

Spiritual Depression-Its Causes and Cures

-A study through D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermon series-

Chapter 3-Men as Trees, Walking

Mark 8:22-26-What is happening here? Why did the man not receive his sight back right away?

“What happened in this case was not accidental. We have other examples of our Lord healing blind people, and it is quite clear that He could have healed this man instantly by just saying to him: ‘Receive thy sight.’ (an example of this would be Mark 10:46-52) Our Lord had that power; nothing was impossible to Him.”

“So what He did here He obviously did with great deliberation and a set purpose. Nothing our Lord did was done haphazardly or accidentally. All His actions were deliberate, and when He varied His technique He always had a very good reason for doing so...All our Lord’s miracles are more than events, they are in a sense parables as well.”

While Jesus had a desire to heal this man, He also was using this as an opportunity to _____ His disciples (and us). The disciples had seen many miracles and had heard much teaching, yet they did not fully understand, their faith was weak/small (an example of this can be the contrast shown by Matthew in 8:5-13 & 8:23-27). The disciples were not chosen by Jesus because of their great “spiritual ability” or because of their superior abilities of comprehension. In fact, sometimes it seems like the apostles were a little slower at “getting it” than were others. The context leading up to this account in Mark 8 demonstrates how the apostles saw much but understood little.

“He dealt with the blind man as He did in order to give them a picture of themselves. He adopted this technique in the case before us, in order to enable the disciples to see themselves as they were.”

At the first, this man could only _____ see. He was kind of healed but at the same time not really healed.

“You cannot say that he is still blind because he does see; and yet you hesitate to say that he can see because he sees men as trees, walking. What then-is he or is he not blind? You feel that you have to say at one and the same time that he is blind and that he is not blind. He is neither one thing nor the other.”

This lack of _____ is what many Christians struggle with and can lead to spiritual depression.

“I am concerned about those Christians who are disquieted and unhappy and miserable because of this lack of clarity...they are unhappy because they are not clear about themselves...They seem to know enough about Christianity to spoil their enjoyment of the world, and yet they do not know enough to feel happy about themselves. They are ‘neither hot nor cold’. These see and yet they do not see.”

There are various reasons for this lack of clarity. Three that Lloyd-Jones mentions are: A lack of clearly _____ basic Christian principles (they know Christ is somehow a Savior-they know this is what the world needs), or maybe their intellectually have a grasp on Christianity but it is has not taken root in their _____, or possibly they have a divided _____.

“There are people who see things clearly at once; there are others who go through stages. We are dealing now with those who go through this particular stage...”

How do people arrive at this condition? It may be because they “generally object to clear-cut definitions; they dislike clarity and certainty.” However, another reason people arrive at this place of a lack of clarity is because of the rejection of the _____ of Scripture.

“I suppose that ultimately that is the whole cause of the trouble. They do not come to the Bible and submit themselves utterly and absolutely to it.”

Another reason people arrive at this condition is because of a lack of interest in biblical _____.

“Yet another cause of this condition is that almost invariably its victims are not interested in doctrine...But what is the purpose of the Bible except to present doctrine?...It is the doctrine that hurts, it is the doctrine that focuses things. It is one thing to look at pictures and to be interested in words and shades of meaning. That does not disturb, that does not focus attention on sin, nor call for decision. We can sit back and enjoy that; but doctrine speaks to us and insists upon a decision.”

“Truth must be defined and safeguarded, otherwise people will walk off into error. So, if we object to doctrine, it is not surprising if we do not see things clearly, it is not surprising if we are unhappy and miserable. There is nothing that so clears a man’s spiritual sight as the apprehension and understanding of the doctrines of the Bible.”

One last reason for that people arrive at this place is because they do not take the doctrines of Scripture in the right _____.

“We can sum up all this by saying that the great cause of the condition which we are considering is a refusal to think things right through. It is the fatal danger of wanting to enjoy something before you really grasp it and possess it. It is men and women who refuse to think things right through, and who do not want to learn, and who become unteachable for various reasons-often self-protection-these are the people who generally become victims of spiritual confusion, this lack of clarity, this seeing and not seeing at the same time.”

So, what is the _____ for this lack of clarity for this confusion?

“Above everything else avoid making a premature claim that your blindness is cured.”

“What then is the cure? What is the right way? It is to be honest and to answer our Lord’s question truthfully and honestly...What saved this man was his absolute honesty...Do we see? Let us be honest; let us face the questions, let us face them with absolute honesty?”

“The last step is to submit yourself to Him, to submit yourself utterly to Him as this man did...Come to the Word of God. Stop asking questions. Start with the promises in the right order. Say: ‘I want the truth whatever it costs me.’ Bind yourself to it, submit yourself to it, come to utter submission as a little child and plead with Him to give you clear sight, perfect vision, and to make you whole. And as you do so it is my privilege to remind you that He can do it. Yea, more, I promise you in His Blessed Name that He will do it. He never leaves anything incomplete. That is the teaching. Listen to it...He came that we might see clearly, that we might know God.”