

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

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When considering the parables that our Lord Jesus Christ taught, many come immediately to mind, such as that of the sower, the talents, the prodigal son, the good Samaritan, etc. One that we may not think about is that of the blind leading the blind. Yet the scriptures refer to this as a parable. Luke 6:39 says, "*And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?*" This same parable is also found in Matthew 15:14, where Jesus Christ warned his disciples of the Pharisees, telling them, "*Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*" In both of these passages, there is a similar context, which pertains to seeing and understanding what pertains to our inner man.

The context of the parable

The entire context of the sermon on the plain in Luke 6:20-49 is about being formed in the inner man, in the heart (Luke 6:45), to be what God wants us to be. We all have an outer man and an inner man (Luke 11:40; Rom 2:28-29). The outer man is only temporal, but the inner man is eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18). Our inner man contains our spiritual heart (Rom 2:29; Eph 3:16-17). It is the heart that is the source of all that we think, say, and do (Matt 15:16-20; Mark 7:18-23). And it is our heart that needs to be purified so that our actions will change (Acts 15:9; Jas 4:8). That is why Jesus warns us about blindness in Luke 6:39. If we cannot "see" the spiritual heart and what pertains to it, then our heart will not be purified, and then we will not be able to do God's will and then we will fall in the end (Luke 6:39-49). The context of his warning to the disciples in Matthew 15 is also about being formed in the inner man, in the heart, so as not to be defiled in God's sight (Matt 15:10-20). That is why Jesus warns us about blindness in Matthew 15:14. If we cannot "see" the spiritual heart and what pertains to it, then our heart will not be purified, and then we will not be able to do God's will and then we will be spiritually defiled (Matt 15:10-20).

Avoiding the ditch of false teachers

The Pharisees were spiritually blind. They could not "see" the inner man at all, but only the outer man (Matt 15:14-20; 23:16-28). Therefore, their sin remained (John 9:40-41). If we follow that same way, we too will be spiritually defiled and fall in the ditch. Therefore, we need to be able to see spiritually. In Matthew 15:12, Jesus' disciples came to him and said, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" Jesus then pronounced woe upon the Pharisees saying that the Father would root them up (Matt 15:13). Then Jesus warned his disciples to "let them alone" (Matt 15:14; see also Rom 16:17; 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 2:16,23; Titus

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(continued)

3:9). Jesus told his disciples to leave the Pharisees alone, because they were “blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt 15:14). We must avoid “foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the (old) law” (Titus 3:9). The reason to avoid these things is because “they are unprofitable and vain” (Titus 3:9). Such heretics are to be rejected (Titus 3:10-11), and we must mark *and avoid* them (Rom 16:17). We must “shun profane and vain babblings” (2 Tim 2:16), and avoid “foolish and unlearned questions” (2 Tim 2:23), such as the false doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim 2:17), who taught that the resurrection was already past (2 Tim 2:18). The reason to avoid doctrinal error is that it increases unto more ungodliness (2 Tim 2:16), eats like gangrene (2 Tim 2:17), overthrows the faith of those who do not avoid it (2 Tim 2:18). We must leave false teachers alone to avoid their ditch.

God’s purpose for Christians

The purpose of any disciple is to be like his master (Matt 10:25). In general, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ need to be like him (Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 3:18; Php 2:5-8; Col 3:10; 1 Pet 2:21; 4:1-2). But Luke 6:40 gives us a very specific goal and purpose, telling us: “The disciple is not above his master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.” Jesus Christ was perfect (Heb 2:10; Heb 5:9), and God’s purpose is for the disciples to be perfect like Christ His Son (John 17:22-26; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:27-28; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 Pet 5:10; 1 Jn 2:5-6; 4:17). “Perfect” literally means “complete.” In the Old Testament, only a “perfect” (complete) animal could be offered as a sacrifice to God. A complete animal was one who had nothing “superfluous or lacking in his parts,” speaking of body parts (Lev 22:21-23). That is physical perfection. Spiritual perfection also means not having anything “superfluous (extra) or lacking in his parts.” But rather than talking about body parts, spiritual perfection means being complete in God’s love (1 John 2:5; 4:12,17-18). God’s love does have parts: longsuffering, kindness, rejoicing in truth, forbearance, faith, hope, patience (1 Cor 13:4-7), and many other things (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:17-5:12; Col 3:10-15). And there are many things that God’s love is not (1 Cor 13:4-6; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5-9). We must have all of the parts, none extra and none lacking. These things have to be formed in our hearts (Acts 15:9; Eph 3:17-19; 1 Thes 3:13; 2 Thes 3:5; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22; Jas 4:8; 1 Pet 1:22, 3:3-4). Jesus was perfect, having all of the parts of God’s love formed in his heart with nothing extra and nothing lacking. That is the goal and purpose of his disciples. We need to “see” (understand) this purpose to fulfill it, and not fall into the ditch.