

Seeing Like Jesus

(Matthew 11:20-30)

I. Introduction

- A. There's an old joke about the guy pulled over by a police officer for speeding
1. The policeman notices an open container, "What is that you're drinking?"
 - a. He says, "*Water.*" The cop smells it, "Sire, that not water, that's wine!"
 - b. He raises his hands and says, "*Praise God; He has done it again!*"
 2. Wouldn't it be great to actually see honest to goodness miracle take place
 - a. I'm not talking about a miracle like the Cubs winning the World Series
 - b. I'm not talking about the kind of miracles people sometimes claim today
 - 1) I saw Earnest Angely once healing someone who lost sense of taste!
 - 2) Lewis Grizzard tells of healing service where guy got carried away
 - a) Jumping all over the stage praising God after he was supposed healed
 - b) He fell off the stage and badly broke his leg—and there was a panic
 - c) Looked at faith-healer, "*I just do sickness; I don't do broken bones!*"
 - c. Those kinds of so-called "miracles" have harmed people's faith
- B. But wouldn't it make a difference if we saw a miracle of Biblical proportions?
1. Maybe hear God's voice speaking from cloud-shrouded mountain (*Sinai*)
 - a. Maybe watching a warrior kill 1000 enemies with a jawbone (*Samson*)
 - b. Maybe being at grave of one dead for days and see them raised (*Lazarus*)
 2. Those Bible miracles this in common—they made no impact in people lives
 - a. The people who heard God's voice on Sinai rejected Him at Jordan
 - b. Despite his miraculous victories, Samson led a lifestyle that rejected God
 - c. The religious leaders who personally knew about Lazarus resurrection?
 - 1) First thought was they needed to kill Jesus to shut him up (**Jn 11:45**)
 - 2) Their second thought was to kill Lazarus as well (**Jn 12:10-11**)
 3. People can witness miracles and then decided they aren't going to believe
 4. In Tuesday reading in **Matt 11**, Jesus addresses those who saw miracles
 - a. Like the Israelites in OT, the miracles were making much of difference
 - b. Even dramatic miracles were not leading them to truly repent

II. Seeing Miracles, But Not Seeing God

A. The text begins as Jesus “denounces” cities who saw his miracles (**Matt 11:20**)
Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

1. The word Jesus uses here “denounce” is really the word for “insult”
 - a. Jesus used it earlier, “Blessed are you when people insult you” (**Mt 5:11**)
 - b. The thieves (**Mt 27:44**) and priests (**Mk 15:32**) insult Jesus on cross.
2. This is more than just Jesus “criticizing” the people (*as in the NCV*)
3. There is more of an edge, there is something of a challenge here

B. This challenge is to cities who saw the miracles and didn’t repent (**11:21-24**)

²¹ “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. ²⁴ If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

1. Korazin and Bethsaida were small fishing villages on the Sea of Galilee
 - a. Were headed to Bethsaida when Jesus walked on water (**Mk 6:45**)
 - b. Bethsaida was also the destination when Jesus fed 5000 (**Lk 9:10**)
 - c. Peter, Andrew and Phillip were all Bethsaida homeboys (**Jn 1:44**)
2. And Capernaum became Jesus new hometown and home base (**Mt 4:13**)
 - a. A servant of a Roman centurion was healed at Capernaum (**Mt 8:5**)
 - b. Jesus cast out demons (**Mk 1:21**) and healed a paralytic (**Mk 2:1**)
3. These little towns saw “most of his miracles.” But they **didn’t repent!**

C. “Then Jesus began to denounce” connects this to previous rejection (**11:18-19**)

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”’

1. Jewish leaders reject both Jesus and John the Baptist (*can’t win for losing*)
2. The very towns where Jesus did most of his miracles didn’t believe
 - a. **Question:** Wouldn’t you expect a **revival** to break out among people?
 - 1) Wouldn’t that be the expected response to these dramatic miracles?
 - 2) It would have in Sodom-n-Gomorrah or Type-n-Sidon (*Jezebel’s home*)
 - b. Like the Jewish leaders, those who witnessed miracles were not changed
 - c. The very people that you would expect to believe didn’t believe at all!

