

**Dealing with Spiritual Blindness, Part 2**

Scripture: Matthew 16:5-12

Code: 2316

Let's look together at the Word of God, and take your Bible and look with me at Matthew chapter 16. We are now in the 16th chapter of Matthew. We are looking at verses 1 through 12 in our study and dealing with the theme spiritual blindness. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the very beautiful campus of the famous McGill University in Montreal, a very historic place; and could that campus speak, no doubt it would have many great tales to tell throughout its history; but none seems to me to be more touching than the story of Thomas Steward.

Thomas, as a young man, accidentally thrust a knife into his eye while working and lost his sight. He went to the doctor, and the doctor feared that he might also lose the sight in the other eye, and so felt it best to remove the damaged eye. When the operation was completed, and Thomas was recovering from the anesthetic, it was discovered that the surgeon had removed the wrong eye and left him totally blind for life...Undaunted in his spirit, Thomas determined still to pursue a course of law at McGill University, even though blind; and for four years attended that University in pursuit of that degree. He graduated; and when he graduated from McGill, he graduated No. 1 in his class; and the marvelous part of the story is that graduating No. 2 in his class was his brother, William, who for four years...had accompanied Thomas to every class, read to him all the necessary books, written for him all the necessary papers, been his very eyes; and the testimony of Thomas is that, without William, he never would've learned what he learned.

Well, I think in much the same way we have been blinded; and we desperately depend upon someone coming alongside to help us. Else we cannot see, and that is the marvelous work of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who, through His Holy Spirit enables those who are blind to see; and I think our text gives us a graphic illustration of that...for in verses 5 to 12, at which we look today, we see the Lord coming to the very blind, very dull, very imperceptive disciples...and by His sight, enabling them to see what they otherwise could never see.

Now, remember what we said last time. Everyone in the world is blind to spiritual reality. Everyone. Whether you're a non-Christian or a Christian, whether you're a Christ-rejecter or a Christ-receiver, whether you know God or don't know God, our humanness traps us in a world that is blind to spiritual reality. Now all of us, then, are blind; but we fall into two categories: the blind who will never see, and the blind who will be made to see...The blind who will never see are those who reject the only One who can give them spiritual sight, the Lord Jesus Christ. The blind who will be made to see are the ones who embracing Jesus Christ have Him as their eyes, their sight, their truth-teacher.

Now, remember, that we looked at the first four verses last time? And we met the blind who will never see? Jesus having crossed the Sea of Galilee, arriving at a place called Magadonis confronted immediately in verse 1 by the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who come to test Him; and they really don't want answers. They merely want to publicly discredit Him by asking Him to do a sign in the Heavens, believing that He is unable to do it and, thus, will be discredited publicly. He said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'Fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'Foul weather today, for the sky is red and overcast.' Oh, ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can you not discern the signs of the times?"

In other words, He says, "You see the weather fairly well, but you are utterly blind to spiritual reality. There have been enough signs to make it patently obvious who I am." And so He says in verse 4, "'A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.' And He left them and departed."

Now, here are the blind in illustration who will never see; and we pointed out four things that are characteristic of the blind who never see. First, they seek fellowship with the darkness. We've only seen the Pharisees alone, really, up to this point; and now, all of a sudden, they have brought with them the Sadducees; and so we see the blind gathering with the blind and neither able to help the other.

Mark it, people who will never see always seek the darkness; and, as we said last time, men seek darkness rather than light. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, and coming to the light would expose the evil of their deeds. And so the first mark of one who will be blind permanently is that he continues to pursue the darkness.

Secondly, we noted that they also cursed the Light. Their whole intent in coming to Jesus Christ was to curse Him, to discredit Him, to shame Him, to embarrass Him, to mock Him. They really sought no sign to legitimize Him. They sought no proof. They sought no genuine evidence, only the discrediting of the One who was such a threat to their religious security.

And the third thing we noted about them is that they only plunge into deeper darkness. The Lord says to them, "You're not bad at the weather," and they had their little saying, you know if the sky is red at a certain time, it means a certain thing; and that's traditionally still true, that little saying. And He says, "You're not bad at the weather, but when it comes to discerning spiritual reality, you're stone blind." You see, with all of the signs, they just plunged deeper and deeper into their darkness.

