

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 25 February 2024. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Two Kinds of Blindness

Matthew 9:27-34

Back in 1933, a young man named **Dick Hillis** set sail for China, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in “regions beyond.” Though he had been a Christian for only a few years, and was fresh out of Bible college, the China Inland Mission could see that he had a passion for souls; and they accepted him as the youngest missionary candidate in the history of their mission. (He was twenty years old at the time.) A short while after he arrived in China, a faithful Chinese brother named Kong took him on as a missionary partner; and they began to go around from village to village to preach the Gospel.¹

Now, as they were preaching in a village one day, they heard a “piercing cry” for help.² It turned out that a farmer named Ho had been seized by a demon, and was being tormented by it. Ho’s wife ran up to Dick and Kong, and desperately told them her husband’s story. She said that “An evil spirit has again possessed the father of my children, and is trying to kill him.”³ Now, Dick, as a young and inexperienced believer, at first dismissed this story. Having never seen demonic possession before, he told Kong that this was merely “heathen superstition.” (As a typical Western believer, he figured that “there must be a logical explanation.”) However, he soon found out differently! As they approached the farmer’s house, and stepped over the threshold, they immediately felt a sense of great evil in the house.⁴

Kong turned to the people who were gathered near the door and said, “An evil spirit has possessed farmer Ho. Our God, the ‘Nothing-He-Cannot-Do One,’ is more powerful than any spirit, and he can deliver this man.”⁵ He then said to Ho’s wife, “You must promise that you will burn your idols and trust in Jesus, Son of the Supreme Emperor.”⁶ Kong then turned to Dick, and urged him to start singing “There Is Power in the Blood.” Feeling very awkward, Dick hesitantly began to sing the old, familiar hymn; and Kong began to pray fervently over Ho. Now, just after they began to pray and sing, an old dog, which had been lying in the doorway, leaped into the air, and then began to screech, yelp, whirl around in circles, and snap at its own tail; and presently, the poor creature fell down dead. (When Dick saw this, he remembered the account, in **Matthew 8**, of the demons that Jesus cast out of two men, into a herd of swine; and he knew that he had just witnessed something just like that!) At this point, Ho became quiet and relaxed, and in his right mind. The demon had clearly left him! Ho personally placed his faith in Christ that day; and as soon as he was able to do so, he burned all the heathen idols in his house, and received baptism. At his baptism, he testified, “I was possessed by an evil spirit who boasted he had already killed five people, and was going to kill me. But God sent Mr. Kong at just the right moment, and in Jesus I am free.”⁷

It's been 2,000 years since Christ walked this earth; and to this very day, Christ’s servants are still praying over people in His name, and casting demons from them. Every now and then (when God so wills), people are even miraculously healed of diseases or handicaps through the prayers of God’s saints. However, no believer who ever lived (not even the Apostles) ever healed or cast out demons by his own power. Jesus Christ alone is able, by His *own* power and authority, and by a single word, to give instant healing of the body or mind, and to deliver captives from the clutch of the enemy!

This morning, we will examine three men who received deliverance from Jesus—two of them from a physical infirmity, and one from of a spiritual infirmity. We will also talk about two kinds of blindness—blindness of the eyes, *and* blindness of the heart. This message is entitled *The Two Kinds of Blindness*.

Read Matthew 9:27-34.

I. The men who were delivered from darkness (vv. 27-31)

Over the last few weeks, we have been focusing on a particularly eventful day in the town of Capernaum. It all began with a party that **Matthew** hosted for his old tax collector buddies. During that party, Jesus rebuked the self-righteous Pharisees, who had asked why He ate with publicans and sinners. He told them that He had not come to call the righteous, but “*sinners to repentance*.” Shortly afterward, while the party was still in progress, Jesus received an urgent request from a man named **Jairus** to come and heal his 12-year-old daughter, who was at the point of death. Jesus immediately got up to go to his house; and while He was *en route* to Jairus’s house, with great crowds pressing against Him, **a woman with an issue of blood** was healed by simply touching the hem of His garment. Then, after he arrived at Jairus’s house, He took the hand of Jairus’s daughter (who had just died), and raised her from the dead!

