

## Spiritual Blindness and Deafness

Is there a difference between spiritual blindness and spiritual deafness? Spiritual blindness is when someone can't see the truth. Spiritual deafness is when someone won't listen to the truth.

The Pharisees were spiritually blind because although they saw the miracles that Jesus did, they couldn't see the truth of what Jesus did – that He was the Messiah. This is due to their lack of faith in Jesus. We see this spiritual blindness played out in Mark 8, when the Pharisees came and began to argue with Jesus; they wanted to test Him by asking Him for a sign from heaven. The Pharisees, who were spiritually blind, wanted to see with their eyes a sign from heaven. Jesus sighed from the depth of His spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation" (Mark 8:11-12). Right after that, Jesus healed a blind man from Bethsaida, putting spittle on his eyes and laying His hands on him. Jesus then laid His hands on the blind man's eyes a second time and the blind man saw clearly (Mark 8:23-25). Soon after, on the way to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples "Who do people say that I am?" Peter said to Jesus in reply, "You are the Messiah" (Mark 8:27-29). In these series of events centering on the healing of the blind man, we can see three elements: the lack of faith of the Pharisees, the healing of a physically blind man, and the confession of faith of Peter.



The Pharisees were spiritually deaf because although they can hear with their ears what Jesus said, they won't listen to the truth in what Jesus was saying. We see this played out in Mark 7, when the Pharisees questioned Jesus why His disciples didn't follow the tradition of the elders, like the washing of hands before a meal. Jesus said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.' You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition" (Mark 7:6-8). From that place Jesus went off to the district of Tyre. A woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit came to Jesus, fell at His feet and begged Him to drive the demon out of her daughter. Jesus said to her, "it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." She replied and said to Jesus, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps." Jesus said to her, "For saying this, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter." (Mark 7:27-29). From there, Jesus went to the district of the Decapolis, where Jesus healed a deaf man. As with the healing of the blind man, Jesus used a lot of actions: He put His finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!") The man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly (cf. Mark 7:31-35). In these series of events culminating in the healing of the deaf man, we can see the similar elements: The unwillingness of the Pharisees to listen to the truth of what Jesus said, the willingness of the Syrophenician woman to listen to Jesus and her response of faith, and the physical healing of the deaf man.

Spiritual blindness and spiritual deafness have similar causes:

Pride may cause people to not see the truth or listen to the truth. For example, If I don't like or respect a person for one reason or another, then it would be hard for me to accept the good of what he did or said. Evidently, it is likely the same case with some of the Jews at the time of Jesus – Jesus was from Nazareth, a poor town in the poor province of Galilee; even Nathanael, someone who would become one of Jesus'

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disciples, remarked, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” But Philip insisted, “Come and see.” (John 1:46) Especially for the rich Pharisees from a big and important city like Jerusalem, who think that they know more than most people, it wasn’t easy for them to accept the miracles that Jesus did or listen to the truth of the things He said.

Hardness of heart may also cause spiritual blindness and deafness. St. Paul warns the Ephesians against spiritual blindness and deafness; he told them that they must not live in the futility of their minds, darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their hardness of heart (cf. Ephesians 4:17-18). Rather, they should put away the old self of their former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

## PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you an adult and have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation? If so, we invite you to join our Confirmation program to prepare you for the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil in 2025. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Bill.



**Attention children and parents: We will have Sunday School today. Parents are welcome to sit in the Sunday School classes.**

Prayer List: Eva Mullins, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing, Pan Bohao and Xu Taicheng.



Reserve the date: Fr. Bill encourages all parishioners to make plans to participate in the Eucharistic Congress in Atlanta next year on June 20-21, 2025. Our church will host the first-ever Chinese Track in the Eucharistic Congress. This is an incredible opportunity for all of us to see and experience the great number of Catholics in Atlanta united under the One Body of Christ!

The Convocation of Priests in the Archdiocese of Atlanta will be held next week from September 9-12. There will be regularly scheduled Mass on Monday at noon, but there will be no Mass on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Come and celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival with us on September 15, 2024. We will have a lantern parade by the children of our parish after the 10:30am Mass, our community potluck, riddles for adults and prizes for the best lantern and riddle winner!



Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	Sundays 9:00-9:30 AM	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)	Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM	Mondays 6:00 PM (English)
	By Appointment	
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)		<b>Eucharistic Adoration</b>
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	<b>Anointing of the Sick</b>	Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		
First Saturday 10:00 AM (Chinese)		