

July 11, 2021

Eyes To See And Ears to Hear But Do Not Understand

By Everett Hardin

Jesus spoke of the heart and its function in Matthew 13:14-15; “*Therefore speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at anytime they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them.*” These people refused to exercise their own power of understanding, because they did not want to know the truth. God gives light; but if a man blinds himself, God does not force that one to see. There is a penalty for none use of the powers which God has given us. “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48).

The prophet Isaiah was commissioned to go and preach a message that Israel would refuse to hear and heed. “*Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and ye see indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed*” (Isa. 6:9-10). The people will hear this prophet’s words, which should accomplish one end but will result in another. What could and should produce repentance and salvation will end in total apostasy. The Lord knows what the reaction will be. The hardening will be complete; and it will, in fact, be accomplished by preaching that is designed to save. The hardness of heart, dullness of ears, and blindness of eyes will lead to total destruction.

Jesus applied this prophecy of Isaiah to the people of His day, who refused to accept His teaching. They had witnessed great miracles, but the sight did them no good; they were as much opposed to Jesus as they were before they witnessed the miracles. They had heard the plainest offers of mercy, but were deaf to them. God gives light, but if a man blinds himself, God does not force that one to see. Notice that the Lord said he would heal those who would be **converted**. In order for one to be converted he must **understand** with the heart. No man can be healed (saved from his sins) unless he is converted (changed), and no man can be converted unless he understands with his heart (believes). But in order for one to understand he must **hear** with his ears and **see** with the eyes. This is the way of perceiving truth which enables him to believe and repent. One closes his eyes and stops his ears when he refuses to accept the testimony of truth into his heart. Why do some not see the truth?

A Failure to Consider One’s Own Life

Jesus taught that a son obtained his portion of an inheritance from his father and went into a far country. There he wasted his substance in riotous living until he found himself in dire want and no one would give unto him, “*and when he came to himself...*” He had lost sight of all that was good, reasonable and just; he had lost sight of his better nature and the virtues of righteous living. His eyes were blind to all that was good, his ears were deaf to wise counsel, and the appreciation of the better things of life was lost. Not until he “*came to himself*” did he see his real condition. That is the predicament of those so enmeshed in their corrupt manner of life that

they cannot and will not see their “self problem,” and therefore they will not listen to anything that relates to it.

Envy and Jealousy

Envy and jealousy are not of God, they do not advance the cause of Christ. It is “*earthly, sensual, and devilish*” (Jas. 3:14-15). Vine describes it as, “*The feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others.*” Envy and jealousy actually destroy their possessor. “*Envy is a rottenness of the bones*” (Prov. 14:30). Cain envied Abel and hated and killed him (Gen. 4:3-8). Envy threatened the life of an innocent Joseph and caused him to be sold into slavery (Gen. 37:11). Saul envied David for his success and hunted him down like an animal (I Sam. 18:8,9,29). It was envy that platted the crown of thorns for the brow of the sinless Son of God and nailed Him to the cross. Pilate “knew that *“for envy they had delivered him”* (Matt. 27:18). Members of the church can be envious of one another. The one talent man may be envious of one with greater ability. One may envy a brother who receives just recognition and praise. We may envy another for the appointment he received or responsibility given. Envy is the daughter of pride and the mother of hatred, vengeance, murder, and other sins which taint the soul. We can be free of envy if we consider the havoc it wrought in Bible days, and the destiny of the envious.

The Riches and Cares of This World

Jesus taught that some will hear the word of God, but “*the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and they become unfruitful*” (Matt. 13:22). Their present problems with this world blind them to the true riches and blessings of the Lord. “*They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition*” (I Tim. 6:9).

Jesus spoke a parable about a certain rich man who prospered greatly. He took great care to provide for his wealth and then said to himself: “*Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*” (Luke 12:19). This is precisely what millions are now doing. God said to this rich man: “*Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided*” (Luke 12:20). Prostitution, gambling, robbery, and the sale of dope and alcohol all continue on the increase by those who are absolutely blinded to the moral and spiritual destruction done to the human race. How do we account for it? The explanation is the love of money blinds men to the truth. They can see, but they will not see.

Hardness of Heart Makes One Blind

Hardness of mind is a condition that blinds the mind because will not allow information, true or false, to come into the heart. A hard heart may be produced by a number of things, but usually it is the result of continuing in sin even though the sin is known. “*Harden not your hearts, as in the day of the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness*” (Heb. 3:8). “*But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*” (Heb. 3:13). Sin is deceitful because it promises us pleasure and happiness, but its rewards are misery and death. To “*Harden the heart*” is to disobey God and act in accordance with one’s own desires rather than the will of God.

Prejudice Makes One Blind

Prejudice is the lock on the door of a closed mind. It is an enemy of information and progress. Webster defines it as “Preconceived judgment or opinion, and opinion or learning adverse to anything without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge.” Prejudice is a blight upon mankind. It has never caused anything but strife, bitterness, and division. Each of us should pray to rid ourselves of such an attitude, and pray that it be eradicated from the hearts of men. Naaman was prejudiced thinking the prophet Elisha would deal with him in a certain way. Nathan was prejudiced when he thought no good thing could come out of Nazareth. Both overcame their prejudice to receive blessings. The people of Nazareth were prejudiced, refusing to honor a prophet from their own country. They lost the presence of the Son of God.

It is important to each of us to use our eyes and ears to see and hear what the Lord made known to us if we expect to be blessed by Him. We must be informed with regard to the facts in the lives of others and deal with them as the Lord teaches us to do so. We must be willing to see ourselves as we really are if we are to correct our lives so that we can go to heaven when time is no more for us. When man rejects the truth and defends himself in opposition to it, they arm themselves with countless errors and falsehoods. Their minds can get into such a state that the truth doesn't benefit them. May God help us to never let this happen to us!