You wouldn’t think that this day could have gotten any more exciting: but it did! No sooner had Jesus left Jairus’s house, than two men began to follow Jesus, and to cry out to Him for help. We don’t know whether these men were local, or whether someone had brought them from another town to seek out Jesus; but we *do* know that these men had a great burden, from which they desired deliverance. Their problem was that they were blind.

Now, a few times in the Gospels, when we read about someone’s healing, we are informed that this person’s physical infirmity was a direct punishment from God for some sin that he had committed. In fact, some people’s physical punishment was inflicted by demons, who had taken control of that person’s body. However, such was not always the case. Sometimes, God allows people (including even godly believers) to suffer from a disease or a handicap so that He might receive glory through their lives. Sometimes God receives glory by giving that believer the grace to keep serving Him with a sweet and thankful spirit, even though he is never healed of his disease. (Perhaps *you* are suffering from a chronic illness, which God is not taking away; and, like the Apostle Paul, you can testify that God has made His strength perfect through your weakness.) Oftentimes God *does* allow His people to suffer. However, there *are* times when God allows someone to have a physical infirmity so that He might *heal* him, and thus bring glory to Himself. Let’s look at an example.

Read John 9:1-7.

The blind man whom Jesus healed by the Pool of Siloam had not committed any particular sin to earn his affliction: nor was he indwelt by demons. He was simply a man whom God had allowed to be born blind, so that Christ might be glorified through this man’s healing. Well,

such seems to have been the case with these two blind men in Capernaum. We are not told that they were being punished for any specific sin, nor that they were being afflicted by devils. God had simply allowed them either to be born blind, or to become blind, so that Christ might heal them of their infirmity, and bring glory to His Father!

Now, we don't know much about these two men; but we do know that *they understood who Jesus is*. There were a couple truths about Jesus of which these men were absolutely convinced. First, these men believed **that Jesus is the Son of David.** (Read Matthew 9:27.)

When these blind men called Jesus the Son of David, they weren't merely acknowledging that Jesus is a flesh-and-blood descendant of King David: they were acknowledging that **He is the Messiah**. All their lives, the Jewish people had been taught that the Messiah is the "Son of David"; and in this, they were absolutely correct. When Jesus asked the Pharisees whose son the Messiah is, they correctly answered, "**The Son of David.**" The Jews "got" that. But what *else* did they understand about the Messiah? *What kind of Person* was the Messiah, in their minds? How did they envision Him?

Well, for one thing, the Jews of Jesus' day understood that "the Messiah" is the same Man that Daniel called "**the Son of Man.**" Let's take a look at the amazing vision of the Messiah, which God gave to Daniel about 550 years before His birth.

Read Daniel 7:9-14.

Folks, this passage is mind-boggling! On the one hand, we have a clear description of God the Father. Daniel calls Him "the Ancient of days"; and he describes Him as having a garment white as snow; hair like pure wool; fire streaming forth from His person; and thousands upon thousands of holy ones ministering to Him as He sits upon His throne. We see Him destroying the "beast" (the Antichrist of the last days), committing him to the flames of hell, and smashing his kingdom. Yet, Daniel also tells us about *another* Person, named "the Son of man": and he says that this Person *came near before* the Ancient of Days, just as the high priests of the Old Testament came near before God in the Holy of Holies, on the Day of Atonement. He also says that this "Son of Man" was given "**dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.**"

