

CLEAN WINDOWS

Matthew 6:22-3

I. INTRODUCTION

Quote: “The eye is the window of the soul”

1. Attributed to Shakespeare

*To thee I do commend my watchful soul,
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes.*

King Richard III, Act V, Scene 3, line 117

2. Attributed to Leonardo da Vinci

The eye, the window of the soul, is the chief means whereby the understanding can most fully and abundantly appreciate the infinite works of Nature; and the ear is second.

II. THE TEXT

KJV—22 *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. 23* *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

NIV—22 *The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23* *But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

NASB—22 *The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23* *But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*

ESV—22 *The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23* *But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness.*

The Message—*Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!*

III. BACKGROUND

1. THE EYE—AND BLINDNESS—IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

- a. The functioning of the eye

1. Ancient view was that the eye was a source of light
2. Light projected from the eye and met light coming from the object seen

3. Then this projected back to the eye, which registered the object in the mind
- b. Blindness [and other impediments] associated with sin in Jewish culture—**John 9**
 - c. The ‘**evil eye**’—in ancient cultures
 1. Evil eye = curse believed to be cast by a malevolent glare/gaze
 2. Usually given to a person when they are unaware
 3. Middle Eastern cultures believe receiving evil eye will cause misfortune or injury
 4. Talismans worn to protect against the evil eye are also frequently called "evil eyes"
 - Blue eye—dark blue outer, white, light blue, then black center
 - Hence—suspicion of blue-eyed persons
 5. Found in most ancient cultures
 - Kurds, Turks, Persians, Indian
 - Albanian, Spanish, Portuguese
 - Swedish = to give an evil look
 - Hawaiian = “stink eye”
 6. Jewish Rabbinic tradition dealt with this
 - Evil eye—is the eye of envy—jealousy of others’ prosperity
 - Good eye—is the eye of one who wants others to prosper
 - They put things in ‘hidden places’ to protect them from evil eye of envy
 - Based on God promise to protect their ‘storehouses’—secret places—**Dt 28:8**
 - Too much praise—can swell a person’s pride—and make vulnerable to the eye

2. JESUS’ TREATMENT OF BLINDNESS

- a. Part of His commission—**Luke 4**

1. Fulfilling **Isaiah 61:1-2**
2. He proclaimed as His mission—at Nazareth synagogue

Lk 4:18-19—*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and **recovery of sight to the blind**, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.*

- b. His actual healing of physical blindness

1. The man blind from birth—Jesus used clay and water from Siloam’s fountain—**John 9**
 2. Two blind men in Galilee—**Matthew 9**
 - After raising Jairus’s daughter
 - Before exorcising mute man—when Pharisees said He was demon-possessed
 3. Blind man in Bethsaida—**Mark 8**
 - After feeding of 4000
 - After Jesus chided them for being blind and not understanding about the bread
 - Before Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi
 4. Blind men outside Jericho
 - a. One of them was Bartimaeus—**Mark 10** and **Luke 18**
 - b. But **Matthew 20** says there were two blind men—Bartimaeus implied
- c. His concern about spiritual blindness—and condemnation of legalism
1. In **Matthew 15**
 - a. After Jesus explained what defiles a person—the inside—not outside things
 - b. His disciples warned—the Pharisees were offended
 - c. Jesus responded

Mt 15:13-14—Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.
 2. In **Matthew 23**
 - a. Jesus pronounces ‘**eight woes**’ upon Scribes and Pharisees
 - b. The third ‘woe’—their spiritual blindness

Mt 23:16-17—Woe to you, blind guides, who say, “Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.” You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold of the temple that sanctified the gold?
 3. With his own disciples
 - a. After feeding of 4000—when disciples did not understand about ‘leaven’
 - Jesus: *do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear*—**Mk 8:17-18**
 - Connected with hardness of heart
 - One of three passages in Mark about blindness or hard hearts

b. Two other related passages

1. **Mk 4:9-11**—during Parable of Sower

- Jesus explains why others do not understand
- They see, but don't perceive; they hear but don't understand

2. **Mk 6:51-52**—when Jesus got into boat as the winds died down

- The disciples were utterly astonished
- Because their hearts were hardened

3. PARALLEL PASSAGE—**Lk 11:34-35**

a. Chapter 11 includes parts of the Sermon on the Mount:

