

Mark 8:9-21

Beware of Unbelief

Proposition: *Escape unbelief by heeding Christ's warning.*

I. The Monster: What is unbelief?

- a. Two Faces: hypocrisy and compromise. (v. 11)
 - i. The *hypocrisy* of the Pharisees.
 1. Feigning piety but intent to tempt.
 2. Demanding proof but eager to argue.
 3. Expecting a savior yet rejecting Christ.
 - ii. The *compromise* of Herod.
 1. Caring nothing for the heavenly kingdom.
 2. Hearing the Word but not doing it.
 3. Dismissing Christ as a mere man.
- b. Two Eyes: brazenness and blindness. (vv. 11, 16)
 - i. The *brazen eye* of the Pharisees and Herod.
 1. Callous.
 2. Contagious.
 - ii. The *blind eye* of the disciples.
 1. Dull.
 2. Vulnerable.

II. The Judgement: How does Christ deal with unbelief?

- a. Christ rejects unbelief. (v. 12)
 - i. Christ will not *indulge* unbelief.
 - ii. Christ will not *compromise* for an earthly Kingdom.
- b. Christ abandons unbelief. (v. 13)
 - i. His *presence removed*.
 1. In all his power.
 2. In all his compassion.
 - ii. Our *demands unanswered*.
 1. Left in a dying kingdom.
 2. Left with a dying soul.
 - iii. Our *hearts hardened*.
 1. Given over to ignorance.
 2. Given over to corruption.

III. The Danger: Who is at risk of unbelief?

- a. Unbelief is fruited in brazenness. (v.11)
 - i. Are you *arguing* with God?
 1. His Word.
 2. His works.

- ii. Are you *demanding* of God?
 1. To satisfy worldly expectations?
 2. To satisfy curiosity?
- b. Unbelief is rooted in blindness. (v. 16)
 - i. Are you *forgetting* God?
 1. Taking counsel in men rather than His Word.
 2. Trusting in your works rather than His Works.
 - ii. Are you *mistaking* God?
 1. Eyes fixed on circumstances.
 2. Heart set on this world.

IV. The Escape: How do we avoid unbelief?

- a. Eyes on Him: Receive Christ's instruction. (vv. 16-21)
 - i. The Kingdom isn't about bread, *but about power*.
 - ii. Power isn't found in signs, *but in the Word*.
- b. Eyes on Ourselves: Heed Christ's warning. (v. 15)
 - i. Every Pharisee *begins as a disciple*.
 - ii. Any unwatchful disciple *can become a Pharisee*.

V. Concluding Applications for Blind and Brazen People

- a. For those both blind and brazen, you are in *the most immediate need of this escape!*
 - i. *Fear to harden your heart* any further in unbelief. Can you pretend your way into the Kingdom? Will you hear the Gospel but imprison the Spirit? Would you compel Christ to carry his cross again? Dare you tempt the Almighty to sin against himself?
 - ii. Forsake the faltering kingdoms and feigned piety of this world and *get in the boat* with Jesus.
- b. For those not brazen but blind, you are *no less in danger if you refuse this escape!*
 - i. *Watch out!* Ignorance is no virtue, and a real enemy of faith. Adam knew nothing of sin, but ignorance did not serve him once he neglected watchfulness. How much more on guard must we be now in a world teeming with temptations to unbelief.
 - ii. *Heed his instruction!* Christ has not left us in Dalmanutha; he is bringing us over the Sea of Tiberias yet again that we may learn to seek first the Kingdom of God. The Word is the power of God to open our blind eyes and to put unbelief to shame forever.