



“...the light within you.”

-Luke 11:29-36

by Pastor Tim Dodson

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an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. "For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. "If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

Luke 11:29-36 *And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is*

“This is an evil generation...” Hmmmm...apparently Jesus had not had the opportunity to attend a modern course on how to reach the unchurched by making His message user friendly! Clearly, He had not heard of the methods of the seeker friendly church movement. Even as the crowds were increasing, Jesus herein opened His sermon by saying, *“This generation is a wicked generation.”* Any preacher who wants to build his church knows that you’ve got to make people feel good about themselves...except I guess Christ didn’t think so!

As the crowds were increasing,” Jesus didn’t say, “You’re all wonderful people. God loves you and so do I.” Jesus wasn’t patting them on the head to build their self-esteem. We can’t help but remember the false prophets who in the Old Testament gained a large following by saying, “Peace, peace,” when there was no true peace (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). God said that they healed the brokenness of His people superficially. Any preaching that does not confront sin is false preaching. God doesn’t heal by giving lots of hugs to make sinners feel better about themselves. He heals by confronting and cutting out the cancer of sin that is slowly but surely destroying people. So Jesus began by saying, ***“This generation is a wicked generation.”***

Biblical preaching always reproves, rebukes, and exhorts. It doesn’t tickle your ears and support your own desires. When we hear the Word preached or when we read the Word, we need to allow it to confront our sin.

There always was and always is those who will seek to test the Lord. The very act of it encompasses all sorts of sin really...pride, self-deification, worldliness, lust, power-mongering, unbelief, and dishonoring of God, etc. God warned mankind of the seriousness of such an act, all the way back in Deuteronomy 6:16 saying clearly *“You must not test the LORD your God...”* Jesus ‘threw down’ on the same issue when Satan tried to push Him

in the wilderness quoting that same passage again to state “*You must not test the LORD your God...*” (Luke 4:12)

Despite the solemn directive, there are always those out there that persist in such. No doubt it is because from the beginning man has attempted to ‘bump chests’ with God in a contest for control. This passage and this event is no different. Seldom if ever does the requesting party *really* want to experience such a ‘proof’ anyway, but it is most often rather a challenge of panache and who will be the ‘alpha-male’ in the room. It’s just pride, and often it’s pride on steroids. Truth is that most often the desire is to honestly *not* see whatever is being requested because that grants a self-permission to not believe and further, to not act, because of it.

On the other hand, man does tend to enjoy the flash and the awe of the amazing. It’s the same feeling we get when we watch good fireworks or ride a rollercoaster. It’s titillating for the moment but quickly forgotten. Seldom if ever does anyone make a lasting life decision because of some shock and awe. Some people are obsessively seeking God to do something, show something, or *be* something. Like spoiled children we approach Christ with an “*if you really love me then you would...*(fill in the blank).”

And of course there are those who know God is speaking to them on some matter or another and they just keep on going and plug their spiritual ears...hence testing God to make good on His threats to spank them. The bottom line in all of this is that there are just some folks who perpetually are testing God. I’m not talking about the true enquiry...the one whose is looking into this whole Jesus thing. I’m talking about the guy who says Christ is his Savior *and* Lord. For that guy, the kindergarten ‘show and tell’ times should be over. And yet...

For those of us that are really looking, we can easily see back at the track record of Christ’s earthly ministry and stagger at the magnitude of the miraculous. He had fed the hungry. He had calmed both nature and the fear of men. He taught as no other man has ever done. He healed all manner of sicknesses and infirmities, cast out evil spirits, made the blind see, the crippled walk, and raised the dead. Yet for many, even this was not enough. For many, it still isn’t. For some of us it will always be “but what are you going to do for me?”

The truth is that so often mankind, left to himself, just doesn’t *want* to believe. He wants to live like he wants, and pursue his own thing. Man from the garden has never wanted a Lord over him, certainly not One who demands all he is and all he has. Man's heart is hard, and he is obstinate in his unbelief, for to live otherwise is just too expensive!

So Jesus said that the only sign they would yet witness was the “sign of Jonah.” Such a statement could or *should* lead a Jew to clearly understand what He was saying. But the idea here was that, like Jonah, He too would go into the ‘belly of the whale’ for three days and would again come forth and live! And if His coming back from the dead wasn’t convincing enough, then nothing would be. Jesus pointed out that a lot of people have so searched and found the truth. Many, with far less evidence and data than they had in that day, not to mention all the historical, archeological and evidential discoveries that have been made since even then!

For us, the guilt is the same. For we live in a nation that at least was *founded* on the principles of Christianity. Bibles are plentiful, there’s Christian radio station in nearly every community, many have broadcast TV services also, and churches are on every other corner. Truly, we are without excuse when it comes to the knowledge of God. (NOTE for those who see the account of Jonah as merely an allegory or a story of fiction to make a point: *Jesus* understood the story of Jonah as a historical fact, yet so many who call themselves Christians today do not. Where does that leave *them*?)

