

## Spiritual Vision (Seeing God)

Ps. 27:13-14 – “I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”

Last time I spoke on Christian endurance and perseverance. We are not to faint, in persecution and hardships, in chastenings, in our prayers, or in well doing. It is easy just to tell someone “Hold on and don’t give up”, but what is there to help us in enduring? For one thing, we need spiritual vision. Ps. 27:13 above says that we will faint unless we have faith that we will see God’s goodness and faithfulness – not just when we get to heaven, but here, in “the land of the living”. We want to see his goodness now, in the form of forgiveness, mercy, provision, protection, deliverance, healing, etc., but it is even more important that we see HIM. All those other things are IN HIM.

By “spiritual vision” I do not mean a vision where you actually see something, like Daniel, Ezekiel, Peter, or John, but that we look to God in faith, believing and abiding in his Word. We don’t seek an image, but we “see” him as we trust and obey, seek, learn of him, experience his faithfulness, and put real value on our communion with him.

Helen Keller was a famous woman who was both blind and deaf, but if you read her book “The World I Live In”, you cannot help but think that she experienced life more fully than a lot of “normal” people. This compares to us – we are blind in the sense that we cannot literally and physically see God (but in visions or dreams perhaps, like John in the book of Revelation), yet there is a sense in which we can “look” to God and “see” and “hear” him.

Ps. 123:1 – “Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.”

If we can develop a sense of “seeing” God in prayer and worship and a life of joyful obedience, it will cause the greatest pleasures of this life to pale.

Ps. 84:10 – “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

Ps. 63:1-6 – “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. ... When I remember thee upoin my bes, and meditate on thee in the night watches.”

### **It is by looking to God that we are saved.**

Isa. 45:22 – “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” This was the verse that got Charles Spurgeon’s attention as a young man under heavy conviction of sin. He did that and God not only saved him but used him tremendously as a preacher in London in the mid-to-late 1800’s. The point is that it is simply by looking to God and what he has done for us through Christ, not through self-reformation or religious works.

Jn. 3:14-15 – “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Numbers 21 tells of the people’s grumbling and complaining in the wilderness, and how a plague of fiery serpents was sent to punish them and many died. Moses was instructed to make a brazen serpent and put it on a pole, “and it came to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.” It was simply by looking to it that they were delivered, and it is simply by looking in faith to Christ on the cross that we are saved.

To see God is to know and to experience him. We can see a picture of someone, like Albert Einstein, but that is not the same as knowing him. Some people might mistakenly have a mental image of Christ as the long-haired gentle man in the brown-toned picture that is so common. God doesn’t want us making images and paintings of him, he wants us to know him.

### **We “see” God when we see his creation rightly.**

Ps. 8:3-4 – “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

Ps. 19:1 – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.”

Rom. 1:20 – “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”

The unbelieving world sees the same things we do, yet turns them into idolatry, worshipping and serving the creation more than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

**We “see” God when we recognize his works of providence.**

God is not even mentioned in the book of Esther, but his providential dealings are obvious throughout.

**We “see” God by focusing our lives on what is eternal, not what is temporal.**

Heb. 11:13 speaks of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah – “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” And 11:16 – “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

Moses is also mentioned, in Heb. 11:24-27 – “... Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: **for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.**” Moses literally saw the LORD on the mountain, in the burning bush, and when he was hid in a cleft of the rock and saw only “God’s backside” (because no man can see God’s face and live), but I think 11:27 is referring more generally to his whole life, not just those particular experiences.

To know Jesus is to put a greater value on him, and on your personal knowledge of him, than on the things of this world. Remember the song lyrics – “I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold ...”

**We “see” God when we consider him to be greater than our circumstances.**

Rom. 4:19-22 – “And being not weak in faith, he **considered not his own body now dead**, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform, And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

**We “see” God when we look to him for strength during times of testing.**

Heb. 12:1-3 says we are to run with endurance the race that is set before us, by “**Looking unto Jesus** the author and finisher of our faith” as our example. We consider the sufferings and humiliation he went through, and it keeps us from being wearied and faint in our own minds.

**It is by “seeing” God that we receive illumination and true knowledge.**

We look in the Word and we “see”, or understand his truth. That is why Ps. 119:105 says “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” It doesn’t mean physical light, but divine guidance and understanding.

Ps. 34:5 – “They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.”

2 Cor. 4:6 – “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

**It is by “seeing” God that we are changed into his image.**

2 Cor. 3:18 – “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Mt. 5:8 – “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” This will certainly be true in an eternal sense (we will see God in heaven), but I think there is something circular here. As we “see” God as described above, it purifies us, but as we are purified, it is easier to see him. The purer we are, the more we can truly see him, and the more we really see him, the purer we become. His presence is purifying.

These lyrics and comments are from [timelesstruths.org](http://timelesstruths.org):

### **I'd Rather Have Jesus**

1. I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;  
I'd rather be His than have riches untold;  
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands;  
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand

*Refrain:*

Than to be the king of a vast domain  
Or be held in sin's dread sway;  
I'd rather have Jesus than anything  
This world affords today.

2. I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause;  
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause;  
I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame;  
I'd rather be true to His holy name
3. He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom;  
He's sweeter than honey from out the comb;  
He's all that my hungering spirit needs;  
I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead

“Although American hymnals show Rhea Miller as the author of this song, Swedish sources attribute the original to Prince Oscar Bernadotte. In 1888 he relinquished his royal title and right to succession in order to marry a commoner who had influenced his religious beliefs. Afterward he was active in Christian service.”