

The Health of our Eyes affects the Wholeness of our Bodies
Luke 11 33-36

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Well it's that time of year again. What time of year is it? Graduation season? Yes but that's not what I'm thinking about. Spring season? Yes, but until Friday this past week it seemed more like Fall and the onset of darkness. Vacation Season? Yes, it's just about time for that. But not quite. It's test season. For many of you students it is test season as you prepare for finals. For me, it's annual physical season. As you grow older like me, it's important to get an annual physical check up with your doctor because of all the crazy things that can pop up as the body ages.

I've already shared with you that once I turned 50, my doctor began to look at me differently. Now we have to do a whole bunch of tests to see where things are at. So on Monday after my physical, I had to do 4 tests. 2 I can talk about publicly and 2 I will just try to forget. But one was the blood test. Now I don't like getting needles. And the doctor had marked off a lot of categories. So the lab tech came with several tubes to draw blood out of my arm. My solution to dealing with all that is simply not to watch. So I turn away while the needle goes in and the blood is drawn.

Then I had what's called an ECG. This is where you have to take off your shirt and roll up your pant legs. Then they stick these lead receptors onto various parts of your body and attach wires to them. Then they turn on a machine and read the data. When you're done, they take off the leads. Then they have to take off the stickers.

Now think about for a moment how much power that lab technician or nurse has over you. I've got all these sticky things on me with hair underneath. I've had this test done more than once. So I can compare how the different technicians take off the stickers. Some take great care to try to not cause you a lot of pain while they rip off the sticker especially from where there's a little hair. And then there are some who are maybe having a bad day or think the patient is a little soft and needs some toughening up or just don't like you. So they seem to take great pleasure in ripping off those stickers one by one. Thankfully, I survived those tests. Now we'll see about the results.

Now I can't say that I really enjoyed taking those tests. But they do have the potential of helping me if there is something that needs discovery and treatment. Today we come across a couple of tests that have the potential to help us if we're willing to submit to them and receive our test results. These tests may reveal something in us that could have very serious consequences for our lives if not attended to. Or they may confirm that things are okay and we need to continue on with our lives.

Our doctor is none other than the Great Physician Himself – Jesus. He ordered a couple of tests that will reveal the state of our spiritual health. We're going to look at these tests. Then we're going to actually take the tests. Don't worry – it doesn't involve any of your blood. We'll conclude by responding to the tests.

They are found in a passage that we might think we know very well when we first hear it. But upon closer examination, we might discover something unexpected that requires further thought. So will you come along by finding Luke 11:33-36 in your Bibles or in the bulletin? Let's look at Jesus' tests for our spiritual health.

Jesus is speaking.

Luke 11:33-36 (ESV)

"No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. [34](#) Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. [35](#) Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. [36](#) If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."

Now if you've grown up in the church or as a kid went to camp or to Sunday School, this passage might remind you of the little song "This little light of mine. "I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine." Shine it all over your community. Don't let Satan blow it out. Shine it until Jesus comes back. I don't know if the author of that song had this passage in mind but it could very well be. The idea is basically that the light we're shining is somehow Jesus or maybe the Gospel. We need to ensure that we don't hide that light.

That interpretation seems to work well for verse 33. A lamp needs an open place its light will do any good. But then we get to verse 34 and Jesus starts talking about our eyes being lamps to our bodies. Then if we have a healthy eye our body is full of light and bad eyes lead to bodies full of darkness. Then in verse 35 he warns about being careful because the light in us might be darkness. He concludes with what seems to be the goal. A body filled with light will be wholly bright like a lamp on a stand in the middle of the room.

So the song, “this little light of mine” kind of works with this little saying of Jesus. But there are some things we have to figure out. What does Jesus mean by our eyes? How do you know if you have a healthy eye or a bad eye? What does it mean to have bodies full of light or darkness? To gain an understanding of this, we have to look at what comes before and after this little saying of Jesus.

Luke 11 begins with Jesus teaching about the Lord’s Prayer. Then in Luke 11:14, Jesus casts out a demon that caused muteness. The mute man begins speaking. The people don’t deny a demon has been cast out. But some begin debating the power Jesus uses to accomplish this work. Some conclude that he casts out demons by the power of the devil. Others keep asking Jesus to perform a sign to prove that he was indeed the promised one from God. Jesus responds to their charges.

First, he points out the logical flaw in the charge that He casts out demons by the power of the devil. Why would the devil empower anyone to damage his own work? The devil loved demons tormenting people. He concludes by saying “if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Then he addresses those who demand that he perform a sign or miracle. Now that’s kind of ironic since he just cast out a demon from a man in front of them. But Jesus will not meet this demand. He declares that their generation is evil. They would only receive a warning sign. God used Jonah to warn the people of Ninevah. God was using Jesus to warn this evil generation.

