

Sermon on the Mount
Lesson #15
“Kingdom Cautions”
Beware of spiritual double vision Part III
Matthew 6:22-24

Scripture: Matthew 5:20 *“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Introduction:

I’m quite sure that I was born a century to late. Dirt roads, horseback, oil lamps and no air conditioning would suit me just fine. You see, I’m not very skilled with most modern inventions, especially electronics. Through much struggle of spirit I have just learned to program the VCR.

Do you remember how simply life was before computers? Many of us today have personal home computers. Our kids use them for homework. Some use it for social networking. We use it like a shopping mall to buy things. We do our taxes on them and manage our bank accounts with them and even pay bills with them.

But there are people called hackers who plot to ruin our programming and steal our sensitive information from our computers. These evil people are simply trying to ruin us at all cost and exploit us where they can.

So in an effort to protect ourselves we get virus protection programs so our computers can stay focused on intended programming and not get side tracked.

Another way we do this to set filters, for instance I have told my computer not to display pornographic sites. I’ve also told my computer not to take information from would be senders without my permission.

Transitional Statement:

In Matthew chapter six, Jesus has really been warning us against the corruption of our minds. He began by warning us about doing our righteousness to be seen by men and then He warned us about materialism when He talked about our treasures.

Today Jesus is going to talk to us about the need for protected spiritual vision

I. First of all, Jesus tells us that our minds are the gateway of light for the soul.

Matthew 6:22 *“The eye is the lamp of the body...”*

A. Jesus begins here with a simple analogy.

1. Thinking of our bodies and all its different parts, Jesus mentions that our eyes are a lamp for our bodies.

a. Now lamps have different functions for sure:

- 1) Like a lamp at an intersection helps us see and avoid dangers
- 2) Lamps help us work or accomplish tasks when it is dark.
- 3) Lamps are even used to for special effects

4) But here, Jesus points to the most basic uses for a lamp...to help us see the path and find our focus.

2. Understanding that Jesus' point is spiritual we know that His point is not about our anatomy.

a. I think the eye here represents our minds focus.

1) And it includes our understanding, desires and even our wills.

b. We might think of our minds as the gateway of light for our souls

1) Purity, holiness and righteousness are ushered into our lives or locked out by our minds focus.

B. So with this in mind, God did not create us to be nocturnal in the spiritual sense, that is we were not meant to dwell in darkness.

1. 1 Peter 2:9 reminds us that we were called out of darkness

2. Paul says in Eph 5:8 that we are children of light

3. And Jesus toward the beginning of this very sermon points out that we are to be the lights of the world Matthew 5:14.

4. And 1 John 1:7 says:

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

a. So light represents that which is pure, holy and right before God.

b. And make no mistake about it, we are created to have our existence within the light of God.

II. Then Jesus tells us to have single vision

“...so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.”

A. The word “*clear*” is key to understanding this set of passages.

1. “Clear” in its basic form means according to Thayer Greek Dictionary, to be single folded ...basically to have a single focus or direction.

B. So here Jesus is pointing out that for our souls to be filled with the light of God ...we must have a single focus.

1. Paul says this very thing so well in Colossians 3:1-3

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

C. You know, spiritually speaking, God wants us to have tunnel vision.

1. He wants to be the center of our attention
2. And He wants us to get rid of the peripheral distractions.
 - a. To this we have a choice
 - b. It’s not like God asks us to do something that is impossible

D. There’s not a thing in the world like having something in your eye while your trying to drive down the road.

1. Talk about dangerous right?
 - a. You’ll be swerving all over the road about to kill yourself and everyone else that on the road around you.
 - b. You know your spiritual vision also effects those around you.

III. Now Jesus takes pause to warn us of trying to walk with one foot in the church and one foot in the world.

Matthew 6:23 *“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.”*

A. “*Bad*” here points to what is evil and in context it points to spiritual double vision.

1. I’ve made a pair of glasses here that make you have double vision. When they are on, out of my right eye I see straight off to my right and out of my left eye I see straight off to my left.

- a. With both eyes open...talk about a mess. I can't hardly walk in any direction....I feel like I am going to fall down.
- B. In 2 Samuel 11 we find an example of spiritual double vision. King Solomon chose to set his gaze upon a neighbors wife, Bathsheba, as she bathed on a nearby rooftop. By doing so, he willingly turned away from God, and engaged sin.
- C. Church, we can not walk with one foot in the church and the other in world.
 - 1. We can't set here on Sundays and proclaim the greatness of God by songs and prayers and bible study and then walk as the world walks or seek the things the world seeks.
 - 2. It's hard to watch, year after year as Satan uses our minds desires to capture our attention away from God.
 - a. He lures us in like a spinner bait lures a big bass under a lily pad
 - b. He lures us in by the lust of our hearts.

James 1:14-15

"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

- 3. It's hard to watch as a lack of spiritual focus floods a persons heart with darkness.....and it's even harder to helplessly watch as darkness consumes a fellow Christian.
- C. But church with our vision we have a choice
 - 1. Satan doesn't have the ability to force our attention away from God.
 - a. It's a choice we make.

1 Corinthians 10:13

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."
 - b. But more even than a choice...we have a responsibility to our savior and our God.
- D. There are a lot of different components to spiritual focus.
 - 1. Probably first and foremost is a deep understanding of God's love.
 - 2. Secondly would be an unquenchable conviction to be shaped by the will of God... Romans 12:1-2

3. And thirdly would be the daily, hourly and sometimes minutely maintenance of our spiritual focus.

a. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5

“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,”

b. Philippians 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things”

IV. Then Jesus tells us to beware of artificial light.

“If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

A. Within the context it seems that Jesus is saying that if the light that is guiding our path turns out in reality to be darkness, ...then great is that darkness.

1. That is, if we have artificially illuminated our life with personal pleasure and desires, seeking after our direction and our will, then our condition is actually worse than simply darkness because our minds have become corrupted and slanted toward understanding what is false for what is truth.

2. Isaiah mentions this type of thinking in 5:20

*20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness*

a. Just last week I listened to some lady on C-Span take her platform to tell the world that abortion was a woman's right and to take any other position would be an evil thing.

1) This seems to be a perfect example of the lack of spiritual focus that Jesus is talking about, where the light of spiritual knowledge trumps God's intention.

B. You know there are degrees of darkness and here Jesus points to that outer realm of darkness where the soul is lost for eternity.

1. So to His question *“how great is the darkness”*

a. I would simply say it is a darkness with eternal consequence.

b. It is a darkness that would cause us to believe that we can be godly and worldly at the same time.

1) And ultimately that sin doesn't really matter.

2) But to this Jesus says in Matthew 6:24

24 " No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Conclusion:

What kind of spiritual vision do you have?

Do you have your virus protection on ...Psalms 119:105

Have you set your filters? Or is there something distracting your focus on God?