- **vv 1-4**—The Lord's Prayer
- **vv 9-13**—Ask, seek, and find

b. Other elements of **Luke 11**

- **vv 5-9**—parable on persistence in asking for what you need—after Lord's Prayer
- **vv 14-28**—response to accusation Jesus is possessed by Beelzebub
- **vv 29-32**—response to those who ask for signs—the 'Sign of Jonah'

c. Context of this passage

v33—*No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light.*

1. From Sermon on Mount—"You are the light of the world" passage—**Mt 5:14-16**
2. Parallels **Mark 4**—verses immediately after Jesus explained Parable of the Sower

Mark 4:21-22—*Do you bring a lamp in to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, it is put on its lampstand. For whatever is hidden is meant to be revealed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought into the light.*

d. **Lk 11** differs from the Matthew text—with slightly different nuance

Lk 11:34-36—**34** *The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35* *Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness. 36* *If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.*

1. Matthew focuses only on the eye— its importance as the filter for the whole body
2. Luke goes beyond this point—and looks at the inward part(s)
 - a. The eye (and every physical sense) controls input for anything coming into the body

- b. But an inward part(s) can also be dark—and block light coming into part of the body
- c. This addresses *inner* controls—that regulate access to parts/rooms of the body
- d. Possible point
 - 1. Even when we take in light with the eye—the heart can block it
 - 2. So—we need to be careful how we process the light inwardly
 - 3. We must be sensitive—with thought and conscience—to what God reveals to us
 - 4. Careless/thoughtless treatment of the light—leads to hardening of the heart!

IV. EXPLANATION OF TEXT

NASB—22 *The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*

- 1. The eye is the **light**—**λυχνος**—of the body = lamp, candle
 - a. Same word used in **Mt 6:15** [and **Mk 4:21** and **Lk 11:33**]
 - People don't put a lamp under a basket—but on a lampstand/candlestick
 - b. Giving illumination—either inwardly—or outwardly
- 2. If your eye is 'good' = **απλους** = unbraided/unplaited—unmixed
 - a. Various interpretations
 - Old NIV = good
 - New NIV = healthy
 - NASB/ESV = clear
 - KJV = single
 - b. Maybe the best interpretation is KJV = **single**
 - Next passage—**v24**—we can serve *either* God *or* the world—but *not* both
 - We must be single-mindedly devoted to God
 - c. Can also mean—accomplishes its purpose
- 3. Whole body will be lighted
 - a. Whole body = **ολος σωμα**
 - **ολος** = holistic
 - Every corner/part of the body

- b. Will be lighted
 - φωτεινός = (adj) well-lit, bright
 - No part of the body will be unlit—all will be clearly lit
- 4. But if your eye is ‘bad’ = πονηρός
 - a. Physical meaning = diseased—blind
 - b. Ethical meaning = evil—wicked—bad
 - c. **Mark 7:22**—mentions the “evil eye”
 - In the list of evils that come from within a person
 - Translated “envy” in NIV and NASB
 - **The green-eyed monster!**
- 5. Whole body [ολος σωμα] will be dark
 - σκοτεινός = (adj) darkened—[entirely] dark
 - Word from which ‘Scotland’ is derived—land of darkness
- 6. If then the light in you is darkness, how great the darkness

V. APPLICATION

A. INTERNAL—OR EXTERNAL—MEANING

- 1. Internal meaning
 - a. Keep our eyes ‘healthy’ and ‘clear’—for our own spiritual benefit
 - b. Beware of what we look at/observe
 - The darkness around us—don’t let it in!
 - It can pollute/poison/darken the soul
 - c. Watch out—that our eyes don’t grow dim
 - Like spiritual **cataracts**
 - Gradually lose brightness of vision—or become spiritually jaded
 - Lose sight and excitement of how God is at work around us
 - d. Instead—maintain a ‘**clerestory**’—[as in Gothic cathedral]—to allow God’s light to shine in
- 2. External meanings
 - a. Keep our eyes ‘single’ and ‘good’
 - b. Singleness of eye

1. Stay single-mindedly focused on the things of God—see **v 24**
2. Echoed by **Proverbs**

Pr 4:25-27—*Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.*

c. 'Good' eyes

- Deal fairly and straightforwardly with others
- Bless others with a kind look
- Look beneficently upon them

d. Don't look with an evil eye

- Don't curse others with a harsh look
- Don't look with envy upon others

B. REMEMBER—EYES ARE WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

1. Like shutters—they allow the good in—and shut out the bad—and *vice versa*
2. But—like transparent windows—they can also reveal to others who we really are
3. We reveal something of our inner/true disposition by the way we look at others