

Do You See Jesus?

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[0 : 00] The text for this morning is, guess where?

! You don't know? Luke! Luke chapter 11. Yeah, Wes is right on it.! And our text is specifically out of that chapter, verses 29 through 36. So you can be finding that. Luke 11, 29 through 36. Now, I'm not going to read it yet. I would tell you that even though we are not yet halfway through the Gospel of Luke, I'm not sure how long I've been on this. I guess I could go back and look on the calendar. We've been in Luke quite a while. We're not even halfway. Now, we're close, but we're not halfway through the Gospel of Luke. Though we're not yet halfway through, we are just a few months away from the cross. Jesus' death. And so really, here, Jesus is in His final stretch, final stretch of His earthly ministry. The cross is in clear view. And so therefore, the opposition to Jesus is getting quite heated is getting quite heated. It's certainly intensifying. And in this portion of Luke, He is traveling through every major city, place in the region of Judea. He's already been through Galilee. And now He's moving through Judea on His way to Jerusalem, on His way to the cross.

And He's been preaching, of course, preaching the Gospel, preaching repentance. And He has been healing and casting out demons. And so He's been involved in a frontal assault against Satan's kingdom.

And all of this, and He is not being believed. Not believing Him. And we saw that last Sunday, didn't we? If you were here, Jesus cast a demon out of this man.

A demon had possessed this man and inflicted this man with, I believe, both deafness and muteness. He cast that demon out, restored the man's hearing and speech. And what did the people say?

[2 : 44] They said, this is a demonic work. Incredible. You see, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the people were curious. Curious about Him.

I mean, there was a heightened alert to the coming of Messiah. They were looking for the Messiah. And so here's this man, Jesus, doing what He's doing, preaching what He's preaching. And so they were very interested. And as His ministry began to grow, progress, at least early on in His ministry, the multitudes of the people began to follow Him. Great throngs of people followed Him.

And they were saying, many of them, that there must be something to this guy. Perhaps, maybe He is the Messiah. And so a small number of them believed, became His disciples.

Many others were very interested. But then, of course, gradually, the people began to question Jesus. And they began, really, to listen more to their leaders than they were listening to Jesus. And so they began to reject Jesus. And not just in their hearts, it started there, but then openly rejecting Jesus. And verbally, as we saw last week.

[4 : 13] Now, our text for this morning then shows us how Jesus confronted this opposition. And He confronted it prophetically.

He confronted it prophetically. And so let's see this in the passage in Luke chapter 11, starting with verse 29. And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, This, this, this, this is 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.

[5 : 27] 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.

Interesting. Now, Jesus in this passage, if you kind of divide the various movements of the passage, Jesus first takes us back to Jonah.

Jonah and the Ninevites. That familiar story in the Old Testament. And then Jesus takes us back to the Queen of Sheba.

[6 : 35] It says the Queen of the South. The Queen of the South, Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. And that too is a somewhat, but lesser, familiar story in the Old Testament.

And then finally, Jesus concludes with a parable. It's a parable of a sort. And the parable becomes the basis for an important analogy. The lamp and the eye.

The human eye. A lamp and the eye. And so those are the three parts of the text. And the third part of the text, the lamp and the eye, is what Jesus really is moving toward.

And he uses this to bring his prophetic teaching to its kind of culmination, or the main thrust of it.

And essentially, Jesus is saying to those who had gathered around him, those who opposed him and rejected him, he was saying to them, the problem, your problem is your eyesight.

You can't see. About 20 years ago, not quite 20, I began to have trouble reading. Some of you have been through that same problem. And I don't mean I forgot how to read.

[7 : 44] I just couldn't see the letters on the, the words on the page. You know, they became blurry. And not only that, but driving down the highway, you know, the signs were blurry. And so what did I do?

I went to an eye doctor. Had an eye exam. And you know the drill. You know how they put you up to that big thing, and they start flipping these little magnifying little glasses there.