Jesus begins again to challenge the people around Him as to the *manifest* of their faith. That's an important thing to point out, because we are so apt to see Jesus as 'light and fluffy' and so overtly 'easy' that He would never actually ask us to 'step up to the plate.' But He does and He does *often* in the gospels! He challenges the 'easy-jesus' Christian; the one who is ever so reluctant to publically declare his position and nothing about his living is currently giving him away as a child of the king. Jesus uses straight up common-sense to highlight the fact that if we are indeed born again, we don't try to hide that fact.

Jesus' example is based upon the ancient idea that light entered the body through the eyes. Therefore if our eyes are good, then much light will be able to enter our lives. And of course, we can therefore gather our Lord's insinuation herein. It seems that maybe He was strongly implying that if they needed another sign, then maybe it was because they were in fact blind!

We therefore, in response to the text ourselves, must ask also: *how are our eyes?* The use of the 'singular eye' aspect of the story speaks of the often presented idea in scripture of a singleness of purpose as well as singleness of focus. *One* vision and *one* goal. The 'good eye' therefore is one that has pure motives and sees *one path*. One that sees only Christ and His purposes for one's life. There is no 'heavenly negotiations' going on...no compromise of our identity as a child of God and no fudging the *full on 'sold out'* calling upon our lives.

James says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." If it is true that there is only one light, we must then ask "do we see it?" What is *our* focus today? Where is *our* heart? Where is *our* treasure?

What Jesus was telling us is that if our eyes are blind, then our whole body will be blind also. His point wasn't, *at least in this case*, an issue of what those eyes are *seeing*, (though that indeed may be an issue also), but moreover the health and the focus of the eye itself. If my eye sees the light, then I too will be full of light. But if it does not, then there will only be darkness. We tend to think that the danger we face is out there, but in truth it is most often *in here*.

Deeply troubling is the fact that so many today believe themselves to be in possession of the light, but their life manifests rather a constant stumbling about in the darkness. 2Corinthians 13:5 warns us to "*Examine (ourselves) to see if (our) faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.*" Offering herein that very method of self-evaluation, Jesus states that a good eye and an enlightened soul will show itself in every part of our life. A light inside us, **will** shine out of us in every way. It will not be by work and effort, but rather by natural attribute. Because we **do**, what we **are**. It is not hard to see who is walking with the ability of sight and who is cautiously and fearfully feeling his or her way through life in the dark!

If we are full of light, it's **going** to leak out! In a cave-dark world, even a penlight gets greatly noticed! It is no secret to us or anyone with whom we have contact with. Acts 4:13 speaks of this very aspect saying "*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*"

John 8:12 "*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'*" Not **reflect** that light, or **know** that light, or **see** that light or **understand** that light. All of those are of course true. But in fact it promises that we will **HAVE** that light...be in *possession of that light*. The original language is quite specific and clear. It speaks of ownership and unity with.

"If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." What is this second "whole body" spoken of herein? The "whole body" of the community of fellowship! The 'body of Christ' ***which is this church***. Reiterating the message that each of us can bring into this fellowship a light or darkness. If we each in turn are full of the light of Christ, such pushes out the darkness in the greater body and this church will be "full" of light...a light that is like that of a "bright shining of a lamp." For light is not the absence of darkness but darkness rather is the absence of light.

The people present with Christ that day were not truly seeking, but rather came with rebellion in their hearts. Ezekiel 33:30-33 *"Son of man, your people talk about you in their houses and whisper about you at the doors. They say to each other, 'Come on, let's go hear the prophet tell us what the LORD is saying!' So my people come pretending to be sincere and sit before you. They listen to your words, but they have no intention of doing what you say. Their mouths are full of lustful words, and their hearts seek only after money. You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don't act on it! But when all these terrible things happen to them — as they certainly will — then they will know a prophet has been among them."*

This heart is manifest throughout the world today. We, according to scripture, are all like sheep who have gone astray, who each have turned to his own way. Therefore we cannot come to the holy God and demand that He jump through our hoops to meet our demands for proof. Our need today is not for more proof; our need is for more repentance. God has given us all the evidence we need in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the miraculous around us. We can only come to Him on His terms through the way He has provided, through the Lamb of God who died for our sins and was raised for our salvation.

If a person's spiritual eye is clear, he can see the truth that Jesus proclaims. But, if a person's heart is darkened by sin, the light does no good. No amount of light helps a blind man (11:34). Thus, the warning, "Watch out that the light in you may not be darkness." Respond obediently to the light that you've been given through Jesus and you will receive more light. Ignore or reject the light that you've been given, and it will be taken away and you'll be left in total darkness. But if you respond obediently to the light Jesus gives, your entire life will be lit up and you will be a light unto others (11:36).