

Lesson Outline

Harmony of the Gospels

The Healing of a Blind Man in Bethsaida

Mark 8:13-26; Matt. 16:5-12

Jesus Tests the Faith of The Twelve

Mark 8:27-30; Matt. 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21

- I. **Introduction:** This lesson opens where Mark describes a miracle, that speaks of a blind man who was brought to Jesus that he might be touched and healed by the Master. The core design of this session, however, centers upon the testing of the faith of His disciples. Christ proceeds to confirm their true faith, that they might not be tossed about amidst various reports. He now enters the coasts of Caesarea Philippi.
- II. **The Healing of A Blind Man In Bethsaida**
 - A. **An Emblem of all who are Spiritually Blind.**

Thus, persons in the natural, are quite dark, even darkness itself, until they are made light by the Lord. They have no sight, nor sense of themselves, nor of the sinful, lost condition that they are in. They do not know that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.
 - B. **We are Commanded to Grow. (2 Timothy 2:15)**

As we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, it is some time before our spiritual senses enable us to discern between good and evil, or between truth and error in every situation. As babes in Christ, we are commanded to grow to develop a clear and distinct knowledge of Gospel truths; and a stability in them.
- III. **Jesus Tests The Faith of The Twelve**
 - A. **Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?**

He looked to be only a mere man, born as other men were; and was properly a son of mankind. Therefore, the question is, not what sort of man He was, whether a holy, good man, or not, or whether He was learned or unlearned, or even the Messiah. The question was, now that He was clothed in flesh and inhabited the earth like other men, what is the opinion that people have respecting me?
 - B. **The knowledge Peter was given of the Messiah**

The knowledge Peter had of the Messiah, was not owing to his earthly father, or to the advantage of an education, but to the revelation he had from Christ's *Father which is in heaven*, as is hereafter affirmed.
 - C. **Christ: The only foundation of the true Church.**

We are joined together, by a holy consent, into a spiritual building, a *solid rock*, that God may dwell in our midst. Christ announces that He Himself, the *Solid Rock*, (*not Peter*) would be the common foundation of the whole Church.
 - D. **The keys of the kingdom of heaven**

Ministers of the Gospel are invested with a power of binding and loosing, which is ratified in heaven. Believers are forgiven and freed from the condemnation of eternal death, and the cords of the curse, by which we were held in bondage is removed. The testimony of believers is used to do this through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- IV. **How to try the spirits**

(Handout attached)
- V. **Invitation to Discipleship**

How To Try The Spirits

(Adapted from A. W. Tozer)

- 1. One vital test of all religious experience is how it affects our relation to God and our concept of God and our attitude toward Him.** *Revelation 4:11*
- 2. How has this new experience affected my attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ?** *(Anything that makes Him less than God has declared Him to be is delusion and must be rejected. Acts 2:36 & Acts 4:12)*
- 3. Another revealing test of the soundness of religious experience is, how does it affect my attitude toward the Holy Scriptures?** *(Whatever originates outside the Scriptures should for that very reason be suspect until it can be shown to be in accord with them. We should never underestimate the value of the letter of the Word. Hebrews 4:12)*
- 4. We can prove the quality of religious experience by its effect on the self-life.** *(A good rule of thumb is: If this experience has served to humble me and make me small and vile in my own eyes, having an overpowering sense of sin when confronted with the infinite holiness and majesty of God, it is of God; but if it has given me a feeling of self-satisfaction, it is false and should be dismissed as emanating from self or the devil. Galatians 5:17, Romans 8:5,7)*
- 5. Our relation to and our attitude toward our fellow Christians is another accurate test of religious experience.** *(Any religious experience that fails to deepen our love for our fellow Christians -not wolves in sheep clothing but Christians - may be safely written off as inauthentic. If we love God we will love His children. 1 John 3:18,19; 1 John 4:7,8)*
- 6. Another certain test of the source of religious experience is: How it affects our relation to and our attitude toward the world.** *(Any real work of God in our heart will tend to unfit us for the world's fellowship - 1 John 2:15)*
- 7. The final test of the genuineness of Christian experience is what it does to our attitude toward sin.** *Titus 2:11-13; Psalm 5:4,5*