Then the fourth characteristic of one who is blind and will never see, he is abandoned by the Lord. The Lord says, "I'll give you no sign," and even the only sign that did come - the sign of Jonah, which was the resurrection of Christ -- didn't convince them. They actually bribed the soldiers to lie about it;

and then it says, "He left them and departed," introducing a new Greek word which means He abandoned them; and so the fourth characteristic, they are abandoned; and so those who are blind and will never see are so because they run from the only hope, you see.

Thomas Hobbs, the famous English philosopher of the 17th century, was totally a godless person, an atheist, a Christ-rejecter; and his biographer describes his death in these words. "When the atheist Hobbs drew near to death, he declared loudly, 'I am about to take a leap into the dark.'" ...Voltaire...the French atheist who openly mocked God felt the stroke which he realized would terminate in his death. He was overpowered with grief. He called in all of his unbelieving friends; and his biographer says, "He cursed them to their faces, and he loudly repeated, 'Begone, begone, it is you that have brought me to my present condition. Leave me, I say, begone. What a wretched glory is this which you have produced for me.'" The writer says that, "He hoped to allay his anguish by a written recantation of his unbelief. He had it prepared. He signed it, and saw it witnessed; but it was unavailing. For two months he was tortured with such an agony as led him at times to gnash his teeth, in impotent rage against God and man, and at other times in plaintive accents, he pleaded, 'Oh, Christ, oh, Christ, oh, Lord Jesus,' and then, at last, he turned his face and cried, 'I die abandoned by God and man.'" No wonder Jesus called hell outer darkness. It is near... it is merely the perpetuation of a life that never sees spiritual reality, because it never embraces the light.

Now, having accomplished the study of those things last week, let's look onto chapter 16 verse 5, and see the other group who will be made to see. Equally blind, because humanness is a legacy of blindness to spiritual reality, these are dependent on the sight given to them by One who comes alongside to help; and we find there are four characteristics of the blind who are made to see, and they are the reverse of the others. Those who are made to see seek the Light, curse the darkness, receive greater Light, and are taught by the Lord.

First of all, those who are made to see seek the Light. Look at verse 5. "And when the disciples...His disciples...were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread." Now, lemme picture the scene for you, if I might. The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ has been around the Sea of Galilee, as you now know from our weeks and months in this particular portion of Matthew; and He keeps going back and forth across the lake. He has just gone across, after feeding 4,000 men plus women and children in Decapolis. He got in a ship and went across to Magadon, and in...in arriving at Magadon, He is confronted immediately by the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The incident occurring in the first four verses happened; and then He gets right back in the boat and goes back to the eastern shore again.

And He is followed, and it's important to note this, as always, by His disciples. It says, "His disciples also came to the other side." And here you find the first mark of one who really will come to see. He seeks the Light. The disciples pursued the Light. Now, they were standing at the crossroads, in a very real sense, in verses 1 to 4; because they had been raised in a Jewish society; and having been

raised there, they had learned to respect basically two groups of people -- the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It was out of the family of the Sadducees that the high priest came and all of his entourage. They were the aristocracy. They were, in many ways, the brain trust. They were the leadership. They were the rulership, and they were to be respected and revered for that.

In addition, there was the Pharisee group; and they were the ones who were the interpreters of the law. They were the religious traditionalists. They were the legalists. They were the ones who...who mingling among the people brought to bear upon the people a heavy yoke of bondage of laws and rules and traditions; and they, too, demanded the respect of people, even to the point where people were to call them by certain titles. And so these disciples had been reared in an environment where they had learned to respect these particular groups of individuals; and when Jesus came along, He was the antithesis to everything they taught. He talked about freedom, not law; and all the things the Sadducees denied, Jesus affirmed; and so it was very clear to see that He was the very opposite of them; and that is why they were so totally threatened by Him.

The disciples, then, stood at a real crossroads. They stood at a point where they either were to decide that they were gonna hang onto the system in which they were reared, and they were gonna identify with the darkness, or they were gonna follow the light. And if we can bring that whole concept down to this very simple little trip, it's clear to us to see that they, too, Magadon, and left standing in Magadon the Pharisees and the Sadducees for the purpose of following the light; and when Jesus came to the other shore, they were there, too; and that's what marked them out; and that's what always marks out someone who will be made to see. He seeks the Light.