And then he'll say something like, is that better? Is that worse? That's worse. He'll flip another two. Is that better? Is that worse? Well, that's a little better. He'll flip. He'll keep on doing that until he finally has discovered what your problem is.

And so the doctor turned to me and he said, I know your problem. Oh, you do? Yes. What is it?

You're 40. That's your problem. Wow. Well, we just cut to the chase there.

And so I've been wearing these ever since. In fact, I went straight from no glasses to near and far sighted kind of glasses. So I ask you, how's your eyesight?

[8 : 48] I'm looking around. Some of you have those peepers on. Some of you are cheating with, you know, the other kind of lenses. Now, how's your eyesight?

How well do you see? And, of course, I'm not talking about your physical eyesight. Neither was Jesus, by the way. We'll get to that. What I mean is your spiritual eyesight.

How well do you see? How clearly do you see life? And I mean the true meaning of life. What real life is. How clearly are you able to see that?

And how clearly do you see yourself? Who you are. Not on the outside. We look in a mirror and we see that.

Sometimes we don't like what we see. Sometimes we see inside. How well do you see on the inside? Who you are on the inside. What is the true you? In light of Scripture, for example.

[9 : 49] How clearly do you see sin? Not sin in general. And certainly not others' sin. But yours.

How clearly are you able to see that? Can you see who you are in light of God's Word? When you hear sound biblical teaching. And preaching.

Which I hope is what you hear here. When you hear it. Does it stir something inside of you? Do you identify with it?

Does it resonate within you? In your mind? And in your heart? Think about these things. How clearly do you see Jesus?

Not just the historical Jesus. The Jesus described in the Bible. But I mean the Jesus who came and ministered and gave His life.

[10 : 45] Do you see His grace? The grace of salvation? Do you see His love for you? His deep love for you?

Are you able to see His eternal purpose for you? And so then able on a day in, day out basis to see how everything in your life makes sense with that.

And the decisions of your life and so forth. And a lot of things that I could say. How is your eyesight? Is the question. You see, that is the issue here. I think in this particular passage out of Luke's Gospel.

The problem with these people. Those who had gathered around Him. And more importantly, the problem with their leadership. The Jewish leadership.

It was their eyesight. Their spiritual eyesight. And it is the same problem with countless people. Countless millions of people in the world today. Out there.

[11 : 46] You know, out there in the world. But also people in here. In here. In the church. And in churches around the world. And there are three spiritual truths.

Highlighted in this passage of scripture. Three truths. That they could not see. They could not see. And many today.

Cannot see. And therefore won't see. Here's the first one. They could not see. The repentance of God. God's repentance that He required.

They could not see. The repentance of God. And Jesus reveals this. By reminding the people of a story. That would be very familiar to them. And familiar to most of us. And that is the story of Jonah. And the Ninevites. And the big fish too. And so He takes them back to the Old Testament. That little Old Testament book. Jonah.

[12 : 48] And He reminds them of that story. Look at verse 29. And while the crowds were thickly gathered together. And again I would remind you. That they were gathering around Jesus.

Not because they believed in Him. Not at this point. They gathered around Him. Because they were seeking something from Him. And so we go on.

And look at it. And so Jesus began to say. As they were thickly gathered around Him. He began to say. This generation. You.

Is an evil generation. It seeks a sign. Seeks a sign. You remember our text last week. After Jesus cast this demon out of this man.

And the Bible says that there were those who tested Him. Tested Jesus. And what did they do? They sought from Him a sign. A sign from heaven.

[13 : 47] As if they hadn't already received one. A huge one. And so they wanted a sign. And so here in verse 29. Jesus is answering that request.

He says. And no sign will be given to it. No sign will be given to this generation. 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. Now here's what Jesus is doing. He is first of all. Comparing Jonah with himself.

All right. Reminding them of Jonah. He's comparing Jonah with himself. And then he is contrasting. Not just comparing.

