

Jesus' Greatest Hits

The Blind Guide

Part 18 – November 4, 2007

[VIDEO: LYON'S FURNITURE]

It's pretty tough to get around when you can't see. It's downright dangerous! Only those who've lost their vision can appreciate the *full value* of sight. But imagine if you were blind, and you didn't even know it! How dangerous would *that* be?!

Worse yet, what if you tried to lead *other* blind people, who also didn't even know you were blind?! In the parable of The Blind Guide, Jesus cautions us, both as followers and as leaders, to keep our eyes wide open.

He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. - Luke 6:39-42 NIV



This is a "proverb-parable" (as opposed to a "story-parable"). The basic message of "the blind leading the blind" is: I cannot lead where I have not been; I cannot teach what I do not know; and I cannot give what I do not have. The extent to which we can and will be a blessing to others will *always* be limited by our own spiritual condition. The blind cannot lead the blind.

And our spiritual condition will *always* be greatly influenced by the people that we hang around – the people who influence us.

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. - Luke 6:40 NIV

A "teacher" is anyone who influences our thinking: our ideas, our attitudes, and our behaviors. So, who are the big influencers in your life? You don't even have to know them all personally; some might be celebrities, musicians, authors, or captains of industry. You can always tell where a person is headed by observing the spiritual fruit of those they allow as their influencers.

You may tell yourself that you can hang out with them, or admire them, and not become like them; but you *will* adopt *many* of their ideas and attitudes and behaviors without even seeing it happen. But they are your mentors, your teachers, your guides.

Let's keep in mind now, that we're only talking about the people who influence *you*; not the people who you are influencing.



However, it's not enough to see the truth; it must not be perverted with self-righteousness, superiority, or pride. Do you know who might do even more damage than the blind guides? The "one-eyed" judges! One-eyed judges choose criticism over compassion! They like to pick at the specks of sin in the eyes of others.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? - Luke 6:41 NIV



Sawdust and planks are made of the same material; they just differ in the amount. We need to remember that it's really easy to see even the *tiniest* little faults and flaws of others; and really difficult to see even the *biggest* ol' faults and flaws of our own.

In a "Peanuts" comic strip, Linus asks Lucy why she always criticizes him. She answers, "I have a knack for seeing other people's faults." He says: "What about your own?" She says, "I have a knack for overlooking them."

Jesus requires honest self-evaluation and self-improvement as a *condition* - as a *prerequisite* - for helping others. Failure to do so is called *hypocrisy*:

"You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye" - Luke 6:42 NIV

A "hypocrite" is someone who is quick to condemn the faults of others while ignoring their own; and they are of little Kingdom use.



- If I don't acknowledge my sin, I can't receive forgiveness.
- If I don't acknowledge my shame, I can't receive restoration.
- If I don't acknowledge my wounds, I can't receive healing.
- If I don't acknowledge the problem, I can't receive resolution.

So, if we want to help others, the most important step is to, each day, ask God to continue removing our blinders of pride. Removing the plank doesn't mean you've ridding ourselves of sin, it means being honest and transparent about it; this is the type of person who is used *mightily* in God's Kingdom.

Now we're going to get really personal!

Because, there's an area to which we are all blind to; and it's an area that we casually lead and follow others into regularly! Look at the two verses Luke records, just before this parable:

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. -
Luke 6:37-38 NIV

It's all about "judging", "condemning", and "forgiving". Not the type of judging that discerns right from wrong, or good from bad, or healthy from unhealthy, or holy from unholy. But the type of judging that condemns and condescends, that withholds forgiveness and refuses to show mercy.

It is the sin of believing that someone else is *less* than us. And it is the sin that Christians are quickest to commit.

- He gives this *directive* about harboring a critical spirit.
- Then he gives the *warning* of the blind falling into a pit.
- Then he gives the *illustration* of the one-eyed sin picker.

And here is how I believe it all fits together: When it comes to condemning, criticizing, or slandering people, we deal in partial truths, outward appearances, one-sided stories, personal agendas, and self-centered perspectives.

In other words: We're blind! We're blind to another's true inner motives as well as to the complete context for their actions.

Q: How often do you *follow* others into a pit of condemnation?

Q: Or, worse yet: How often do you *lead* others into the pit?!



Have you ever been to the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles? They've collected more than a *million* fossilized bones from the creatures that got caught in the unforgiving grip of that pit of doom. Once caught, escape was *almost* impossible. This is just like the pit of condemnation!

We're never more easily influenced than by an attitude of fault-finding, and a behavior or finger-pointing. It doesn't matter if we're doing the leading or the following; it's almost impossible to escape once we've waded in! This pit of doom has a ruthless grip!

Q: What do you suppose the best way to deal with a tar pit is?

A: Stay as far away from it as possible!

“But I have a knack of seeing other people’s faults!” - *Lucy*



Anyone can spot a flaw, that’s no special talent. Spotting a fault isn’t a gift, it’s a trap! Confronting and dealing with sin in a merciful, loving, humble, understanding way, *that’s* the gift! And this calls for a supernatural dose of humility! Because, when we spot a speck of sin that’s been blown against us, it’s difficult to respond without condemnation.

It’s common to have the facts right, and the reaction wrong!

One-eyed judges focus on the minor infractions of others while simultaneously ignoring the HUGE inconsistency of one forgiven sinner condemning another.

This critical spirit that Jesus warns us against:

- A. Prefers to tear down rather than to build up.
- B. Prefers going behind-the-back over face-to-face.
- C. Prefers to dwell on negatives rather than positives.
- D. Prefers harsh condemnation over loving confrontation.
- E. Prefers to hurt rather than to heal.

Blind guides and one-eyed judges share a common attitude:

- You need Christ much more than I do!

But, when we’re very aware of own fallen faults and flaws, we’ll empathize and sympathize with the weaknesses of others.

And together we’ll hopefully be able to say:

I was blind but now I see! - *John 9:25 NIV*

TRUE OR FALSE

Let’s see how well you’ve been listening; answer *true* or *false* when I ask the questions. In this passage, we’ve learned that:

1. We should be better known for criticism than compassion.
2. We can be right and wrong at the same time.
3. Picking at someone else’s specks of sin is fun.
4. It’s okay if you wade in the tar pit up to your knees.