

# Are We Blind Also?

*John 9:39-41, "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."*

Powerful words recorded here by our Lord! Yet, do we ever stop to think that we need to hear these words as well? Although it was the Pharisees that asked the question, "Are we blind also;" I believe that in our present circumstances, this is the question we must ask ourselves. We must take a moment to ponder this as those who are genuinely and sincerely concerned for the future of the church, and the "peace of Jerusalem."

There is much concern amongst many in our day that we have become a proud people. We seem to have become proud of our traditions, our doctrines, etc. It is our nature to say, "we see, because we are God's special people who are affiliated with this church group or that denomination." The point that must be addressed is this: Did our church fathers establish these traditions in pride? Did they not rather establish them in humble submission to God, and in obedience to his Word?

We too need to see this necessity to be humbled before God, who shows such mercy to preserve his truth amongst a people most undeserving. The blind man in John 9 received not only the ability to see with the physical eye, but also with the eye of faith. Just as the blind man, we must make it a constant prayer of ours that we may receive spiritual sight as well; whether it be as individuals, or as those who are members of the body of Christ. The ones who are given sight are those who sit as beggars, confessing their blindness and pleading that God will open their eyes. On the contrary, the ones who point the finger and lay heavy burdens on others are the ones whose sin will remain on them. These remain in darkness!

The well-known parable of the Pharisee and the publican was directed at certain which "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." The true believer is the one who at the end of the day sees all his wretchedness, his depravity, and the sin which he is still inclined to, and comes before the throne of grace trembling in holy fear. This man will only be justified if he looks outside of himself, his traditions, his social status, etc. for righteousness, and sees the blood of Jesus as his only covering, and his only hope for eternal life. His cross may not be replaced by tradition!

When trust is placed in tradition and the commandments of God are neglected, this is bound to cause division in the church. “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:13-18).

There is definitely a place for traditions in the life of the believer. I also refuse to minimize the countless efforts that our church fathers applied to establish these traditions designed to teach their covenant children in the fear of the Lord. The true focus must remain on God’s establishment of the covenant of grace, and God’s power to preserve his covenant in the line of continued generations. There is an increasing danger prevailing in our day to act as if man establishes this covenant of grace with God, making demands of the covenant that are contrary to the Scriptures’ teaching on the covenant. It’s God’s covenant, and we are exceedingly grateful that he does what he will with his own covenant!

We see that the kingdom of God is near with evidence of generations who are not properly taught in God’s fear, but rather are given certain standards to follow and “left to themselves.” Amos 8:11 sets forth what we can see happening in churches around us, and also serves as a warning for us. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” I remember a sermon that I heard a while ago on this text by Prof. Decker. One statement he made that sticks in my mind is, “Don’t say, DON’T YOU DARE SAY, that this famine cannot happen to the Protestant Reformed Churches!” He went on to explain that we would still hear the gospel with the physical ear, but the famine would be a lack of understanding or discernment of the Word.

This is the frightful judgment that we can see descending on the church as we approach the end of time. We must take heed that while we are shouting our “Amen’s” when denouncing the wicked errors of the Federal Vision, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics, etc. that we don’t become hardened when this Word of warning and admonition comes at us. As many as Christ loves, he “rebukes and chastens.” All praise be to God for his chastening love!

So we see that we are exhorted to love the commandments of God! What are those commandments? They are summed up by our Lord in this, “Thou shalt love the Lord,

thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!” If these are obeyed, we will see the blessings of it in our generation. “And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isaiah 54:13). If we ourselves live in obedience, then teaching our children to obey the law of God will be easier because the testimony of our lives will show them how to live. Great peace will be upon Israel, as generations live in faithfulness to God’s covenant! Man’s additions to God’s established covenant only lead to the “confusion and every evil work” that James spoke of in the passage that was previously quoted.

Whatever church you are affiliated with, consider this your “wake-up call.” As we preach the gospel and instruct our children, we must always point to Christ and his love for us. After his resurrection, Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep. That is our calling as well in the office of believer. When we speak, whether it be for the purpose of rebuking or edifying the church, God’s sheep must hear the voice of their Faithful Shepherd.

Love your God! Love the church of God! Live out your calling to be “ready to give an answer.” As believers we must “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Timothy 4:2-5). Although Paul gave this advice to Timothy in regards to his work as a pastor, we are admonished in this passage as prophets, priests, and kings to be faithful witnesses of the “things that we have seen and heard.” When we heed this call, we will see God’s covenant blessings prevail in the church, and God will not be ashamed to be called our God.

Christ will not have his church, his covenant bride, long for other lovers and “reject the commandment of God, that ye (she) may keep your (her) own tradition” (Mark 7:9). He purchased her! He saved her from the wrath of God and from hell itself, and gave to her eternal life! No man, no institution can frustrate God’s purpose in salvation!

What a comfort!