

Mark 8

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Thoughts from Deacon Adam

It's easier to fool people than to convince them that they have been fooled. - Mark Twain

Once upon a time, there was a brave little boy who lived with his people in a cave underground. He didn't miss the sky or the forest or the ocean because he had never seen them or even heard about such marvelous things. All he knew was his people, and their cave, and their campfire, and the shadows on the wall.



One day God called the boy to come out of the cave. This was an unusual thing, but the boy was very brave, and he wanted to be friends with God, so he left the cave. When the boy reached the surface of the world, the sky was so big, and the forest was so green, and the ocean was so blue, and God was so good!

Filled with excitement, the boy raced back down to his people in the cave to bring them out, but they did not want to leave the cave. They could not hear God. And they did not believe that there was such a thing as “sky” or “forest” or “ocean.” The religious and political leaders of the people even began to attack the boy in their attempts to persuade the people to stay in the cave.

What could the boy do? What could he say? He loved God and he also loved his people. How could he choose between following God and staying in the cave? How could the people ever learn to hear God for themselves if their leaders would not teach them?

The ancient philosopher Plato's allegory of the cave describes what it is like for us to think we understand life, when in fact we really do not. For our science fiction fans out there, Plato's allegory of the cave also inspired the movie script for The Matrix, where the hero fights to free unwitting captives from a dreamworld prison. Here we have combined it with some of Jesus' theology to create a kind parable.

Jesus warns his followers about the dangerous Pharisees and Herodians. How does this apply to us? The Pharisees represent religious authority that loves human approval more than God. Have we seen that in our time? Likewise, the Herodians represent political authority that loves human approval more than justice. Both love power more than people. Both publicly promise solutions to the problems they secretly create. Both use pretense and emotional manipulation, like a growing “yeast,” to subtly influence the masses who keep them in power.

Throughout the gospels, we notice Jesus encountering these kinds of people. He points them out as “hypocrites” which was their word back then for paid actors on a stage, professional pretenders.

Sometimes our own favorite spiritual leaders or political leaders become professional pretenders, always trying to look good while living a life far from God. Then when the corruption is finally exposed for all the world to see, we are shocked and wonder how we could have been so deceived. We may wonder who we can turn to, who we can trust. Where is justice?

Then into the darkness God speaks. And like the child in the story, we can finally hear Him, calling us out of the caves, out of the illusions, into more light, more truth, more of Him- different from what we thought we knew, but better, much better. And God wants to prepare us to help others make the transition, because justice is coming.

Things are not always as they appear. During a secret mission many things cannot be explained until the very end. The winds of change will soon begin to stir because God wants to sweep away the longstanding hidden darkness wherever it may be found, in churches, and in governments. Justice is coming.