III. Seeing Like Jesus

A. **Question:** Who is it that has all the advantages in the world as we know it?

1. The rich, the powerful, the educated—don't these folks get all the breaks?
 - a. We refer to people like this (and like us really) as “*the advantaged*”
 - b. That makes poor, weak, uneducated unwashed masses “*disadvantaged*”
2. Jesus has a different view of advantaged and disadvantaged (**Matt 11:25**)
At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.
 - a. Who were the “*wise and learned*” people Jesus is talking about here?
 - 1) Pharisees? Rabbis? Priests? None of those people listen to Jesus
 - 2) Those were the people who saw John as demonic & Jesus as drunk
 - b. In contrast, things of God are revealed to “*children*” (NASB “*infants*”)
 - 1) Rabbis were indigent when the “*children*” praised Jesus (**Mt 21:15**)
When the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.
 - 2) France— this was simply Pharisee-speak of the uneducated masses
 - c. Jesus says that was these “*little children*” who have deep things of God

B. This reversal of the world's standards was promised by Isaiah (**Isa 29:14**)

Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.”

1. Paul quotes this text, and then he applies it to Jesus (**1 Cor 1:20-21**)
Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.
 - a. Is Paul an anti-intellectual who is opposed to education and learning?
 - 1) Of course not! Paul was himself a wise man, scholar & philosopher
 - 2) He knew the kind of arrogance and pride that wisdom can bring!
 - b. Paul says that it is Christ who is “*power of God and the wisdom of God*”
 - c. Jesus says the wisdom of the ages had been revealed to little children
2. So who was it that were advantaged— the truly blessed people?
 - a. It was not those who saw Jesus' miracles—many of them rejected Him.
 - b. It wasn't the educated and powerful—most of them rejected Jesus.
 - c. It was those who saw things like Jesus did—those who saw with faith.

IV. Conclusion

- A. In **2 Kings 6**, the King of Aram (Syria) is out to get the prophet Elisha
1. It seems every time Aram attacks, Israel already knows where and when
 - a. The king thinks he has a spy, but in reality, Israel has a prophet
 - b. So he orders, “*Get Elisha!*” The next day, his army surrounds Dothan
 2. Elisha’s servant goes to get paper that morning—army surrounding them!
 - a. I would imagine a large army around you would be a bit stressful
 - b. While he freaks out, Elisha is nonchalant (**Reading: 2 Kings 6:15-20**)
 3. Elisha’s servant could see only the seen— but *Elisha saw the unseen*
 - a. Point of text today— we must learn to see things like Jesus sees them
 - b. It not the learned or wise who see God, but those who believe as children
- B. Ultimately faith is the willingness to see that which cannot be seen (**Heb 11:1**)
Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see
1. **Hebrews 11** illustrates this with example after example from OT faithful
 - a. Noah believed when he was “*warned about things not yet seen*” (**11:7**)
 - b. Abraham saw unseen city “*whose architect and builder is God*” (**11:10**)
 - c. Moses left Egypt because “*because he saw him who is invisible*” (**11:27**)
 2. The writer makes his conclusion in **v. 13** (*keeps ON going, like most preachers*)
All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth
 - a. These people were faithful because they were able to see the unseen
 - 1) They never fully receive what was promised in this life—way of faith
 - 2) They saw God’s promises from a distance—by faith and thru faith
 - b. Because they lived by faith, they never fully fit in the world around them
 - c. But they lived by faith and they saw by faith that which cannot be seen.
 3. Like Elisha’s servant, sometimes our faith is eclipsed by the things we see
 - a. The material things around us just seem more real... at least more urgent
 - b. We can become impressed by power, wealth, status, education
 - c. When we focus so intently on things of this world, we stop seeing God
- C. So we pray with Elisha, “*Lord, open our eyes so that we may see You!*”