But contrasting the Ninevites with the people of Jesus' generation. Those he was speaking to right there. This contrast.

[14 : 44] And so look at it. We have to skip on down to verse 32. He takes up Jonah and the Ninevites again. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it.

Why? For they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And indeed a greater than Jonah is here. And so first. Clearly he is comparing Jonah with himself.

Jonah preached repentance. Though it's difficult to see that in his message. His message consisted of just a few words. Forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed.

That's a message full of hope isn't it? How would you like to have that kind of message? That was his message. But of course the idea is. You better repent. Turn to God.

Or you will be destroyed. That was his message. He preached repentance. And Jesus also preached repentance. He came preaching repentance.

[15 : 43] In Matthew 4.17. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And so he's comparing Jonah with himself. But the. And we'll talk more of this a little bit later.

But the main idea here. The main thrust of what Jesus is saying at this point. Is not the comparison between Jonah and himself. It is the contrast.

The contrast. The contrast. Between the Ninevites. And the people of Jesus' generation. The Ninevites repented.

At the preaching of Jonah. The people in Jesus' day. In his generation. They did not repent. They would not repent.

At his preaching. Even though Jesus is infinitely greater than Jonah. Even though Jesus' message is infinitely more clear. Than was Jonah's.

[16:43] They would not repent. Why? Why did they not repent of the preaching of Jesus? Perhaps they needed more information. Maybe that was it. Perhaps they needed a little bit more Bible.

From Jesus. Let me ask you something. How much of all of that did the Ninevites have? I mean listen. The Ninevites were pagans.

They were not Jews. The Ninevites knew nothing. Virtually nothing about the Bible. God's revelation. It had not been given to them. Been given to the Jews at this point.

They knew nothing of the Bible. All they had was a one sentence sermon. From a reluctant prophet. A reluctant preacher. Forty days. And you're out of here.

God is going to destroy you. And yet I love this. Jonah 3.5 says. So the people of Nineveh believed God. Proclaimed a fast.

[17:43] And put on sackcloth. From the greatest. That is the king himself. To the very least of them. Oh. Man. I wish that would happen in America today.

Incredible though. They had no Hebrew Bible. They had no law and the prophets. They had not been raised in any kind of biblical teaching or preaching.

They didn't know any of that. But they believed and they repented. But in stark contrast to that.

What about the Jews to whom Jesus was preaching? What about them?

Well they had it all. They had every bit of that. They had their Hebrew Bibles. They had the revelation of God. They had been taught the scriptures since childhood.

And much of it they had memorized. It was just part of the system. They attended the synagogue. Where every Sabbath day. They heard the Bible read and taught.

[18:46] Their lives were literally saturated with God's word. God's revelation. Their lives were immersed.

I mean immersed in a culture of divine truth. That's what we can say about Jesus' generation. And yet when they heard the preaching of Jesus. They would not repent.

They would not repent. They had major eye troubles. They just couldn't see it. They could not see the repentance of God. And listen.

What could be a more apt description of America today? I mean even still today. Even though this may have been true.

Even more true in generations past. We live in a Bible saturated country. We really do. I go to China and I realize just how much our culture is saturated by the Bible.

[19:50] And theirs is not of course. The gospel. We live in a gospel saturated culture. You can turn the radio on. And any, you know, half a dozen probably radio stations are preaching the gospel.

Some of them are not. But some of them are. 24-7. The TV. I mean we have churches on every corner. We live in a gospel saturated culture. And yet most will not repent.

They will not repent. They cannot see the repentance of God. Cannot see it. But let's look at a second spiritual truth. Highlighted here in the passage.

That the people could not see. Second, they could not see the revelation of God. They could not see the revelation of God.

The truth of God. The wisdom of God. The word of God. They could not see it. Jesus reveals this by reminding the people of another familiar Old Testament story to them.

[20:58] And that would be the story of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Even though it's a very small little excerpt out of Scripture. You can find it in 1 Kings chapter 10.