Whoever this "Son of Man" is, He seems to have the exact same authority as the Ancient of Days, doesn't He? In fact, He appears to be *one* with the Ancient of Days! It appears that this "Son of Man" is, Himself, God! What *else* are we to think, when the LORD says, in **Isaiah 42:8**, "***I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another***"? If God will not give His glory to another, yet He *does* give all His glory to this "Son of Man," then the Son of Man must not be "**another**": He Himself must also be God! We see this same stunning truth in **Zechariah 14:9**, where Zechariah says that in the future Day of the LORD, "**The LORD (Jehovah) shall be king over all the earth.**" How can *Jehovah* be King over all the earth, and "the Son of Man" be King over all the earth at the same time? These are the

kinds of questions that the Jewish saints of old grappled with, as they studied the Scriptures: and by the time of Christ, they had come to the conclusion that this Son of Man (who is the Messiah) would be an eternal Person, who would embody all the perfection of the Most High; yet, at the same time, He would be a true Man. How could the Messiah be a “divine Person,” with all God’s attributes, and yet be a Man, unless there were an “Incarnation”—God taking on human flesh? The Jews of old (even lost men, like the Pharisees) understood this!

Now, there were some things about Messiah that they *didn’t* understand correctly. They didn’t understand that the Messiah would come *twice*—once to die for our sins, and the second time to reign as King over all the earth. (This is why most people rejected Jesus as Messiah: He didn’t appear to be setting up an earthly Kingdom.) Also, the Jews assumed that the Messiah, since He is a heavenly Being, would be incapable of dying. That is why, when Jesus told the people that He would soon be “lifted up” on the cross, the people responded, “***We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?***” (In other words, “We understand that the Messiah cannot die: yet *you* say that you *will* be dying soon. How, then, can you be the Messiah?) Now, in one sense, they were right: the Messiah, since He is God (and sinless Man), *is not* subject to death. The Scriptures say that “***The soul that sinneth, it shall die***”; therefore, Jesus, who was *not* a sinner, was not under the sentence of death, as all other men are. This means that Jesus *could have* hung on the cross indefinitely, without dying! Yet, Jesus *did* die. Why? Because He, as our God and Lawgiver, had the prerogative to take the penalty of our sin upon Himself, lay down His own life as the ransom for ours, and dismiss His own Spirit from His body!

The two blind men didn’t understand *everything* about the Messiah (and certainly not the fact that He was soon going to die on a cross); but they *were* sure that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah—the Saviour who had been promised of old. There was something else about Jesus that they understood, as well. They understood that since Jesus is the Son of David (the Messiah), He could show them **mercy**. As Jews, and “sons of the Law,” they would surely have heard Scriptures such as **Psalm 72**, which describe the mercy of the Messiah.

Read Psalm 72:1-20.

My friends, this entire passage is about one thing: the future reign of Jesus Christ as King of all the earth! How do I know? Well, look at the very beginning of the psalm. In **verse 1**, David makes a petition to God: he requests that God would give His “***judgments***” to “***the king***.” Now, what is *that* supposed to mean? If *God* be King (and He is), then who is this “King” to whom He gives judgments? David answers this question at the end of the verse: he requests that God would give His “***righteousness***” unto “***the king’s son***.” Think about *that* one! The “King” is giving judgments to “the King”...who happens to be His Son! Clearly, David is not talking about *his* son, King Solomon, because Solomon (great though he was) *did not* accomplish the stupendous feats that David is describing here. Solomon *did not* have dominion over the entire earth, “***from sea to sea***”; he *did not* “***live***” perpetually; he *did not* bring “***abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth***”; his name *did not* “***endure for***

ever,” and “*continue as long as the sun*”; the whole earth is *not* “*full of his glory*”; men all over the earth do *not* praise his name; and all men are *not* “*blessed in him.*” Only one Man fits this description: Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the Highest, who is one with His Father!

With this in mind, look again at what David says about the Messiah. **(Read Psalm 72:12-13.)** My friends, *this* is the portrait of Messiah that these blind men had “seen.” Though they couldn’t see Jesus with their physical eyes, they *could* “see,” and understand, that the Messiah is merciful to the poor and needy—that He *delivers* those who “*cry unto him.*” They surely would have heard the words of **Isaiah 55:3**, where the Messiah is called “*the sure mercies*” of **David.**” Throughout the Old Testament, it was prophesied that the Messiah would be full of tender mercy and compassion. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, understood this, too.

Read Luke 1:76-79.

