

Clouded by Unbelief



The famous Helen Keller wrote an article entitled, "Three days to see." Her article was a fanciful look at what she would do if she could see for three days and then have to return to blindness. On day one, she wrote, she would want to look at the faces that have showed her kindness and compassion. Day two, she dreamed of visiting museums, historical sights and art galleries. The last day, would be spent in the city looking at tall buildings but mostly looking at people. She wanted to see what made people smile and even to understand their sufferings.

That thought finds a great connection to our study of Burry Vision. This study takes a look at the important topic of unbelief.

- Some send a lifetime not seeing the right things (Mt 13:13)
Looking for happiness in the wrong places, among the wrong people, and in the wrong things
- Others only see what they want to see. They have "selective" vision
- A few truly have their eyes opened to see the incredible blessings of the Lord (Mt 13:16)
- Jesus told Thomas, "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" (John 20:29).

A. The Lord was disappointed in the little faith of the disciples

1. Five times in Matthew, the Lord points out the little faith of the apostles (Mt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20)
 - even after the resurrection this was a problem (Mk 16:14)
They had reasons to believe: report of the women; report of the two on the road to Emmaus; the promise of the Lord (Jn 2:18-21)
2. the apostles were not the only ones
Mt 13:58 in Jesus' home town
Mk 9:14-27 help my "unbelief"
3. unbelief is not just an issue with someone who is not a Christian
 - it is a leading cause of apostasy and walking away from the Lord among Christians
 - "I no longer believe" what the Bible says

B. What is life like if we no longer believe?

1. It is to be secular
 - it is a life without prayers, worship, or the input of God's word to guide and govern our lives
 - it is believing that there is nothing higher than mankind
 - it is believing that we set our own rules and determine what is right or wrong

The Reality of Unbelief:

- We are on our own. There is no one to help us.
- This is as good as it gets. As we age, the best is behind us.
- There is nothing to look forward to. To the unbeliever the cemetery is the end of all of us. No Heaven. No God.
- There is no reason to be thoughtful and kind. Life is dark, dreary and hopeless.

Ephesians 2:12 "remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."



C. Why is there so much unbelief?

1. A refusal to accept the evidence of the Scriptures
 - some have never looked at it
 - some just can't come to accept it (Jn 11:45-48; 12:9-11)
2. Caused by not understanding the nature of this world
 - the presence of evil and suffering has led many to close their eyes
 - trials and tribulations often cause this (Job 2:9)
3. Having a heart that is taken over by temptation and sin
 - either sin will drive God out of your heart, or your faith will drive sin out of your life
 - our associations, habits, choices of entertainment all lead to either sin or God in my heart

What is it that we are to believe (John 3:16)?

- Jesus is the risen Savior, the son of God
- the inspiration and authority of Scriptures
- we are responsible for our choices in life
- we will be judged by God
- we will live on in eternal life or eternal separation

2 Timothy 1:12 "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

Notice Paul's declarative statements:

D. How do I keep believing?

1. I take ownership of my faith and I put some effort into it
 - 1 Tim 4:15-16 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
 - several key action words here
 - these reflect and surround a heart that wants to believe
 - Acts 18:5 Paul was "Occupied with the word" (ESV)
2. I continue to feed my faith and not my doubts
3. I surround myself around confident believers
4. I trust the Lord and what He has said
 - I realize that I stand at the intersection with Eve. Do I listen and trust those who cast doubt upon God and His word, knowing that doubters have never helped my life. Or, do I trust in the One who made me, blessed me and is there for me?
5. I look at what life is like to walk away from God