The Scripture's replete with statements to this effect, Old Testament and New Testament. "If you seek Me with all your heart, you shall surely...what?...find Me." And so there is the seeking heart, and here we see it noted in these particular disciples. The word disciple, mafaytase, basically means learner. They were learners. They were following to be taught. They sought to know the truth...The disciples had followed Him, and they had followed Him to the Light of life. He was not a light to be seen; He was a Light to be followed; and they sought that Light. They knew well what the Old Testament prophets had said: that the Messiah will come and bring Light to the nations. They knew that the Psalmists had said, "The Lord is my Light and my salvation." They knew well that, and they saw in Jesus Christ the Light in their darkness. They sought to follow it.

And it was not necessarily so with all of them. Not all of them who originally were interested in the Light were faithful to follow. In John chapter 6, there were many disciples there; and then Jesus began to speak of the real commitment which He required for a disciple: eating His flesh, drinking His blood, and all of that; and it says, "From that time, many of His disciples walked no more with Him." And He said to the ones who remained, "Are you also gonna go away?" To which Peter replied for them all, "To whom shall we go? Thou, and Thou alone hast... what?...the words of eternal life." You see, these were the ones who sought the Light. They followed the Light.

They knew they needed help in seeing. They knew that the Psalm expressed their own situation, Psalm 119 verse 18. "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." You see, they knew they were blind, as the Psalmist knew he was. In verse 33, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes." In Psalm 30...119:36, "Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. Establish Thy Word unto Thy servant." And then verse 73, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding." In other words, "You're the One that put me together. You know what I need. Now give it to me." In other words, they knew they didn't know on their own and couldn't know; and so they sought the Light as the Psalmist had said. They turned their back on the incorrigible Pharisees and Sadducees, and that takes us to the second point.

They cursed the darkness. They made their choice; and in seeking the Light, they cursed the darkness. They turned their back on those who brought them only deeper darkness. They are the hungry hearts. They are the eager learners. They are the ones who, when told, or asked, "Will you go away?" said, "No, there's nowhere to go. You have the Words that we must hear." And so they followed; and that's the way it is with the people who are made to see. It isn't that they, by some innate ability, are able to see on their own. It isn't that they're any better or any different than the rest. It is that they will pursue the light and curse the darkness instead of pursue the darkness and curse the light.

Now, it's interesting to note at this juncture that the disciples, indeed, needed help in understanding. I suppose if we could come up with a proper name for them, we could call them the O Ye of Little Faith Association. Jesus gave them that speech on several occasions. We hear Him give it to them in Matthew 8. We hear Him give it to them in Matthew 14. It's basically given to them again in Matthew 15, and it'll be given to them again in Matthew 16. They needed help in seeing. They were pretty dull. In fact, we...we could assign them the Charles Schultz moniker of blockheads. They seemed unable, on many occasions, to receive the things the Lord was saying.

Go back to chapter 13 for a moment, and I'll remind you of a passage we studied some months ago. Verse 10, the Lord had given the parable of the sower and the seed and the soils; and of course He closes the parable...parable by saying, "If you have the ears to hear, then listen." In other words, "If you can understand this, if you've got spiritual hearing capacity, then hear it." And the disciples came to Him, and they said, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" Or maschalls, veiled sayings, riddles, things that aren't clear on the surface. "Why are You doing this?" And He said, "It's because it's given to You to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it isn't given." In other words, "I'm saying these things because God never intends to give His truth to those who cannot receive it."

And down in verse 15, He says, "Their heart is gross. Their ears are dull. Their eyes, they've closed, and there's no reason to waste truth on them. There's no sense in throwing your pearls to the swine."

But verse 16, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which you hear, and have not heard them." And you know what's amazing about that? The fact of the matter is, they didn't understand the parable any better than the Pharisees did or the other people who were there.

When He says to them, "It's given unto you to know these things," they must have been saying to themselves, "Well, I mean we don't understand it either." But the point is then in verse 18. He says, "Hear therefore the parable of the sower," and He explains it to them. You see, the difference between the blind who will never see and the blind who are made to see is not that the blind who are made to see all of a sudden get some innate ability to see in their humanness. The difference is the Lord teaches those that His. That's the difference.

