

Luke 11:33

by W.F. Anderson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of a generous spirit and the dangers of spiritual blindness, highlighting the need to cultivate love and compassion for others in order to see and follow Christ's teachings.

Duration: 32:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:14, Luke 11:33-36

Topics: "Parable Ministry", "Spiritual Light"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the use of parables in the preaching of the word of God. He explains that parables are not just illustrations, but they teach truth and bring light. He draws a parallel between Jesus' parabolic ministry in Mark chapter 4 and the lamp metaphor used in Luke chapter 11. The preacher also emphasizes the importance of generosity and open-heartedness, using examples from Deuteronomy and Romans. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to be mindful of the light within them and to let it shine brightly.

Transcript

Too much religious activity, you know. It kills your spirituality. Let's turn this morning, I'm going to do something a little different from what I've been doing at least, as far as looking at people in trouble.

Primarily because I'm in trouble this morning. Let's turn to Luke chapter 11. Begin reading in verse 33.

Luke chapter 11 and verse 33. No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body.

When your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light, but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful, lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be holy bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.

I'm sure you immediately recognize that our Lord has used, even when you die, you'll be the late Naomi Cole. All these people come in late and then start ordering the meeting, you know. I'm not even sure the Lord is working at 7.20 in the morning in a meeting.

Well anyhow, for those of you who wandered in just now, we were reading from Luke chapter 11 beginning at verse 33. And our Lord on more than one occasion uses this figure of a lamp set on a lamp stand. And as Don Cole has already mentioned in one of his studies, in the Sermon on the Mount, our

Lord talks about his disciples as light and uses the figure of a lamp and also of a city set on a hill, which you cannot hide at night.

In Mark's Gospel he uses that same figure to talk about his own parabolic teaching, that the parables of our Lord were not designed to obscure truth, but to teach it. Now they may not have been as obvious at the moment as a plain statement, but the parables were designed to teach truth. They are not just illustrations of truth, they teach truth and they are light.

And our Lord's parabolic ministry in Mark chapter 4 is likened to a lamp. Now he's using it in a different way, the same figure of speech here in Luke chapter 11. He's really using it of himself and who he is and the revelation of God that comes through our Lord Jesus.

You're also aware that this particular figure of speech that our Lord uses here occurs in the journey of our Lord from Galilee to Jerusalem to die. And Luke's Gospel gives us the largest account of that journey of any of the Gospels. It actually begins in the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel, the journey from the northern province of Galilee down to the southern province of Judea.

And it was our Lord's last journey there to go to the cross. Mark's Gospel, for instance, covers the whole thing in one chapter. Our Lord is talking about the revelation that comes through him as a light.

And if you think about a Palestinian home in the first century, usually a one-room affair, and everybody is crowded into this one room at night, and if the master of the house, the lord and master, who is obviously the husband, lights the lamp, he's not going to put a cover over it. It either goes in a niche in the wall or on a table that is designed for that purpose, a stand. So that everybody in the room gets the benefit of the light.

They can see because of that light. Now, if he lights that lamp and no one sees, there are only two possible explanations. Either he has covered the light or the people are blind.

One or the other. And our Lord is saying about his own self-revelation, who he is. He is like that light.

And he did not come into the world and throw a cover over himself so that people couldn't see. If people do not see who he is, the fault is not in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, but in the people whose eyes are blinded. And that's exactly the situation that has arisen here.

And what I'd like to do is go back and see how the blindness, particularly the religious leader, shows up in this section and then see what our Lord has to say about their eyes, why they can't see. And it may say something to us about our own approach to the truth of God as we have it in the scriptures. Now, just to save a little bit of time, in this same eleventh chapter, without going back beyond the eleventh chapter for the moment, go back to verse fourteen.

Now, he was casting out a demon that was dumb. When the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke and the people marveled. But some of them said he cast out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, while others sought to test him.

While others to test him sought from him a sign from heaven. Now, here's the miraculous ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. And there are people who see this, who see the effect, who see people delivered.