And so he says in verse 31. The Queen of the South. Known as Sheba according to 1 Kings 10. The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them.

Why? For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And indeed a greater than Solomon is here. So the formula is very similar here, isn't it?

Jesus compares himself with Solomon. And he's the greater of the two. And more importantly, Jesus contrasts the people of this generation, his generation, with the Queen of the South.

The Queen of Sheba. Contrast the two. Now we're not told why. But the Queen of Sheba had an insatiable thirst for truth. For wisdom. Wisdom.

[22 : 09] And so she came, the Bible says, Jesus said. She came, she traveled from the ends of the world. To seek out, to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

Wisdom that God had given him, by the way. Came from the end of the world. Many scholars speculate that she was from Ethiopia. And the Jews considered Ethiopia to be virtually the very end of the world in the South.

That is, there was nothing beyond there. So she came from the furthest reaches of the known world of the day. To seek the wisdom of Solomon. And so there was something in this Queen's heart. That yearned for, that hungered and thirsted for the knowledge of God in Solomon. God's revelation.

Even though she was not a Jew. And again, like the Ninevites, she knew nothing about the Bible. Nothing about God's revelation.

[23 : 11] Very little, if anything, about Yahweh God Himself. And even though she had not been raised in the teaching of Scripture. Holy Scripture. She came seeking knowledge.

Knowledge. The revelation of God in Solomon. Now then, contrast this with the people of Jesus' day. Similar contrast as with Jonah, Ninevites.

The Jews, the Pharisees, the scribes. How did they respond? It's really ironic. They did not travel very far to hear the knowledge of Jesus.

The wisdom of Jesus. They didn't travel very hard at all. It was Jesus who traveled a long way.

From heaven. To bring God's word to them. The wisdom of God.

The divine revelation of God. Most of them, however, as they heard it. They said that that comes from Satan. This is the power of Satan.

[24 : 13] This is the working of Satan. His word cannot be trusted. His truth is bogus. It's how they responded. You see, they couldn't see it.

Even though, incredibly, God had given, uniquely given them, the Jews, His divine word. That's what Paul meant in Romans chapter 3 verse 2.

To them, that is the Jewish people, were committed the oracles of God. God had given His word to the Jews. They had it.

They had possession of it. They read it. They memorized it. They taught it to their children. They even wore scripture on their body. And put it up in their homes and so forth.

They had it everywhere. They had it. They didn't know it. They didn't know it. If they had, then the very moment Jesus began preaching, they would have said, Yes!

[25 : 15] This is it. This is the truth we've been looking for. And this is the one we've been looking for. This is the revelation of God. But they could not see it.

They could not see the truth. They could not see God's revelation. And, you know, of course, the same is true of so many today in our culture.

In this Bible-saturated culture. And really, honestly, even though many Americans have been, in a sense, raised with the Word of God, immersed in the Word of God, it's all around us.

Most people today will not get up on Sunday and just drive a few blocks to hear it taught and preached. They won't do it. In fact, most people today will not walk a few steps in their homes to pick up the Bible that's got dust all over it.

And most people have a Bible. They won't go just a few steps and pick it up to read it. There's no thirst for it. No craving or hunger for the Word of God, for divine truth.

[26 : 25] Because they do not see it. They do not see it. And maybe even worse, there are so many people today who will, honestly, will sit in a congregation like this one, in a church like this one, and hear the Word of God preached and taught, but not care anything about it.

Not respond in any way to it. Nothing stirs. The truth does not stir. It does not resonate in their hearts.

These are the kind of people Jesus is talking about, see, in this passage. Then and now. They cannot see the repentance of God, and so they will not repent.

They cannot see the revelation of God, and so they do not hunger for it. Do not desire it.

Do not respond to it. And here's the answer to why this is so. Because finally, they cannot see the Redeemer of God.

[27 : 45] They cannot see the Redeemer. They cannot see Jesus. I'm not talking about the man. They certainly could see him. This Jesus from Nazareth.

