occasion in healing? (7:33; John 9:6, 7.) Would the mere spittle have opened the eyes of the blind man? How did the healing of this man differ from most of the

cases recorded in the Gospels? Of what is the gradual opening of his eyes an illustration? (Prov. 4:18; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Cor. 13:9-12.) Of what was the opening of his eyes a proof? (Is. 29:18; 32:1-3; Matt. 11:3-5.) How did he see at last? What did our Lord forbid him to do? (See R. V.) Why? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus Christ

(1). His nature:

Divine, 8; human, 23.

(2). His office:

The Messiah, 23-25.

(3). Characteristics:

Compassionate--even upon the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mark 8:12); on the blind, 22-25.

(4). How He was treated:

Hated by the Pharisees and Sadducees, 1; sought out by those in trouble, besought to help when all human help failed, 22.

(5). What He did:

Refused a sign to those who shut their eyes to the signs already given, 3, 4; sighed deeply over the spiritual blindness of men, Mark 8:12; finally gave up those who persistently refused to see the truth, 4; read men's thoughts, 8; warned the disciples to take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees--formalism on the one hand and skepticism on the other, 6; rebuked the spiritual dullness and little faith of His disciples, 8-11; avoided notoriety, took by the hand, laid His hands upon the blind man, 23; laid His hands upon the blind man's eyes, 25; restored his sight gradually, 23-25; did not perform all His miracles by the same method, 22, 23.

2. Pharisees and Sadducees

Hated Jesus Christ so bitterly that they forgot their hatred of one another in their hatred toward Him, demanded a sign from heaven when already there had been abundant signs, 1; could discern the face of the sky but could not discern the signs of the times, 3; a wicked and adulterous generation, given up by the Saviour, 4; their doctrine corrupt, 6, 12.

3. The Disciples

Their forgetfulness, 5; dullness of apprehension, 7, 9, 10, 11; little faith, 8.

4. The Blind Man at Bethsaida

Blind, could not come of himself to our Lord, brought by others, his friends besought our Lord for him, 22; taken by the hand by our Lord, had His hands laid upon him, 23; at first saw dimly after He laid His hands on him, 24; completely restored and saw every man clearly when He laid His hands upon his eyes, 25.

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