Their conclusion is that he has that power from Satan. Now, you're aware of how our Lord answers that. But then Luke says there are others testing him, asking for a sign from heaven.

Now, the word sign that has to do with our Lord's miraculous ministry indicates the significance of what he is doing. What is revealed by what he is doing. And they are asking for some evidence from heaven that will signify that he is really from God.

Now, I think you can see immediately why they are asking for a sign from heaven. Everything he has done miraculously, they have ascribed to Satan. Now, they are saying, give us a sign from heaven.

You've given us some from hell. Now, give us one from heaven. If you want to authenticate yourself as the son of God, as you claim, then show us a sign from heaven.

Now, it's obvious that our Lord will go on to say there isn't any kind of a sign you can give to people like that. No matter what he did, they can ascribe it to Satan. I really don't know what they were expecting when they asked for a sign from heaven, but something unmistakable that would assure them that God was testing this one as his son and the Messiah.

Now, I'm going to go a little further in the chapter. Verse 29. When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, this generation is an evil generation.

It seeks a sign. But no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. Now, as our Lord expands on that in Matthew's gospel, it refers to his own resurrection.

But as you could say, in the 16th chapter of the same gospel, they won't believe if one rose from the dead. And people in that condition, it doesn't matter what kind of a sign you give, they are not going to believe. The problem is not that the light isn't clear.

The light is clear. The problem is in the eye of the beholder. And for people like this, there isn't anything you can do that is going to convince them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Now, why is that? What's wrong with their eyesight? Well, here is the light clearly shining in our Lord Jesus Christ, and these people cannot see it. He hasn't covered it. They are blind.

Let's look at one of the things he says here about the eye. In verse 34, the Lord says, Your eye is the lamp of your body, and when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light. But when it is not sound, and I want to look at those two expressions, when your eye is sound, and when your eye is not sound.

Now, the same word, sound, is used in various other contexts in the New Testament. I'm going to need some help here, primarily because I'm too lazy. Now, how about one of you fellows turning up James chapter 1, in verse 5-4.

Who's got that? What? Don't brag, just look it up. Are you going to take James 1-5? All right, hold on. Then I need somebody to take Romans 12-8.

Romans 12-8. Okay, Brang. And then 2 Corinthians chapter 9, verses 11 and 13.

2 Corinthians 9, verses 11 and 13. Anybody? Okay, fine. Now, listen carefully to what these verses say, because the same word translated here, when your eye is not sound, or when your eye is sound.

Now, we're beginning with that word sound. A healthy eye is the idea. But what is a healthy eye? We'll find it as we see how this word is used in other contexts.

All right, let's begin with that passage in James, shall we? If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God to give it to all men. All right, now that word translated generously in that translation is the same word here, when your eye is sound. I love that passage.

The basic idea of the word is originally full. It's like a piece of cloth that's unfolded. And when a piece of cloth is unfolded, there isn't anything hidden in it.

And when God gives, that's the way he gives. There are no second thoughts, no hidden motives. It's absolutely open and generous.

He never says, maybe I gave too much. Maybe I shouldn't have done that. He never gives grudgingly.

When he says he gives generously, there's no hidden grudge in his heart when he gives. And in this particular context, he never reproaches. He doesn't belittle us.

He doesn't scold us. But he gives generously. Now, that word generous is the same word we've got here.

Okay, let's go to that Romans 12a passage. All right, when he talks about giving, he that gives, what's the word he uses with that, Brant? Liberality. Or simplicity.

That's the idea of being unfolded, not being folded over. No hidden motives. We are to give, not grudgingly.

We are to give with liberality. Just the way God gives. All right, finally, let's take that passage in 2 Corinthians 9. All right, that word shows up twice in those verses.

And in that translation, both times, generosity. Generosity. And the sound I is the generous I. Maybe it's not clear yet, but let's go look at the other side of it.