And this brings us into the marvelous doctrine of illumination. That when you, who know Jesus Christ, go to the Word of God, you not only have the Word of God, but you have the God of the Word resident in you Who opens to you the Scripture... And a marvelous truth that is. You see, while the disciples were on the earth, Jesus taught them. He taught them, and that's our third point in those who are made to see. They receive greater Light. Jesus taught them...and He knew they were dependent on that teaching. I mean over and over again He says to them, "Don't you yet understand? Have I been so long with you, and you still don't know who I am?" It seemed as though they were in a remedial state continually, but He patiently taught them.

That's the difference. We're all blind, but those who are made to see are made to see because, sovereignly, graciously, the Savior teaches them. When the Lord anticipated leaving, He wanted to teach them so much; and so He taught them and taught them; and even when He died and rose, and then He was here for forty days, Acts 1 says, "All those forty days, whenever He was with them, He taught them things pertaining to the Kingdom." He just kept opening their eyes, letting them see, opening their ears, letting them hear, and opening their heart, and letting them understand, because it was so important that they have all this truth. And even when He left, you remember as He gathered with them in John's Gospel chapter 14 verse 26, He said this. "Now, I'm gonna go away; but the Comforter who is the Holy Spirit, who is sent from the Father in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance."

In other words, He says, "When I go, the Father will send Him, and the process will continue unbroken," right? Because, you see, we're dependant on that. In chapter 16 of John's Gospel and verse 12, the Lord reiterates the same idea. He says, "I have yet many things to say, but you can't bear them." Like feeding a baby, there's a point at which you have to stop. You can't just keep shoveling it in; and they couldn't absorb it all; and so He says, "I can't tell you everything. Nevertheless, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth. He shall not speak of Himself, but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and show you things to come and glorify

Me and receive from Me and give it to you," and so forth.

In other words, "I'm gonna teach you till I'm gone; and then when I go, the Father'll send the Spirit, and He'll take it up." Oh, this is a great promise. The promise is given to the one who seeks the Light, that he will be given greater Light, because, not only will he be given the Word of God, but he'll be given the Spirit of God, indwelling, to teach.

Beloved, there's a marvelous intimacy in that concept that we are not sort of taught in a big classroom. We are not a big gang of people. That I'm up here talking to a large number of people. But the marvelous reality is that the truths that I am articulating to all of us, the Spirit of God is working in and applying and elucidating in the heart of each one of us in the most marvelous intimacy of commitment as He is our resident teacher. That's why 1 John 2 says in verse 20, "You have an anointing from God who teaches you all things; and verse 27, "You have an anointing and that anointing comes from God so that you need not to hear human teachers teaching human wisdom; for the anointing from God is in you and abides in you and teaches you all things; and you abide in Him."

You're all wrapped up with the resident Truth Teacher, the Spirit of God...In 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 4, Paul says to the Corinthians, "My speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power." In other words, "When you hear Him speak...he says...it isn't human wisdom you're hearing. It's the Word of God and the power of the Spirit coming to you." And so we see that not only does the resident Truth Teacher speak to us in our hearts, but He speaks to us through the voice of His spokesman. And Paul says to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 5, "When our Gospel came unto you, it came not simply in human strength, but it came in the power of the Holy Spirit." And so we are taught by the teachers whom God has empowered with His Spirit uniquely to teach and by the resident Truth Teacher dwelling within us; and so we are led to greater understanding and greater Light. What a great promise that is...Great promise. We can pursue the riches of the truth of God as we open His Word because of the Spirit's ministry.

Now, let's look and see how the Lord used this occasion to teach these dull disciples greater truth. Verse 5, they forgot to take bread. They forgot to take bread. Now, that's important; because, in those days, there were no fast food restaurants. It's not easy in the wilderness to get the right kinda thing to eat; and so they needed to plan ahead on that; and they had failed to do that. They came across, I think maybe they may have left a little hurriedly after the confrontation with the Pharisees and Sadducees. By the time they got to the other shore, Mark 8:14, the comparative passage says, "They looked around and found one bread cake," which would be like one flat cracker; and that would not be enough to handle these twelve apostles and the Lord Himself; and so they were very concerned because they had forgotten to take bread.

Now, this'll tell you what level they functioned on, right? The basic physical level. They're just like us. I mean here they are in the presence of God Himself, Who has just created enough food to feed 50,000 people in the last few weeks...5,000 men plus women and children in...in the...in the Jewish area; 4,000 men plus women and children in the Gentile area of Decapolis. They have just seen massive miracles of reproduction of food. They get to the other side; and they say, "Oh...we don't have any bread."...Really on the physical level, aren't they? Seeing only the physical need.