Then Jesus speaks our passage today on light, darkness, healthy and bad eyes. Following this a Pharisee invites Jesus to dine with him. The Pharisees were one of the religious groups in Judaism at the time. They paid serious attention to living their lives in strict accordance with God’s law to the furthest extent. Lawyers interpreted the law for the people and they were close associates of the Pharisees. Jesus reclines at the Pharisee’s but he does not do the expected ritual washing before coming to the table. Luke 11:38 tells us the Pharisee was astonished that Jesus didn’t wash before dinner. In the Pharisee’s mind, Jesus had just violated some huge religious expectation.

Jesus does not apologize. Instead he delivers one of his most blistering passages in Scripture. He calls out the Pharisees for their willingness to adhere to the most minor and obscure pieces of the law while harboring greed and wickedness in their hearts. That must have been an awkward moment at supper.

Then a lawyer speaks up and says to Jesus ‘when you talk like this you offend us too.’ Jesus still does not back down. He condemns the lawyers for loading up the people with heavy burdens from the law that were not even intended. He charges them with having a key to knowledge of God’s law to helping people understand and relate to God through the law. Yet it’s like they’ve hidden the key from the people led them away from what God intended in the law. And in doing they have missed it themselves.

So we have basically 4 groups of people before and after our passage. Some accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of the devil. Some demanded a sign from Jesus to prove He was from God. The Pharisee was astonished at Jesus’ neglect of ceremonial washing. The lawyer was offended by Jesus’ comments towards the Pharisees. What do they all have in common that relates to light and darkness passage?

Here it is. I believe they all thought they walked in the light. I think they thought they were doing right. It was unusual for someone to cast out the demons Jesus did. So in defense against a possible phony, they conclude he must be using the devil’s power. The people demanding a sign probably thought they were just being careful with this one they weren’t sure about. The Pharisees certainly thought they were in the light because they paid close attention to law. The lawyers paid even closer attention. It was their job to become experts in the law. They too seem to have convinced themselves that they were the ones walking in God’s light.

But Jesus’ response to all of them shows they actually walked in darkness. How did he know that besides being God? They rejected Him in one way or another. Those suspecting him of casting out demons by the devil missed that He was be doing it by God’s power. The crowds demanding a sign missed the greatest sign that stood before. The astonished Pharisee who couldn’t get over a simple violation of ceremonial washing missed the one who could wash souls clean. The expert in the law missed the law giver. But it wasn’t

that they just missed something. They wanted to miss it. They looked for reasons to reject Jesus even though he was right in front of them like a lamp in the middle of a room.

So I interpret Luke 11:33 to refer to Jesus and His mission. He is the light that is out in the open for everyone to see. God did not put this light in a cellar or hide it under a basket. Jesus lived and breathed right in front of them. But how could people respond to Him? How have we responded to Him? How are we responding to Him? Here come Jesus' tests for our spiritual health.

Test #1 – Consider the health of your eyes. Verse 34 – “Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness.” So a healthy eye leads to a body of light. A bad eye leads to a body of darkness. But what does that mean? Several answers have been offered over the centuries. A good eye could mean “a single minded focus on good” or “a moral and spiritual readiness to see.” Or to directly relate to Jesus I might put it like this. **A healthy eye is an openness and submission to Jesus.** If Jesus is like a lamp in the middle of room for everyone to see, a person with a healthy eye will go into the room and open their eyes. They will see Jesus for who He is and acknowledge His Lordship over their lives. When a person does that their whole lives or bodies fill with light.

But if a person refuses to do that, they have a bad eye. They are not open and submissive to Jesus. They do not have a single minded focus on good. Instead their eyes go in many directions. So **a bad eye is willful blindness to Jesus.** It's like they are taken into the room with the lamp on table and close their eyes. Jesus charges the people demanding a sign with this. They wanted Jesus to perform a sign. Not because they sought after God and His truth. They just wanted something for themselves. They weren't really spiritually seeking. They just wanted Jesus to do something for them. So Jesus can say “The queen of the South will rise up and condemn this generation.” She honestly sought wisdom and found it in Solomon who received His wisdom from God. The men of Ninevah whom Jonah preached to would rise up and condemn this generation. Because they took Jonah's words to heart and repented and sought God. But standing right in front of them was something greater than Solomon and Jonah. Yet they rejected him.

This is a critical test of spiritual health. Where is your heart at in openness and submission towards Jesus? Is it open and soft or closed and hard? Jesus declares that our attitude towards Him hugely effects the rest of our lives. Healthy eyes lead to lives full of light. Bad eyes lead to lives full of darkness. So how open and submissive is your heart to Jesus?

