

Blind resistance (part 2)

Last sermon recap:

Jesus was performing miracles in Capernaum (the two blind men and a mute fellow). Despite of the miracles, the Pharisees resisted Jesus by blaspheming against him. Their resistance was political, in large scale, and theological. Should we translate things to our days, it looks like: Ottawa making a Law against Jesus' ministry, or the newscast with an anti-Jesus agenda, or a scholarly statement from a prestigious dean from the University of Toronto stating that Jesus is a fake pastor.

Moreover, there is a contrast between the Pharisees' spiritual blindness to the men's physical blindness. There is a contrast between them speaking blasphemy and the mute man's tongue. It is better to be physically blind than spiritually blind; and it is better to be a mute person than a blasphemer.

Our 2 main lessons from last sermon: Blind resistance!

- (i) The Pharisees resisted Jesus because they were denying the truth.
- (ii) The blind men resisted Christ because they believed in *partial truth*, and for lack of humility, missed the *whole* truth. They got their blessing, yes; but they did not become disciples.

The blind men knew Jesus was:

- (i) The Son of David
- (ii) Merciful

They also had:

- (iii) Great faith.
- (iv) Healing.

Nevertheless, they missed the point by disobeying Christ and went their own way.

The bottom line: They were never saved! Hence, that's why you know the name of the blind man from Jericho (Bartimeus), but you do not know their names.

Their story should lead us into self-examination. I know you believe God, I know you go to church. Those are *true*, but those are not the *whole truth*. The *essential question* I need to ask you: Are you truly a disciple of Jesus?

“A house is built from bricks, but a pile of bricks isn’t a house.” In the same way, all that we know about Christ should **make us** his disciple.

Today’s sermon:

This is just a continuation of our last sermon. Once again, some *partial truth* will become the roadblock to the people. The Nazarenes don’t believe in Jesus, why? Because they “partially know” him...

The former sermon deals with partial truth (bricks) and the stubborn heart unable to see the whole truth (the house). Lack of *discipleship* was the emphasis of last sermon.

Today’s sermon deals with the truth that is divorced from faith. The emphasis here is *incredulity*.

1. Incredulity.

- (i) **For the things they don’t know:** V.2 says they were amazed when they heard him. V.3 asks the questions “where” and “what”. They were asking themselves where does his wisdom and power come from. Because they didn’t *know*, they couldn’t *believe*.
- (ii) **For the things they do know:** V.3 says they knew Jesus’ family, trade, and whereabouts. Because they did *know*, they couldn’t *believe*.

Whether for lack of information or for familiarity with the information, their hearts became dull. Which is a lesson in itself: Incredulity is a matter of the heart, not of the intellect.

2. (Re)actions.

Upon seeing their incredulity, Jesus takes 3 *(re)actions*:

(Side note: We tend to *forget* that our actions/or lack of actions, are never free from consequences – the Nazarenes rejected Jesus, and he acted)

- (i) Admiration - The reason for Jesus' being admired was that he had a fresh contrast in his mind. He had been to Capernaum, a neighbouring city, and he found faith in there. Now here at home (Nazareth), he expected to be received in the same way, but he wasn't.
- (ii) "Do not throw pearls to the swine" –
 - a. He spoke to them in Parables – (V.4) "A prophet has no honour in his hometown." As you know, when Jesus speaks in parables to people with stubborn hearts, the goal of it is condemnation, not salvation.
 - b. He hindered his miracles – (V.5) Says that Jesus could not do many miracles in Nazareth. That is shocking because the word "can't" does not fit God well – he is the all-powerful!

Nevertheless, there are certain usages of the word "can't" that fits him perfectly, for example: "God cannot sin!" In that sense, the word "can't" fits perfectly with Jesus, because he is not an "enabler". Should you give money to a drug addict, you are not blessing him, you are killing him instead. Jesus decided to hinder his miracles so that he wouldn't enable this unbelieving town.
- (iii) Shaking off the dust of the feet – (V.7) says that he went to another region. And he never came back!

Conclusion – We can learn 4 lessons from this story (2 are hard & 2 are refreshing).

1. Nazareth blew their last chance – The Gospel of Luke (Chapter 4) describes the very first time Jesus was rejected in Nazareth. Now for the second time he came to his hometown, and they rejected him once again. Search in the Bible and you will not see him ever again in Nazareth. "He shook the dust of his feet and left."
2. Eternal condemnation – It is very unfortunate that I need to talk about hell in such a story like this. But when Jesus shakes off the dust of his feet and restrains his miracles in Nazareth, he is automatically withholding saving grace to them. Incredulity is the only sin that condemns people to hell – we are all sinners, yes;

however because of Jesus we have our way to God, should we reject him, we have no other way to Heaven.

3. Listening more – keeping with last sermon's flow, it becomes clear again that knowing truthful information does not necessarily mean you know the whole truth. We need to learn how to listen more and speak less. If the Nazarenes had only listened, seen, and *added* to their understanding, they would've known that the "Jesus they knew from youth, is actually the Lord and saviour." And they would've been saved!
4. Endure hardships and resistance – The Pharisees' resistance to Jesus hurts. But I bet you that the resistance from his own people hurts more. It is very painful when we suffer resistance from the ones we should be receiving support from. Just as the English maxim says, "familiarity breeds contempt."

Nevertheless, Jesus teaches us that we need to be strong.