But now you learn one of the greatest lessons in all discipling. The Lord takes every one of their extremities as a divine opportunity to teach truth. You wanna know how you make a disciple? You don't really make a disciple by having twelve lessons on discipleship you just dump on 'em. You really reproduce a disciple. You really build someone to maturity by getting alongside of them, walking through life, and interpreting life in terms of it's spiritual significance. That's how you make a disciple. It's taking the vicissitudes, the struggles, the anxieties, the situations, the happenings of life, on a day-to-day basis, and interpreting them on a divine level; and you can tell a mature disciple, because he is one whose reactions and whose interactions and perceptions and perspectives are on that divine level.

And so the Lord just takes this opportunity with their preoccupation with not having bread as a point to teach them profound truth. Verse 6, "Jesus says to them, 'Take heed,'" orahtayin the Greek. It means to see. "Open your eyes, guys. Open your eyes and beware...and that implies danger...beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

Now, what is He saying? They're worried about bread...and the Lord uses that as an opportunity. He is saying to them, "Look, don't be concerned about bread bread. Be concerned about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." In other words, "Get up on a spiritual level. I mean we are facing a tremendous crisis." Christ now is months from the cross only, and He wants them educated spiritually. One day without food isn't a major problem. "Get off that mundane level of the physical," and most of us live on that all the time. I mean we really sort of...some of you, and I'm not even done with my sermon, and you've already sort of salivated over your lunch...or you've been tasting your pancakes and bacon again. I mean we're very physical. Or you've been worrying about the creases in your pants, or you're checking out somebody's hair that isn't quite right...We are very physically oriented. We tend only to see the physical things; and we don't have that spiritual sight, even though we're redeemed people.

The Lord's encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees is fresh in His mind, and he wants to warn these men. Why? Because He's gonna be gone, and they're gonna be on their own, as it were, with Him dead and...and gone, for those...for that period of time before His resurrection when they scattered and flew all over the place; and then they're gonna have to go out and...and bear the message; and He warns them about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, trying to get 'em off



the physical level onto the real issue, which is the bread that they're dispensing, not the physical bread...

I worry about our society. I even worry about the church today, because it's so physical. We worry about what we wear, what we look like, our hair looks like, kinda car we drive; and we worry about all of the clothing; and we worry about the shape of our bodies. You know, we're almost paranoid about that. We look at people and judge them by how they appear, how their hair looks, what their clothes are like. That's what was so refreshing about being up there in Canada with that first generation French Canadian church that had just been born in the last two or three years. I...I...I got the feeling that nobody cared whether you had an alligator on your shirt, you know? Really, I don't think that was a big deal to them. I...I don't think they cared if your socks matched. I don't think it mattered to them one bit what your hair was like. I think they were so excited and thrilled and blessed and ecstatic about the reality of Jesus Christ in their lives, that that's all they could think about. And they evaluated people on the spiritual dimension; and it was refreshing; and it was exciting; and other stuff wasn't even an issue.

So the disciples were down on that physical level where most of us live most of the time; and Jesus wanted to lift them; and He said, "What you really need to be concerned about is not whether you have physical bread, but whether you're being influenced by the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Now, what is this idea? Well, leaven, when you made bread, you took a piece out of the lump of dough before it was baked; and you put it aside; and it fermented and became sour; and then you put it into the next lump; and it fermented or caused a yeast reaction; and it causes the bread to be large and so forth. You know how it works. It's a yeast or a leavening. And so leaven then came to mean influence, something held over from the past applied to the present; and that is why, when Israel left Egypt, they were not allowed to have leavened bread. God was saying to them in simple form, "Don't take anything that you knew in Egypt out and put it into your new lifestyle. That's in the past. Cut the cord. There's nothing of that that you need. Sever yourself. Don't bring any influence from that part of your life. From the bread of Egypt, don't take a piece to...to start the bread of the...of the new people of God in their new land. Don't do that. Cut that thing off," and the unleavened bread symbolized that. And so leaven came to mean influence. It mostly means evil influence, although, in some cases, could mean a good influence. A permeating influence. So what the Lord is saying to them is this. "You need to beware of the permeating influence of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And Mark's Gospel, which is the parallel account, adds He also said, "Beware of the leaven of Herod."