But then He provides another test. We might think that our hearts are open and submissive to Jesus. We might even say this to others. But what's coming out of our lives? **Test #2 – Consider what fills your life – light or darkness?** Verse 35 – “Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.” Remember all the people before and after this passage who thought their lives were full of light? But the light was actually darkness. They thought they were okay but in fact were in great danger.

They were kind of like the people a captain saw from 50 feet away. A new captain jumped from the deck of his day trip cruising yacht. He was fully dressed and sprinted through the water. A former lifeguard, he kept his eyes on his victim as he headed straight for a couple swimming between the yacht & the beach. “I think he thinks you're drowning,” the husband said to his wife. They had been splashing each other and she had screamed but now they were just standing neck deep on a sand bar. “We're fine. What is he doing?” she responded, a little annoyed. “We're fine” the husband yelled waving him off – but the captain kept swimming hard. “Move!” he barked as he swam between the stunned swimmers. Directly behind them, not 10 feet away, their 9 year old daughter was drowning. Safely above the surface in the arms of the captain, she burst into tears and screamed “Daddy!”

How did the captain know from 50 feet away what the father didn't know from 10 feet away? The captain knew. Drowning is not the violent, splashing call that most people expect. The captain was trained to recognize the signs. The father was trained by what he'd seen on TV. We expect drowning people to cry out. But most people who drown can't cry out. They can't breathe so they can't cry out. The instinctive drowning responses do not look like the violent splashing, waving and calling we expect. Drowning is the second leading cause of death in children 15 and under. Half of those who drown do so within 25 yards of a parent or adult. In

some of those the adult actually watches the child drown because they don't see any of the expected signs. It can be a very quiet, undramatic event. So the adult thinks the child is fine when in fact they're in grave danger.

The same thing can happen in our lives – we think we're walking in light – but we're actually in darkness like the people before and after our text.

This second test challenges to examine our whole lives for hints of darkness. How would we know that we're clinging to darkness – or full of darkness or have a bad eye? If there is something in our lives that goes contrary to Jesus' word, that's darkness – Galatians 5:18-19 lists some of these – Sexual immorality; impurity; sensuality; idolatry; sorcery; enmity; strife; jealousy; fits of anger; rivalries; dissensions; divisions; envy; drunkenness. These indicate darkness, but we also might be living in darkness. If there is something missing from our lives that Jesus commands, that's darkness. Love; Joy; Peace; Patience; Kindness; Goodness; Faithfulness; Gentleness; Self Control. If our minds aren't focused on whatever is true; whatever is honorable; whatever is just; whatever is pure; whatever is lovely; whatever is commendable; or things excellent or praiseworthy, we might have bodies lives full of darkness.

But to identify whether the "light" in us is actually light or darkness, assumes we actually have some idea of Jesus' commands and His word. If I don't know His Word, then it is more likely that I won't know if I'm living in darkness. We cannot use the culture as our gauge for what's right and wrong. For a lot of what our culture says is light is actually darkness according to Jesus and the Bible. So we apply Jesus' Word and the Bible to each area of our lives. Is my business practice full of light or darkness? Is my work attitude full of light or darkness? Is our marriage or relationship full of Jesus' light or of darkness? Is my thought life light or darkness? Is my screen time light or darkness? Are my phonecalls, texts and posts light or darkness?

Jesus is our standard – not what other people do; not what everybody says is okay or not okay. Jesus defines the goal for us in 11:36 – if then your whole body is full of light having no part dark, it will be wholly bright as when a lamp with its rays gives light." This is part of the good news of the Gospel. Jesus comes into our lives not only to save us from the penalty of sin or to ensure that we will go to heaven when we die. He continues to do His work of saving us from the power of sin. He works in our hearts – He transforms our

thinking and renews it. We begin to see our lives filled with more of His light. When we come to this high standard we realize we cannot accomplish this in our own strength. We have to open our lives and submit to the Lord's work in our lives, marriages, work attitudes, language, screen time and relationships to the Lord.

Many of you are already doing this consistently in the Lord's strength. Jesus sees those moments when you choose light over darkness. He rejoices when you find satisfaction in him over the world. Others of us have to confess that we've had a bad eye for a while or our lives show many dark areas. But it's not too late to turn back to Jesus and let him fill us with His light.

If the Holy Spirit has revealed to you today that you're walking in darkness, will you turn to the light – Jesus Christ?

So we have Jesus and His tests – Where are you at in being open and submissive to Jesus and His Word? Is your life full of light or darkness? Is there some area in your life that your hiding from Jesus' light? It's time to take these tests as we pray and fellowship with Jesus. You'll have some time in silent prayer before Him. Then we'll respond together.