And that's the evil I, as the King James has it, or this translation has it, the unsound I. Now, these are such delicious passages, and I'm going to turn to them myself, and I want you to read along with me, all right? Now, let's go back to the book of Deuteronomy. And it's chapter 15. Deuteronomy chapter 15.

And let's begin reading at verse 7. And we see in this picture that the sound I is the generous I. Now, that may not make any sense yet, but it may as we look at the contrast of the evil I. And this is the expression that the Greek translators of the Old Testament use in the passages we're going to be reading now. Deuteronomy chapter 15. Let's begin with verse 7. If there is among you a poor man, one of your brethren, in any of your towns within your land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart but shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.

Take heed, lest there be a base thought in your heart, and you say, the seventh year, the year of release is near, and your eye be hostile, there's the expression, your eye be evil, to your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and it be a sin in you. You're aware of the situation. Every seventh year was the year of the release of all debt.

And here is a wealthy Jewish man whose poor neighbor comes to him and needs to borrow money. And of course the wealthy man has plenty to give, but then he starts to calculate. He says, well this is the sixth

year, next year is the year of release.

If I lend him that money now, it's very unlikely he's going to be able to pay it off in a year, and that's the year of release and the debt cancels and I've just lost the money. And the poor neighbor, no, I won't give it to you, I won't lend you that money. If it had been the first year, if they'd just had the year of release previously, you'd figure out, well, he's got six years to repay, he's a pretty good worker, I'm sure in six years he can repay and I won't lose anything, therefore I'll give to him.

And that calculation, that attitude of thinking of myself, what am I going to get, what am I going to lose, chapter 23, that covers the same idea. Let's begin with verse 1, Proverbs chapter 23 verse 1, When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. I don't suppose you ought to do that right at the table, it would be awfully messy.

But now listen, Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food. Do not toil to acquire wealth. Be wise enough to desist.

Now he doesn't want you to get your heart set on wealthy things, because now he's going to go on to describe this kind of a wealthy guy that you've gone to eat with. He says in verse 6, Do not eat the bread of a man, now how does the King James have that next expression, how does he describe that man? Do not eat the bread of a man with an evil eye. Now this translation says, Do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy.

That's the idea. Do not desire his delicacies, for he is like one who is inwardly reckoning. Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you.

Now, here you've been invited to a nice big meal at this solid house, and because you know he's wealthy you haven't eaten for three days before the invitation, and you sit down there and he's got steak on the table or whatever it happens to be that night, and he says, go right ahead, eat all you want. But every time you reach over there and stab another steak, he's got a computer going in his mind, and he remembers what that thing cost him at the checkout counter at the grocery store, and he says, oh, yikes. And what he's telling you is eat what you want, but in his heart, he really doesn't mean it.

He's thinking of what it is costing him for you to enjoy yourself at his expense. That's a man with an evil eye. And the idea of having an evil eye in scripture is to be a selfish individual, to calculate everything in terms of what it will cost me.

That's the man with an evil eye. A man whose world centers around himself. A man who cannot see the needs of other people, and therefore cannot reach out and touch those needs.

Now, it seems to me what our Lord is saying is the reason those religious leaders cannot see who he is because they were basically selfish, and the light was hidden from them because they didn't know anything about love. Do you remember in the Council of the Sanhedrin when they finally decided to put Jesus to death as they discussed the whole matter? One of the considerations is that if we don't get rid of this man, the Romans are going to come, and what are they going to do? They're going to take away our place. It's him or us.

We'd lose if this man prevailed. No wonder they couldn't recognize who he is. Well, of course, the disciples had the same problem.

Their problem in recognizing who Jesus really was, and it took them two and a half years, by the way, before they came to Peter's Great Confession, their problem in recognizing who Jesus really was was that concept of the Messiah they had, of the glorious Messiah setting up a political kingdom in which Israel would be the head of Israel. And one of the interesting things to trace in our Lord's public ministry with His disciples is this conflict that goes on between the Lord and His disciples. They are always trying to bring Him around by their way of thinking.