Did you notice what Zacharias said about God’s “*mercy*”? He said that his son, John, would give “*knowledge of salvation...by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.*” That word “*whereby*” means “in which”—and it is pointing to “*the dayspring* (literally, “the sunrise”) *from on high.*” And who is the “*Dayspring from on high*”? It is John’s cousin, Jesus of Nazareth! Zacharias is saying that Jesus had come down from on high to visit us in “*tender mercy*”!

These two blind men may not have understood *everything* about Jesus; but they knew that He was the God-Man—the Messiah, the Son of David; and they understood that since He is the Son of David, He could show them mercy, by opening their eyes. (After all, this is one of the very things that Isaiah said the Messiah would do—open the eyes of the blind!) How, then, did Jesus respond? Did He respond in mercy? Let’s take a look. **(Read Matthew 9:27-28.)**

If you look carefully at this passage, you’ll notice that Jesus’ response to these men, at *first*, seemed cold. These men were *following after* Jesus, and crying out to Him as they went; yet, Jesus just kept on walking, until He came “*into the house*” (probably Peter’s house). It was almost as though Jesus were “closing up shop” for the day, and ignoring their pleas. This seems out of character for Jesus, doesn’t it? Oftentimes, *Jesus Himself* sought out people in need, and addressed *them* about their need (such as when He found the lame man by the pool of Bethesda, and asked if he wished to be healed). When people *came to Jesus* to ask for help, He usually responded to them immediately. Sometimes, people were healed without even asking, by simply *touching* Him (such as the woman with the issue of blood had done only a short while earlier). Others *couldn’t* ask for help at all, since they were *dead* (such as Jairus’s daughter, whom Jesus had just brought back to life)! Jesus was always ready and willing to heal people! Yet, there were a few times when Jesus seemed, at *first*, to ignore people’s pleas for help. Take the Syrophonecian woman, for example.

Read Matthew 15:21-28.

Why did Jesus ignore this woman at first? After all, she was addressing Jesus in the exact same way that the two blind men addressed Him. She called Him **“Lord”**; and she called Him **“Son of David.”** She also asked for Jesus for **“mercy,”** just as the blind men did. Why, then, didn’t Jesus respond to her right away? There are a couple reasons. First, **Jesus was testing her faith.** He was giving a little “pushback,” to reveal whether she had real faith. Secondly, **Jesus was correcting a misunderstanding on her part.** You see, this woman had appealed to Jesus with the title, “Son of David.” This is a title belonging to the King of Israel; and this woman was *not* of Israel. In fact, she was a direct descendant of the Canaanites, whom God had commanded the Israelites to drive out of the land. She was not of the King’s flesh-and-blood family (the Jews): thus, she had no claim upon Him as “the Son of David.” However, the good news is that this woman quickly realised her mistake, and corrected it. In **Mark 7:27**, we are told that Jesus told this woman, **“Let the children first be filled.”** By this, she understood that Jesus had come to the Jew *first*—but that she, as a *non-Jew*, was not utterly rejected. She wasn’t part of the flesh-and-blood family of Messiah; however, just as a puppy is often considered an “adopted” member of the family, she, too, might ask for a portion from the family table! Therefore, when she addressed Jesus the second time, she left off the title “Son of David,” and simply addressed Him as “Lord”—and requested the morsels from His table. At this point, Jesus’ whole tone changed. He now lovingly accepted her, and commended her faith. He said, **“O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.”**

As you can see, Jesus did not always respond to people’s requests straightaway. In the Syrophonecian woman’s case, it was because she needed to understand that Jesus had come *first* to the house of Israel. (Jesus was also giving her a little “pushback,” in order to test her faith.) Why, though, did Jesus not respond immediately to these two men straightaway? These men were Jews; and they were addressing Him as “the Son of David.” They were sons of Abraham, and they were using the right words; yet, Jesus still didn’t respond at first. Why?

There are probably several reasons. First, **Jesus wanted this miracle to be done *privately*,** within the walls of the house. He didn’t want this miracle to be seen in the streets. (In a few moments, we’ll examine *why* He wanted it to be done privately.) Secondly (just as it was with the Syrophonecian woman), Jesus was testing these men’s faith!