Now, what is the leaven of the Pharisees? Well, Luke 12:1 tells us. It says right there, "The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy." It's phony religion, externalism without the heart, legalism, ritualism, ceremonialism. Everything on the outside, nothing on the inside...beware of that. Beware of

legalism. Beware of ritualism, ceremonialism, externalism, where there's no heart for God; and then beware of the leaven of the Sadducees; and it tells us in Acts 20...can't remember the chapter, somewhere in Acts, 20-something, 23:6 I think.

My...my eyes are going up and down the pages till I get there, right? It tells us there that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They did not believe in angels. They did not believe in immortality. They were liberals. Beware of liberalism. Beware of skepticism, rationalism, liberalism; and then beware of the leaven of Herod, Mark adds. The leaven of Herod was political ambition, materialism, secularism.

And so the Lord is saying to the disciples, "Guys, I just want you to know that now that you follow Me and you pursue the Light and you curse the darkness, make sure you don't drag any of that stuff with you. Don't take any of that leaven to leaven your new lump." Avoid the legalism, the ritualism, ceremonialism, the externalism. Avoid the liberalism, the skeptic...skepticism, the rationalism; and avoid the secularism. In other words, He wants a pure loaf.

So He was teaching them a profound spiritual lesson in very graphic terms. "Cut the cord," is what He was saying. "Have nothing to do with that former life," and, of course, because, as I said, they were raised to respect the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and they were raised under the...the dominion, as it were, of the Herodian dynasty, which included Herod, who ruled in Galilee; and they had some respect for him. They needed to make sure they cut that stuff off. Don't let the world influence you. Don't let legalistic religion influence you, and don't let liberal religion influence you. Those are the poles. Those are the extremes of false systems...Stay pure.

Well, that's what He said in verse 6. Wanna see their reaction? Verse 7, "The reasoned among themselves." Now, stop there for a minute. This is the best that human reason can do. You ready for this? They had a little meeting, got all their brains together. "What does He mean? What is He saying?" And because they lived on the physical level, they said, "Aha, our conclusion is He said this because we have taken no bread." In other words, "What He's afraid of is we'll buy bread baked by a Pharisee." Or "We'll buy bread baked by a Sadducee. And that would be defiled bread. He...He's worried that, because we don't have any bread, we're liable to run out, and we'll buy bread from a Pharisee."...

Really kinda sad, isn't it? You wanna know something? If the Pharisees got the best price, buy it, as far as bread goes. If the Mormons have a store that sells cheap bread, buy it cheap. It's good stewardship. That isn't the issue. Who you buy the bread from isn't the issue; but they're on the physical level, see. They're way down there...and all they can think about is, "Well, He's afraid we'll buy some kind of defiled bread." You see, the...which misses the major point, right? Because the major point in all of Jesus' teaching is it isn't on the outside what defiles you, right? It's not what goes into a man that defiles him, true? It's what what? Comes out from the inside, 'cause religion is

internal, not external...

Plus, how could Jesus be upset and concerned that they not run off and buy bread from some Pharisee when, if He didn't want that to happen, He could just create bread like He just created enough for 50,000 people; and both times that He created bread, do you remember that He created enough for the feeding...the feeding of the twelve, too? So if...if...if that was a real problem to the Lord, He didn't want 'em to go do that, He'd just create more bread. And so, because that's the best that their human reason could do, He gives them this lesson. Here comes His speech again. Jesus says to them, "O, ye of little faith." That's...that's that same speech. "Why reason ye among yourselves, 'because you have brought no bread? Why are you stuck on the physical level? Do you not yet understand? Do you neither remember the five loaves and the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up?...which was twelve...Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? Have you forgotten those two occasions?" And, by the way, the two words for baskets are different, and they are consistent with each account. First was a Jewish word, a small basket. Second was a Gentile basket, which was larger.