You know, they're trying to straighten the Lord out. Hey, OK, you may be the Messiah, but you've got some wrong concepts about what it is to be the Messiah. We've got to train you.

And they were particularly horrified when He talked about going up to Jerusalem to die. And He said, well, do you know what the Messiah is supposed to do? And then it shows up when Peter finally says to the Lord, look, we have forsaken everything for you. What's in it for us? What do we get out of it? And when James and John, along with their mother, come to the Lord and say, we want the chief seats in the kingdom, one on the right hand and one on the left.

Now, man, I don't want to get onto that subject, but when they were talking about one on the right hand and one on the left, before there would ever be thrones on His right hand and on His left, there would be a cross on His right hand and on His left. And they weren't looking for that. But it's because of that basic concept of what's in it for us that they really couldn't see the light that was shining.

Now, this shows up in these chapters very quickly. Well, you're familiar with this material, so I won't have to take a lot of time to do it. Back in chapter 10, verse 25, you hold a lawyer stood up to put him to the test saying, teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And then you know the story that comes out of it.

Our Lord says, you know what the law says. And what was the lawyer's response when they got down to love thy neighbor as thyself? What was his response to that? Who's my neighbor? Why do you ask the question, who's my neighbor? When the law says, love your neighbor as yourself, why would you ask the question, who's my neighbor? Yeah, I don't want to face reality. I don't want to face illusion.

But what's the direct thinking here? Who is my neighbor? What's he trying to do with this? Love your neighbor as yourself. Who do you really do that? It's going to cost you plenty. Man, I want to put some restrictions on this.

Let's narrow this down. That could be too expensive. And then our Lord gives the story of the good Samaritan.

And I don't know any parable that's more perverted than the parable of the good Samaritan. And one of the reasons I like to pervert it is what I like to do is make the good Samaritan the Lord. And I like to make the poor guy that's been robbed the sinner.

I like to make the whole thing a parable of salvation. And that neatly lets me off the hook. That is not what the parable said.

How does our Lord end up that parable to that liar? What's his instruction to the liar? Go and do thou likewise. Now did it cost that Samaritan to show compassion for that poor beaten robbed man? Well, he risked his life in the first place. How did he know the robbers wouldn't come down on him? And then it cost him to put that man at the inn and he pledges whatever future cost it will take for that man's well.

And our Lord says go thou and do likewise. By the way, if the Lord shows up in that parable anywhere, it seems to me he's going to show up in the poor beaten and broken man. That would be the Lord inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren but you remember the priest and the Levite who passed by.

They represent the ritual holiness of the law and they could ignore the man in the ditch. It seems to me what our Lord is saying as he will say in the 11th chapter is love is the real holiness. Not being separated from all these people and things like the priest and the Levite were who couldn't contaminate themselves if they were going up to Jerusalem to perform their services.

Real holiness is love. Verse 37 I'm going to try to hurry because I can hear breakfast calling. While he was speaking a Pharisee asked him to dine with him.

So he went in and sat at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. That's not a matter of cleanliness.

That's ritual purity. It's not a matter of getting the germs off your hands. It's a matter of getting spiritual defilement off because you've been out touching Gentiles and things that Gentiles have touched and then you touch food with those ceremonially unclean hands and you put that food in your body you are unclean and God rejects you.

And our Lord didn't go through the little ritual that the Pharisees went through and I take it he did it deliberately. It's not something he forgot. It's something I take it he deliberately did.

Now I take it this Pharisee was honest in his invitation to the Lord. He was just surprised that our Lord would not go through this. It's not a matter of ritual purification.

Now our Lord says to him in verse 39 By the way it might not be as comfortable to have the Lord at your table as you think it would be. I thought of that at the Lord's table by the way. If he's really there it might not be as comfortable as we make it.

So while they're at table and he's a guest in this man's house he says now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. Now how would you like that for a dinner conversation? What is extortion? Got another translation there? You are full of extortion robbery which is what extortion is only it's done not with a gun or with a knife there are nice little legal ways to do it. Well maybe not exactly legal but there isn't any violence so that you can maintain your reputation while you commit robbery.

