

## A SPIRITUAL CHECK UP

Mark 7:1-8:26

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** Does anyone look forward to having a complete physical examination? There is the fear that something wrong might be found or that one is overweight and a diet is in order, that there is going to have to be more exercise. Sometimes people don't tell the doctor all that has been going on or what hasn't been working properly or pains and aches that they have been feeling. Some people just don't like to have physical exams for they want to keep on living their lives as they always have. They "think" that they are healthy, that they can live with whatever ailments they have. That same attitude exists in one's spiritual life as well but Jesus conducts a spiritual exam in this text of the heart, ears and eyes.

### I. THERE ARE SPIRITUAL HEART CONDITIONS AS WELL AS PHYSICAL ONES

#### 1. *Mark 7:1-23*

2. Most physical heart attacks are not sudden, obvious, physical attacks where a person grabs his/her chest and falls over in a faint.
  - Heart attacks occur when there isn't enough oxygen-rich blood reaching the heart muscle and damage results.
  - Such attacks occur because over a long period of time the arteries have been filling up with fatty materials and cause blockage in the flow of the needed blood.
  - There are gradual symptoms: a little pain now and then, discomfort in the neck, stomach, arms, etc. All which one usually just passes off as nothing to worry about.
  - People appear healthy on the outside, but on the inside their hearts are unhealthy.
3. Jesus explains to the religious authorities that having clean hands does not indicate genuine cleanliness and that following rules does not indicate genuine obedience.
  - Jesus further teaches that a person's heart is not guided by one's behavior but the opposite, one's behavior is guided by his/her heart.
  - People can appear to be spiritual, pure, but on the inside are actually the opposite.
    - Such people are called hypocrites.
  - What do YOU want people to think about you? What if they knew all that was on the inside, in YOUR heart? Are YOU as pure on the inside as you appear to be on the outside?
  - The religious leaders (Pharisees) were very good at appearing to be religious, spiritual, but on the inside, in their hearts they were far from being that good.
4. How many believers (Christians) cover up, pretend to be on the outside what they are not on the inside?
  - What do people want others to think about them?
5. Would YOU benefit from a "spiritual" heart attack?

### II. THERE IS SPIRITUAL DEAFNESS AS WELL AS PHYSICAL DEAFNESS

#### 1. *Mark 7:24-37*

2. Jesus healed a man of deafness and muteness and as He did, Jesus looked upward toward Heaven, indicating that God was the One who was doing the actual healing.
  - There are "spiritual" ears as well as physical ears.

3. It is said that there are four (4) kinds of selective hearing/listening:

- Selective exposure is when one starts to listen in the middle of something, not listening to the start/beginning and hearing only a part of what is being presented.
- Spiritually this happens when one opens his/her Bible and starts reading in the middle of a passage, not going back to the start and therefore fails to get the whole idea of the scripture passage.
- The same thing happens when one arrives late for Sunday School class or for the worship service and misses out on the opening remarks.
  
- Selective attention is when one "tunes out" parts of what is being heard.
  - He/she hears all that is being presented, but turns his/her attention to something else, being distracted, parts are missed.
  - The same thing happens when one reads the Bible and perhaps every Christian has done this at one time or other.
    - Reading along, one's mind is distracted and even though the eyes are still following the lines of words, the mind is elsewhere.
    - The same thing can happen during a sermon when someone's small child yells or cries or someone has a coughing spell, or someone is talking too loud.
    - Distractions can cause one to lose concentration in reading as well as hearing.
  
- Selective understanding happens when one deliberately changes the meaning of what is being heard to fit one's own wants, liking.
  - Most of which is done unconsciously.
  - Who hasn't forgotten the words to a song or a hymn and when that happens other words are filled in or some sound is made to fill in those forgotten words, but one keeps on going along with what is being sung/played.
  - The same thing happens when reading God's Word or hearing a sermon for insted of applying the truth that is being presented to one's own self, it is applied to someone else, but not to YOU. ("They" need to hear, read this, it would do them some much needed good...")
  
- Selective retention happens when one hears and understands the message, the scripture but doesn't act like he/she has never been exposed to the truths.
  - It is hearing the whole thing, understanding it all, but continuing on to live as if it wasn't ever heard at all.

4. Jesus can heal those with spiritual hearing difficulties as well as those with physical hearing difficulties.

### **III. THERE ARE SPIRITUAL SEEING DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS PHYSICAL**

1. *Mark 8:1-26*

2. Jesus healed a blind man in two stages - why two and not one?

- Sight often represents understanding. "Do you "see" now what I am talking about?"
- The disciples and others were just not seeing Jesus clearly, plainly, they were not understanding what Jesus was about.

3. The man Jesus was healing began to see but not clearly.

- He saw people who looked like "trees walking."

- Things he saw were blurry.

4. The same thing happens to people in the spiritual realm.
  - Some see spiritual things in distortion, not clearly.
  - Some see spiritual things partially, not entirely.
  - Some can only see some things close up, but not in the distance.
5. People were not seeing Jesus clearly.
  - Jesus' disciples still were not seeing Jesus as He really was.
  - The religious leaders were not seeing Jesus as the Son of God.
  - The crowd that followed Jesus around were not seeing Jesus in a spiritual sense, only in a material sense, that of healing their sick.
6. How do YOU see Jesus?
  - Do YOU see the things God wants you to see?
  - Do YOU need "spiritual" glasses? (The Holy Spirit makes spiritual things clear)

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Jesus reminds everyone that their hearts are where the truth lies, not in the outward appearance for all pretend to be/do what they really are not.
  - Believers need to have a "heart" check up now and then.
2. People don't always hear everything they need to hear because they don't want to hear it. People have "selective hearing" hearing only what they really want to hear.
  - Believers need to hear with their hearts and not pick and choose.
3. Things don't always appear to be what they really are to most people.
  - Believers need to see things as they actually are and not add to or take away.
4. Believers need to have a "Spiritual Check Up, a Spiritual Physical" now and then to make sure that they are in "good Spiritual health."