And so He says, "Have you forgotten that if...if it was a physical bread problem, I could take care of that? Why are you still on that?" It's just exactly the same principle as Matthew 6:33, when the Lord says to them, "Why are you worrying about what you eat? Why are you worrying about what you wear? Why are you worrying about where you're gonna sleep? Look, if God takes care of the grass of the field, God takes care of the birds...so forth and so on...He'll take care of you. O ye of little faith...and He says to them...Seek ye first...what?...the Kingdom of God and His...what?...righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

If you just get up on the spiritual level, God'll take care of the physical dimension. Just like in 2 Corinthians 8 where He says, "Give." He talks about the giving of the Macedonians. He says, "You give a lot, and you give a lot, and you say, 'Well, I...I'm concerned about that. That's...that's quite a commitment.'" And then it says in the following section there in 2 Corinthians 9, "God is able to provide bread for your food. If you're worried that, in your act of spiritual giving, you won't have any food, then you fail to understand how God can provide that. Get off the physical level, O you of little faith, who have to hold on in your hands to everything to purchase your physical needs and cannot abandon it to God, because you don't trust that He can provide. Don't you remember that God provides physical needs? Just get on that spiritual level."...

And so in verse 11, He says, "How is it that you do not understand that I spoke not to you concerning bread? I wasn't talking about bread, but that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And this brings us to the fourth point about one who...is blind but made to see, and that is that he's taught by the Lord. See how patient He was with 'em? I mean He took 'em where they were, and He taught 'em. He comes right back and repeats the same lesson. "I'm talking about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. I'm trying to get your focus on the spiritual dimension."

You see, it's very much like what Jesus said in Matthew 6 when He said, "Lay up your treasure...where?...in Heaven. For where your treasure is, that's where your heart will be also." It's what Paul said to the Philippians when he said, "Our citizenship is not in the earth. Our citizenship is in Heaven." It's...it's what he said in chapter 4 when he said, "Think on these things, spiritual virtues. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." You see we...we get so earthbound, and that's because we're earth creatures, and that's why we have to have the illuminating work of the Spirit, because it's what lifts us out of this, you see. That's why the Christian has to be exposed to the Word of God regularly, feeding on it. Why? Because as you feed on it, the Spirit of God teaches you; and as He teaches you, He elevates you out the physical dimension...where you begin to take God seriously.

And...and after the Lord's patient teaching, just like He has to do with us, the light dawns, verse 12. "Then understood they that He bade them not to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." You know, I am a firm believer that you'd better stay away from false doctrine. I mean stay away from it. Jude says, "When you go over to take somebody out of it, snatch 'em like a brand from the burning. Don't even stand around or you'll singe your own garments." Stay away. Stay away from the leaven that influences you from legalism, and the...the stuff that influences you from ritualism or ceremonialism, from rationalism, liberalism, from secularism in the middle. You avoid that.

But isn't it wonderful how patient the Lord was? Isn't it wonderful that He teaches so patiently till they finally understood He was talking about the doctrine that the Pharisees and the Sadducees taught which corrupt their faith? And, boy, you read the Book of Galatians, and you'll find out that it worked on that church, didn't it? They started out in the Spirit and tried to perfect themselves in the flesh. They got into legalism, and the Colossian church was being threatened by liberalism, rationalism; and you find if you read in the churches at the Revelation, that some of the churches there were literally put out of existence by secularism, materialism, ambition.

So it's done its work. The Lord pleads that it not be so. The great truth in all of this passage, and the thing that touches your heart with such profound reality is the ministry that Christ has to those who are His own. That even in our blindness, He takes patiently the time and effort needed to teach.

Look at 1 Corinthians 2, 1 Corinthians chapter 2, and I just wanna show you this wonderful, wonderful portion of Scripture. Verse 9, "As it is written: 'Eye hath not seen.'" Now, what does that say? We're all what? We're all blind. We can't perceive it. It is not externally available. It is not objectively available. It's not empirically available. "Eye hath not seen it, nor ear heard." In other words, externally, we can't in our humanness perceive things. "Neither has it entered into the heart of man." That's internally, subjectively. We can't know it externally and objectively. We can't know it internally and intuitively and subjectively. It hasn't entered into the heart, "the things that God has prepared for

them that love Him." Spiritual reality is not available to human perception.

But look at verse 10, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." Isn't that great? I'll tell ya, nothing gets me more excited than the deep things of God; and the Spirit reveals 'em to us, to me...So verse 12 says, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Beloved, you have in your hand this tremendous treasure. You have in your life as a believer the resident Truth Teacher, the Spirit of God. As you open the pages of this Book, and the Spirit of God teaches you, you find yourself plunging into the depths of the deep things of God. Profound and exciting reality. We who know nothing, we who are stone blind can see the deep things of God...

