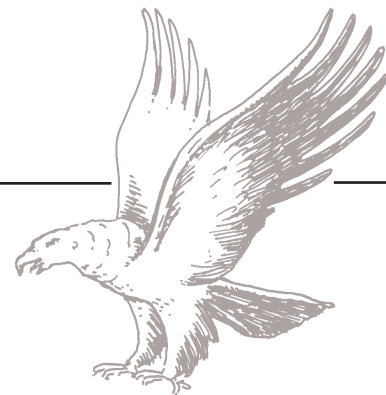


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



May 25, 2014

To See or Not to See

When we encounter the truth, however it may come to us, our response reveals the kind of heart we really have—despite whatever outward advantages or disadvantages we may possess.

“And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.’ Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, “We see.” Therefore your sin remains.’” (Jn. 9:39-41).



This exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees follows the story of the blind beggar whom Jesus healed at the pool of Siloam. That miracle prompted a formal inquiry by the Pharisees, who were driven by their desire to discredit Jesus as a fraud. To succeed, they had to debunk this miracle as a hoax. So the Pharisees grilled the (formerly) blind beggar mercilessly, and even called in his parents in an effort to obtain incriminating testimony. Throughout the questioning, the beggar more than held his own against his interrogators. In the end, the man’s stubborn defense of the miracle he experienced earned him expulsion from the synagogue.

A significant theme in this story is the gradual development of the beggar’s opinion of Jesus. At the beginning of his interrogation, he called Jesus merely “a man” (v. 11); a wonderful man to be sure, but beyond that he could not say. As the Pharisees pressured him to recant his testimony, he firmly clung to his story, even to the point of calling Jesus “a prophet” (v. 17). After being cast out, he encountered Jesus again, who fully revealed His identity. The beggar then became a full-fledged believer (“Lord, I believe,” v. 35, 38).

The beggar received two gifts that day: his physical sight was restored, and he came to see Jesus as the Messiah. The Pharisees, on the other hand, retreated deeper behind a curtain of denial. They could believe in miracles performed a thousand years earlier (v. 29), but could not accept one performed right under their noses. Their disbelief exposed hearts black with prejudice.

It’s that contrast between the belief of the beggar and the disbelief of the Pharisees—both involving the same body of evidence—that prompted Jesus’

remark about judgment. Jesus came into this world to sort humanity into two camps: those who recognize their deficiencies and surrender to the authority of the One they see as their Master; and those who, defiant in their pride, stiffen their necks against the demands of the gospel and reject Jesus as unworthy of their trust. This is not a judgment that God imposes upon them; it is one they make themselves.

Moreover, this sorting often follows a familiar pattern. It is usually the weak, the outcast, the unlearned, who can see the truth and respond. And it is often the knowledgeable, the prosperous, the sophisticated, who are hopelessly blind to their need for a Savior.

The challenge that faces each one of us in life is keeping our minds open to new ideas that disrupt our status quo. It’s not easy to objectively consider evidence that might force us to revise our thinking. But honesty demands nothing less. “There are none so blind as those who will not see”—and none who see with such clarity as those who change their minds when truth demands it.

– David King