

“if you believe God will judge all according to their works” – wow, I mean this is what we believe and teach, but do we act like it?

The Word of God Opens the Heart

Why does Jesus say that “blessed is he who does not see but believes”

This text dove tails off the end of the text from last week.

One of the things I didn't get a chance to talk about last week was the final thing Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen you have believed, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The text today is an example of those who have not seen and yet believed. True they saw Jesus later, but their belief came first, as they walked and talked with Him, not knowing who He was, their eyes were opened by the word of God to understand that all which Jesus did was written in the scriptures

It is through the word of God that we come to faith, not through the evidence no matter how much we see. This is something that is made clear in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as well as our text before us today. This doesn't mean that there isn't evidence, there is plenty of evidence, it just means that man is unwilling to accept the evidence because he is unwilling to believe.

Man is blinded by his own desires, pride, bias and ideology that he can't see the things staring him right in the face. We know this to be true, we see it all the time

Year after year after year, for the last two / three hundred years, every year people level these claims against Christianity why the bible is wrong. And they have this so called proof and it's a big thing for a few weeks or a few months or even sometimes a few years. And then they seem to disappear, and then of course some new “proof” comes out. Well why do they disappear? Because they are proven false.

There never was a Sodom and Gomorrah
There never was a king David
There never was a king of Babylon named Belteshazer
The bible talks about camels in Canaan
The bible teaches the world is flat

So what about us? Do we have hearts that hear and see only what we want? ABSOLUTELY. We do it all the time, we want something and so we refuse to listen when God's word says that is wrong. Men think the headship principle is an excuse to boss their wife around. Women think that because their husbands are not doing what they should, that that's an excuse for them to ignore what God says to them. We read into God's word what we want.

Thank God, that our salvation is not dependent on our understanding. Jesus died for our sins and therefore we are going to heaven.

But the one bias that we should work the hardest at breaking free of, is all the excuses we have built up around our own sin. That can only be done by prayer and study. This is why prayer and study have to be done together. So that the word of God can open our hearts just as it opened the hearts of these disciples in our text.

So here Jesus is walking with these two disciples, but they don't know who He is. Why didn't they know? And there is a little bit of a question in our text.

Was the miracle the fact that their eyes were shut or the fact that their eyes were opened? Was the miracle spiritual or physical? Did they not see Jesus because they didn't believe or because Jesus purposely closed their eyes? – These are all the same question

The theologian probably wants to emphasize their willful stubbornness, and look what the word of God can do

The Sunday school teacher probably wants to emphasize, Jesus hid himself

The fact that it is the eyes that were closed and the eyes that were opened suggest that Jesus was purposely hiding himself from them. Usually when the bible people talks about people who willfully will not see it talks about their hearts being closed or open. So the fact that the Bible here says, "their eyes were closed," indicates to me that Jesus purposely did not allow them to recognize him.

Jesus hides, and then reveals himself in the Word of God. This is exactly why He told Thomas "blessed are they who don't see but believe." "Don't seek the signs, seek me in the Word."

But even if Jesus is the one that closed their eyes, he did it because their hearts were closed. His purpose in hiding himself was to show them how to find him in the scriptures. He would not have had to do that if their hearts were already open to hear and understand what God says in His word.

Law and gospel? We all have this hardness of heart, it takes the hammer of God's word to break upon our prideful heart and bear the truth of God's word.

What does the Old Testament teach us about Jesus? This is one of the basic proofs of scripture's authority and truth.

Wouldn't it be great to know what it was that Jesus said to those disciples?

Well we probably have some of what He said in the gospels and epistles. I'm sure that much of what he pointed out was the beginning of their study into the Old Testament. You know we are told that the apostles regularly argued with the Jews, showing from the scripture that Jesus was the Christ. But the great thing is to know that the Old Testament does indeed give witness to Jesus. That is one of the ways that we know that everything we are taught is true. All these prophecies are fulfilled in Christ.

Of course our opponents would say that we are being biased. You only think these things speak about Christ because you want them too. Sometimes it seems like they might be correct. It is easy to see why they think we are reading back into the story of Jonah. But there are other passages that are just too explicit and too precise, Isaiah 53 for example.

Or Genesis 3:15 - And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

Or even the virgin birth passage, **Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. – Now this is one that skeptics will often attack, it doesn't say virgin. But here context is everything. A married woman giving birth is not a sign. We aren't reading into the text, the text is clearly referring to a virgin.

And so you have all these old testament passages confirming the account of the new testament, and showing that God's word is true. And not only that God's word is true but that from the very beginning this was God's plan to come and die for our sins, so that we could be saved.

How wonderful that we don't need to see Jesus in person, to know He is alive. But we have all this evidence supporting the Word, showing that the tomb is empty, Jesus is alive and because He lives we will live also.