Reminds me of the road to Emmaus as Jesus opened the Scriptures and taught them, and as He had departed from them after revealing Himself to them, they looked at one another and said, "Did not our hearts...what?...burn within us?" Oh, the burning heart that comes as the Word of God is opened. Only two kinds of people in the world...two kinds. The blind who will never see, and the blind who are made to see. Those of us who pass from darkness to light, from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God's dear Son, those of us who, as a Paul says, come out into the daylight, as Peter says, and walked out into the daylight...I trust that you know Christ. And that if you know Him, you have a hunger to know His Word is taught by His Spirit.

There's a marvelous story told of a little girl in France, and she was blind, and she was given a Gospel of Mark in Braille, and she, with her fingers, began to read that Gospel and came to know Christ and embraced Him as her Savior. And then that Gospel became infinitely more precious to her, and she read it and read it and read it and read it until she had developed such calluses on her fingers that they no longer could sense...the letters. And in a desire to have the hunger of her heart fulfilled to read it again, she peeled the skin back off her fingertips that she might unbare a more sensitive tissue to begin again to feel. In so doing, the doctor said she damaged the nerves and would never feel again with her fingers. And so brokenhearted with tears in her eyes, one day she picked up that Braille Bible and put it to her lips as if to kiss it farewell, only to discover that her lips were far more sensitive than her fingers had ever been. Spent the rest of her days reading it with her lips...

How hungry is your heart? To be in that Word illumined by the resident Spirit of God. And what about that one who is blind and will never see? To plunge into eternal darkness. Tragic thought.

You've all heard the name Ethan Allen. Most of you think he owns a series of furniture stores, no doubt. Ethan Allen is a well-known name in American history. He was an unbeliever. In fact, Ethan Allen wrote a book, the whole intent of which was to deny the deity of Jesus Christ. He was against Christ with everything in him. Strangely enough, his wife was a devout Christ-loving Christian; and

they had one daughter caught between the two. The wife, so earnest, so cheerful, so devoted to Jesus Christ, died, left the daughter with Ethan Allen. That fragile, sensitive child who treasured the memory of her dear mother and loved her greatly also respected and loved her father and was caught in the middle of determining which was right. Christ or against Christ?

And then one day, to the sadness of all who knew her and especially her father, she was hit with the disease tuberculosis. She began to waste away. "The sight of her," the biographer writes, "would bring tears to the hardest heart." One day, her father came in the room; and he sat on the bed beside her, and took her hand in his; and she looked up to his face; and she said, "Father, I know I'm going to die."...And the biographer writes, "Oh, no, my child," he said, "no, the spring is coming and with the birds and breezes and the bloom, your pale cheeks will blush again with health." "No," she said, "the doctor was here today, and I...I felt I was nearing the grave, and I asked him to tell me plainly what I had to expect. I told him that it was a great thing to exchange worlds, and that I did not wish to be deceived about it. I, if I was going to die, needed to make the preparations; and he told me that my disease was beyond treatment." And then she said to her father, "You will bury me by the side of Mother, for that was her dying request. But, Father, you and Mother have never agreed on religion. Mother often spoke to me of the blessed Savior who died for us all; and she used to pray for both you and me, that the Savior might be our friend, and that we might all see Him as our Savior when He sits enthroned in His glory."...Her eyes look rather desperately into her father's eyes. She said, "I don't feel that I can go into death alone. Tell me, Father, whom shall I follow? You or Mother? Shall I reject Christ as you have taught me? Or shall I accept Him?"...

Well, Ethan Allen, to put it mildly, was heartbroken; and there was an honest heart in him; and through his tears, nearly choking out his utterance, the biographer says, "That old soldier said, 'My child, cling to your mother's Savior. She was right, and I, too, shall try to follow you to that blessed place.'"... And they said a serene smile must have spread across his face, and who knows but that there was a reunion in Heaven of that whole family. The choice is yours, as well. You can choose the Light, or you can choose the darkness. Let's bow in prayer...

Our Father, we thank You that choice is clear...that if we embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, we seek to follow Him, He is the Light of the world; and whosoever follows Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life. We are led to an understanding, a comprehension of the richness, the depth, the truth of the divine dimension...Father, may there be no one in this place who...curses the Light, seeks the darkness, goes into deeper darkness to be abandoned by God. But may all hearts be seeking hearts, cursing the darkness, receiving through the instrumentation of the blessed Holy Spirit a greater Light, being taught by God Himself. Thank You for that great promise.

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