They couldn't see Jesus, not for who he really was. He is. Not for what he really came to do. They couldn't see it. Which is the same, by the way, as saying they cannot see the Gospel. Cannot see the Gospel. And to highlight this, Jesus uses a parable. It's a parable of a sort. And with the parable as the basis, he then gives an analogy.

So first the parable, verse 33. No one, when he has lit a lamp, sets it in a secret place. Some versions have cellar, and that's the idea.

The word means crypt. A place where you would hide things. Dark places. Be like a basement. No one, when he has lit the lamp, would then take it to a hidden place.

[28 : 55] A place where nobody needs a light. Neither under a basket. No one would light a lamp, and then immediately put a basket over the top of it, or a bowl over the top of it, as my granddaughter Ella would say.

That's silly. But she'd say it. I can hear her say it. What would you do with a lit lamp? Well, Jesus says, you would put it on a lampstand.

All right? Right in the middle of the room, or in some prominent place in the room. Up high so they would light the entire room. That's what he says. You'd put it on a lampstand that those who come in may see the light.

Well, it just makes sense, doesn't it? It's a simple little parable. Truism. Okay? Just common sense. And then, Jesus explains the parable by making it an analogy of both a physical truth, as well as a spiritual truth. More importantly, a spiritual truth.

[30 : 00] Verse 34. The lamp, or light, of the body is the eye. So now we're connecting this kind of truism about what people do with lamps.

The light that he gives off, and so forth. Now, he's applying that, making an analogy of the human body. And so the lamp of the body is the eye.

The point being, you cannot see anything without your eyes. Right? Can't see without your eyes. And when your eye is good, he says, as you have vision, your whole body also is full of light. Simple, right? Conversely, when your eye is bad, when it's bad, you cannot see anything. Your whole body is full of darkness.

So if your eye is good, you have vision, you can see, you can see others, you can see yourself, you can see where you're going, you can see the things you need, and what you're doing, and so forth.

[31 : 07] But when your eye is bad, you cannot see anything. And so your whole life is then darkness. Your whole world is darkness. That's a simple analogy.

But now comes the spiritual application. Verse 36. Therefore, take heed. Or be very careful.

I think one version says, watch out. That the light which is in you is not darkness. That's kind of strange. How can light be darkness? That the light in you is not darkness.

That the light is not, in fact, really darkness. Or, to explain it further, that what you think is light in you is, in fact, darkness.

If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light.

[32 : 16] As when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. Just like how a bright lamp gives light. And so what is Jesus talking about here?

In this parable, then, analogy, and so forth. Well, in the parable, clearly Jesus is the lamp. Right? He's the light. The light that we need. And so to the unbelieving Jews of his day, then, he is the lamp hidden in the cellar.

Or hidden under a basket. So they cannot see him. Cannot see him. That is, for who he truly is. And then, in the analogy that follows, Jesus is saying that since the lamp is what illuminates the whole body.

Just like an eye is what illuminates the body. Just like the lamp is what illuminates the whole body. And since I am the lamp, the light. Then if you don't see me, you don't see anything.

[33 : 26] You don't see anything. If you don't believe in me, then your heart will be dark. Your life will be dark.

If you stick me down in the cellar, if you cover me with a basket, then your heart, your life is going to be dark. Because I am the only source of true light.

I show you who you really are. And you need to know who you really are.

I show you your sin. I show you your desperate need.

And you need to know your need. Your real need. I show you the way to forgiveness and salvation. [34 : 30] Because I am the way. And I show you that. I show you the gospel. Because I am the gospel.

And if you don't see me, you won't see that. And so these Jews, and especially their leaders, could not see that. Their eyes were bad. They're that part of the analogy.

Their eyes were bad. They're blind. Their eyes were dark. And therefore, their whole body or lives were darkness.

Darkness. Not that they believed that. Not that they didn't somehow think that they had the light. We're living in the light. But Jesus says in reality, you reject me, then you have no light. And your life is dark.