Read Luke 18:1-8.

These men believed in the *Person* of Christ (that He is the Son of David); but did they believe in the *power* of Christ? Jesus was challenging them with this question. He specifically asked them, **“Believe ye that I am able to do this?”** This is a question that Jesus still asks of us today. First, if you have not been born again, Jesus is asking you this question in regard to your *eternal destiny*. You may believe, *in your head*, that Jesus is Christ; but do you believe

that Jesus is *able* to wash away your sins, and to accept you into Heaven? Do you think that your sins are too bad for Jesus to forgive, and that there is no point in your trying to come to Him? If so, Jesus is asking you this morning, “Do *you* believe that I am able to do this? Do *you* believe that I am able to save you from sin, death, and hell?” The answer to that question is, “Yes! Jesus *is* able to save you, no matter what you’ve done.” However, you *must believe this*, and ask Him for it! Perhaps you *have* believed that Jesus could save you, and you *have* come to Him for salvation; yet, now that you are saved, Jesus is asking you another question. Perhaps Jesus is asking you, “Do you believe that I am able to deliver you from that powerful temptation? Do you believe that I can give you the strength to overcome that sin that has entrapped you for so long?” Again, the answer to *this* question is, “Yes! He *can* deliver you!” But will you believe it? Christian, do you believe that He is able to guide you through the treacherous shoals of your life, and to give you all the grace and wisdom you need to live for Him, even in the midst of trials? Jesus has *everything* you need; but do you trust Him?

With this in mind, let’s get back to the question: **Why did Jesus want to do this healing privately?** Why did He wait until He had gotten into the house to heal them? For the same reason that He didn’t want them to tell anyone about their healing: **He simply didn’t want people to know about it!** This may seem strange to us: but the fact is that there were *many* times when Jesus didn’t want people to tell others about their healing; and He had good reason for it. For one thing, **Jesus did not exalt Himself.** In His great humility, He often concealed His acts of mercy. In this, He was being an example to all of us! We, too, should do good for people secretly, without trying to exalt ourselves. Secondly, Jesus often hid His miracles in secret **so as not to excite the hostility of the religious rulers** more than necessary. Remember, Jesus had to die at the right time and place, to fulfill the Scriptures. The Pharisees were always plotting to kill Him; so He had to be discreet. It wasn’t time for Him to die yet!

However, probably the greatest reason why Jesus commanded people to keep quiet about their healing was **to bring judgment on those who rejected Him.** What do I mean by this? To answer that question, let’s read **Matthew 9:24** again. **(Read Matthew 9:24.)**

How did the people respond to Jesus when He said that the girl was not dead, but sleeping? They *laughed* at Him! And how did Jesus, in turn, respond to *them*? He refused to let them see the miracle of raising Jairus’s daughter! Only Peter, James, John, and this girl’s parents (who were *believers*) were allowed to see this miracle. What does this tell us? It tells us that Jesus was beginning to *withdraw Himself* from the people of Capernaum at large, because of their unbelief. Likewise, Jesus was now *concealing* the mighty work that He was about to do on these two blind men, because of their unbelief. Unbelief has consequences!

Read Mark 6:1-6.

Folks, this is serious stuff! When the people of a family, city, region, or nation repeatedly reject the Lord, He is not obligated to continue to send messengers to them, or to do great

works among them. Now, He may not always withdraw *entirely*. (In this case, Jesus *did* perform one more miracle that day—the healing of the dumb, demon-possessed man: and people did see it.) However, Jesus was now beginning to withdraw His mercy from Capernaum. They *laughed* at His words; therefore, His miracles would begin to be withheld. When people tell the Light of the World to “go away,” God gives them their wish, and withdraws; and when the Light of the World is withdrawn, men are plunged into darkness!