And he said you're full of extortion. Now why do you commit robbery? Why does anybody commit robbery? Selfishness, gain unless the man is in real need it's a matter of accumulating things for myself and that's what the Lord says about the Pharisee. Now why in the world couldn't the Pharisees recognize that Jesus is the Christ? Well I don't like this kind of dinner conversation if I'm a Pharisee to begin with but if I'm operating on the principle of getting what I can out of life and he's operating on the principle of giving everything he can in life then how in the world am I going to recognize him as the Messiah? They lived on two totally different principles he came to give and they lived to get and there's no way that the two can get together.

Now listen to what he says as he goes on here. You fools did not he who made you don't talk to your dinner host that way you fools did not he who made the outside make the inside also?

Now notice what he says but give for alms those things which are within that is the contents of the dishes give for alms and behold everything is clean and again he is saying true holiness is love what you Pharisees need to do is learn what it is to give let me suggest to you therefore that the reason why these religious leaders could not recognize him as the Messiah is because they didn't know anything about love and they couldn't recognize love when they saw it let me suggest further that if that is not my basic approach to life I am going to misunderstand the scriptures and I am going to misuse them and I don't want to take time to go into all the ways in which we I couldn't say all the ways in which I misuse the scriptures simply because my basic approach to life is not one of love

and therefore I can neatly sit in front of the scriptures and calculate with them and lay out their teaching and outline everything and lay out the program of the future according to dispensational interpretation of the scriptures and never be affected by it because my approach to life is not one of love and I look down on poor ignorant Christians who haven't had the benefit of the teaching that I have had and the years of study I have had but who like our Lord Jesus go about doing good I think they see the scriptures correctly one more passage and then I will finish this helps me understand something in 1 John 1 John chapter 2 and then I want to come back to another passage in 1 John 1 John chapter 2 verse 7 Beloved I am writing you no new commandment but an old commandment which you had

from the beginning the old commandment is the word which you have heard yet I am writing you a new commandment which is true in him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining he who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still he who loves his brother abides in the light and in it or in him there is no cause for stumbling but he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes what is it to walk in the light here? to walk in love and a lot of our problems in life of course as all of us know are caused by our basic selfishness some of our discussions about how far can you go helping people when you have to think of your

reputation all that tells me is I am not walking in love I am concerned not about that individual but about what people think about me and that's why I get into the complication of trying to decide that question because I haven't learned what it is really to love that's why I stumble around in darkness that's why so much of the word of God is dark to me that's why when I go to the prophets for instance all I can see is a scheme for the future and all the great moral lessons listen prophecy is always primarily moral always excuse me I feel very strongly about that but it wouldn't be difficult to show that from the scriptures and when I go to the prophetic scriptures and all I can do is construct a scheme for the future event I have missed the whole thrust of prophecy and the reason I have

missed it is because I know so little about love now let's go back to chapter 1 of 1 John verse 5 this is the message we have heard from him to proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all God is pure love there isn't one hidden fold in God where he keeps his grudges so that someday he does not act in love toward people God is light there is no darkness in God at all now what's the key to our fellowship if we walk in the light not in the amount of truth that we have that's not what he's talking about is light if we ever learn what it is really to love other people we'll have fellowship one with another and we'll have fellowship with God because God is love and perhaps in my own life as with those Pharisees the reason I really don't recognize him and the reason that I

can play with the scriptures is because I have never learned what love is the light the lamp has been lit the light is shining but if I've got an evil eye I can't see it help us our Father to walk today in the simplicity of

love and in its generosity in its lack of self-calculating how we thank you you did not sit down and calculate whether or not the cross is worth it but there was the generous outpouring of your own life for us Lord deliver us from being such calculating creatures but to learn what it is to love and to give generously as you yourself have done we pray in Christ's name Amen

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