[35 : 33] They could not see the Redeemer of God. Now, the evidence of their utter blindness is revealed in verse 29. Look at it again. It's part of the analogy that he uses of Jonah.

He says, this is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it, except, except, except, the sign of Jonah the prophet.

That's the only sign that will be given to you. All right, so what is this sign of the Jonah prophet? Jonah the prophet. What is the sign of Jonah the prophet? Is it his message?

I mean, his preaching of repentance. And that seems to be a pretty key part of the story. In fact, Jesus even highlights that part of the story. That Jonah preached and Nineveh repented.

Is it his preaching of repentance? Is that the sign? Is it his, the sure judgment that he said would come if you do not repent?

[36 : 37] Is that the sign? Well, no, it's not. No. Look at what Jesus says next. For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.

So not the preaching of Jonah, but rather Jonah himself is the sign. Jonah is the sign. What is he the sign of?

The gospel. He's the sign of the gospel. You know the story. Jonah in the boat with the sailors out in the sea. Jonah's fleeing God, and there's a great storm that has come.

Such a great storm, the ship is about to go down, and all hands on deck are going to be dead. And so Jonah is there, and Jonah offers then his life for the life of these sailors.

All they have to do is just throw him overboard. And so they did, and so Jonah then figuratively becomes the substitutionary death that takes place in order for the sailors to live.

[37 : 51] And then Jonah, of course, swallowed by this great fish down in the water. And how long does he stay inside that fish? Three days and three nights. Figurative of death.

He dies. He's in the belly of the whale, or great fish, for three days and three nights. And then he comes out of that great fish, that watery grave, alive.

Picture of resurrection. You get it, don't you? Clear, clear picture of the gospel. And by the way, this is why the Ninevites repented.

They repented. God sent them someone from the dead to preach to them, and they believed, and they repented.

You see, Jonah is a sign. Just as Jonah was the sign to the Ninevites, Jesus is the sign to us. And Jesus says then to those Jews, and to us today, you get the same sign.

[38 : 55] It's the same one Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, which is a perfect summation of Jonah, as well as, of course, a perfect proclamation, declaration of the gospel.

He says in 1 Corinthians 15, by this you are saved. You're justified. Christ died for our sins, substitutionary death, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, not in the belly of a whale, but in the belly of the earth.

He was buried, and that he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. There it is. You see, but they could not see it.

They could not see it. They could not see Jesus, the Redeemer. Even after the sign of Jonah was finally given, that is, even after the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

They could not see it. The question is, what about you? What about this generation?

[40 : 08] Do you see it? How is your eyesight? Do you see Jesus, the Redeemer?

Jesus said in verse 35, and this is perhaps the key point of the entire passage. Therefore, take heed.

Be very careful that the light which is in you is not, in fact, darkness. Be careful.

You see, here's the point. The danger for those Jews that day who had gathered around Jesus, and the danger for possibly some of you here, and certainly for many in the world today, the danger is this, that what you think, what you think is light in you is, in fact, in reality, darkness.

That you would think, that you would think this, that what you think is salvation is really not. It is merely religion.

[41 : 30] it's merely biblical morality. Or it's just some form of spiritualism or spirituality.

Some good works kind of system. And so Jesus calls for a self-examination.

Take stock. Take stock. Take heed. Be careful. Watch out that the light which is in you, or again, what you think is the true light, that it is not really in reality darkness.

Take stock. I would say in closing that if perhaps you have for the first time come to understand, come to realize light, what you have is not really light.

It's been darkness all along that you don't, hadn't really seen Jesus, don't really know Him. If that's what you're thinking right now, I've got good news for you.

[43 : 08] You're well on your way to salvation. Repent. That's what Jesus said. Repent. Turn to God.

Embrace God's revelation, God's word, and believe in His Redeemer. And you will be saved.

Amen. Amen. Amen.