II. The men who remained in darkness (vv. 32-34)

It had been a wonderful day in Capernaum. Jesus had done many astounding things. However, the day wasn't over yet! Jesus did one more wonder that day: He cast out a demon from a mute man. **(Read Matthew 9:32-34 again.)**

Folks, demons are no joke! Demons can afflict people in many ways; and one of the ways that they can afflict people is by causing them to be mute. This sort of thing still goes on to this day, all over the world. For example, a Baptist missionary named Ken Eagleton, who grew up in Brazil, often dealt with demon-possessed people in Brazil, and cast out the spirits from them in Jesus' name; and on one occasion, he dealt with a woman who, just like this man in **Matthew 9**, couldn't talk. The woman was “literally as stiff as a board, like a piece of lumber, unable to move anything but her eyes”; and she couldn't open her mouth, or talk.⁸ She could only grunt from her throat. Ken spoke to the demons, and they told him their names; however, on this occasion, Ken could not cast them out, as he had done with others. Why? Because in this woman's case, she *didn't really want to be delivered*. She *wanted* to consult the witch doctors, and to interact with spirits.⁹ My wife and I can personally testify of four occasions when we prayed over a demon-possessed person, and the demons left—but only temporarily. They came back. Why? Because that poor soul wanted deliverance from demonic possession, but didn't want to repent, turn to Christ, and be delivered from a life of immorality. The demons still had power over this person, as long as my wife and I weren't nearby.

Now, what about this demon-possessed man in **Matthew 9**? Did *he* want deliverance? We don't know. We don't know anything about him, other than that Jesus cast the demons from him. One thing is for sure, though—he didn't have any ability to ask Jesus for help, because he couldn't even talk. Yet, Jesus, in love and compassion, cast the demon from him. We would hope that afterward, this man did believe on Jesus, and was saved: but whether he ever believed on Jesus or not, the demon could *not* remain in him. When Jesus commands demons to leave, they *must* leave, because He is the Son of the Most High God!

Now, before we close this morning, I would like to point out to you some men in Capernaum who were in darkness—and who were *not* delivered from their darkness. It wasn't because Jesus *couldn't* open their eyes that they remained in darkness: rather, it was because they didn't *want* Jesus to open their eyes. I speak of the Pharisees. **(Read Matthew 9:34 again.)** Two blind men were delivered from physical darkness that day; but the Pharisees remained in

another kind of darkness—*spiritual darkness*. While nearly everyone else recognized Jesus’ divine power, the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils through the “*prince of devils*,” Satan. Jesus didn’t give the Pharisees the dignity of a reply; but on a later occasion, when they made this same foolish charge against Him, Jesus pointed out the illogic of what they were saying. (We will examine this when we get to **Matthew 12**.) For now, though, I would leave you with this thought: **Jesus will *not* open the eyes of those *who do not want to see!***

Read John 9:35-41.

The Pharisees *thought* they saw spiritually; but they didn’t. If they had acknowledged their spiritual blindness, and their need of the Light of the World, they would have had no sin. (In other words, their sin would have been judicially removed, and God would have accepted them.) However, they *refused* to acknowledge their sin, and their need of Jesus. Therefore, their sin remained upon them. They remained in spiritual darkness; and the moment they departed this life, they entered into *everlasting* chains of darkness...in hell!

Conclusion: My friend, if *you* have not come to the Light of the World, I urge you to come to Him today. There is not a soul whose eyes Jesus will not open—if that person *would* be healed. Jesus will flood your soul with light and peace, *if* you will only let Him. Repent of your sin, and place your complete trust in Jesus’ saving work for you on the cross! Should you be saved already, I would ask: “Do you believe that Jesus is able to do this?” Do you believe that He can deliver you from those sinful habits? Do you believe that He can bring you comfort, and pull you from the pit of despair? Do you believe that He has all the wisdom that you need for living? Should your faith be weak, let Him strengthen you today!

¹ Dick Hillis, Missionary, Evangelist, Pastor, Disciple Maker, <https://bdconline.net/en/stories/dick-hillis>.

² Robert J. Morgan, *Preacher’s Sourcebook of Creative Sermon Illustrations* (Nashville, TN: -72.Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007), p. 198.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*