A close-up of a hand

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**2nd Corinthians 4 – “FIX OUR EYES”**

**Last week:**

**2nd Cor. 3:17**“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

Paul explains that neither people who live recklessly, nor those who live under the weight of the law are free. It is only through the Spirit that we can be free from both.

Jesus said:

**John 8:32,36**

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”

***THIS WEEK:***

**2nd Cor. 3:1-16** (end of Ch. 3) “Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away…” [therefore]

**2nd Corinthians 4:1-3**

**“1**Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. **2**Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. **3**And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to *those who are perishing*.”

Remember, Those who are perishing and have no knowledge of the truth, because they reject the gospel of Jesus, and message of the Cross. In their lostness they are blinded to these things, and in fact find them detestable or foolish.

***1st Corinthians 1:18*“**For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

They can’t “see the light”

**2nd Corinthians 4:4-6** “**4**The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5**For *what we preach* is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. **6**For God, who said, “*Let light shine out of darkness*,” made *his light* shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of *God’s glory* displayed in the face of Christ.”

*“What we preach*” is exactly what was put forth in John 1. Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. The light of the knowledge of God’s glory in given to all who believe.

**John 1:4,9,12,14**

4 “In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

9 “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”

12 “to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

14 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Continue:

**2nd Corinthians 4:7-10 “7**But we have this treasure in *jars of clay* to show that this *all-surpassing power* is from God and not from us.”

“Jars of clay” a.k.a. “Earthen Vessels”

In Israel, when we visit new archeological sites, where arachnologists have dug deep into the earth to find artifacts of human existence, the most common item that is found are pottery shards. These are broken pieces of common earthen vessels that are specific to certain time periods and give clues about the site in which they ae found.

Sometimes they ae marked with symbols and writing. In fact the oldest writing that was found in Israel, were Hebrew letters on a piece of pottery dating back 3500 years.

It’s not always known what substance the vessels contain, but in almost all cases, these common vessels contain something of much greater value than the vessel itself. A common vessel could contain, expensive oil, wine, or ointment.

Paul makes that comparison with our human bodies. Even our common human vessel is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We have Christ in us, the hope of glory, a treasure which contains the all-surpassing power of God.

**“8**We are *hard pressed* on every side, but *not crushed*; *perplexed*, but *not in despair*; **9***persecuted*, but *not abandoned*; *struck down*, but *not destroyed*. **10**We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

**[Bill Higgins Sr.]**

We experience these things as Jesus did,

This is what Paul calls “the fellowship of His sufferings”.

**Phil 3:10** “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, *and* the *fellowship of His sufferings.”*

* hard pressed on every side, but not crushed;
* perplexed, but not in despair;
* persecuted, but not abandoned;
* struck down, but not destroyed.

We experience these things so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

Our “vessels” are hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, and eventually wear out. That’s OK because the life within our vessels is the *“all-surpassing power of God”.*

He explains this more fully here at the end of our chapter;

**2nd Corinthians 4:11-18**

**11**For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. **12**So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

**13**It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, **14**because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. **15**All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

**16**Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18**So we fix our eyes *not on what is seen, but on what is unseen*, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.<>

Understanding the concept of ‘*fixing our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen’* is the very essence of “faith”.

Believing in God and trusting in His Word requires us to put our faith and security in that which our human eyes, and natural perception *cannot* perceive.

This is why Hebrews tells us;

**Heb. 11:1** “faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.”

Some would say that they will only be convinced by substance they can verify, and evidence that they **can** see. This is the opposite of faith. It is doubt.

Is that you? Do you find yourself doubting God because He does not present scientific evidence that convinces your skeptical mind that He is real, and His word is true?

The Apostles were like this, even after Jesus was resurrected. When He first came to them He was disappointed at their unbelief before he appeared to them, he actually rebuked them for not believing. This was particularly true of Thomas who was not with them at first. He told Thomas, also known as Didymus [or “Diddy”, which means “twin”], to stop doubting and just believe.

**John 20:24-27“**Now Thomas (also known as Didymus) one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25**So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” **26**A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **27**Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

When we fix our eyes on Jesus, it means that we are opening the eyes of our heart and allowing His truth, as revealed to our Spirit to be the indicator of what is true and not true, real and not real.

**Eph. 1:18** “I pray that *the eyes of your heart* may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.”

Our world is under the influence of the Great Deceiver, The Devil, whom Jesus calls the “Father of Lies” (John 8), “who deceives the whole world.” (Rev. 12).”

The battle is not against people, ideologies, political parties, even dictators, or military regimes. It’s a battle that wages constantly in realms that we can’t see with our human eyes.

**Eph. 6:12** “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the *heavenly realms.”*

Those heavenly realms are in unseen places, they are invisible to us in the natural, but their destruction and devastation is very apparent here on the earth.

This is why there is so much evil, darkness, hatred, dissonance, bitterness, hopelessness, and depression in the world. These are clear results of the *works of the Devil* that Jesus said He came to destroy;

If/when we rely only what we can see, and understand with our human ability, the world remains hopeless and dark. When we fix our eyes on Jesus, and view things by faith, we find that we can walk in victory, courage and strength.

**1st John 4:4** “He who is *in you* is *greater* than he who is *in the world.”*

One of my favorite examples of this in scriptures takes place in the book of 2nd Kings. The King of Aram was pursuing the armies of Israel to destroy them. His problem was that each time he planned a secret attack, Elisha, the prophet of Israel, would supernaturally discover the plan and reveal it to the King of Israel. This enraged the King of Aram and he set his sights on chasing down Elisha to capture him.

**2nd Kings 6:13–18** “Go, find out where he is,” the king ordered, “so I can send men and capture him.” The report came back: “He is in Dothan.” Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” the servant asked.

“Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, “*Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see*.” Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, “Strike this army with blindness.” So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.”

Elisha’s servant went from being completely terrified that morning at the sight of thousands of enemy chariots and armies surrounding them, to being filled with empowerment and confidence as *his eyes were open* to see the hills full of horses and chariots of fire of the Lord’s angel armies protecting them all around. Elisha simply prayed, “Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see,” and he saw.

Obviously it was his “spiritual eyes” that needed to be opened, so that he could perceive what was “really” going on in the spirit.

(It’s interesting that the servants’ spiritual eyes were enabled, and the army’s physical eyes were disabled.)

This is so similar to what is happening in the world. We are given spiritual sight, while those without the spirit are stumbling around in blindness.

**1st Cor. 2:14** “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned.”

Reread verses 17-18;

“**17**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18**So we fix our eyes **not** on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is *seen is temporary*, but what is *unseen is eternal*.”

Many of us have our eyes fixed upon things of this world. You see the trouble in this world, and the trouble in your own life. You look for solutions from this world that can only come from God. It takes faith to believe what we can’t see, but if your spiritual eyes are opened you will find that;

He is you protector.

He is your provider.

He is the one who has carried you through the tough times of your life,

And He is the one who watches over you.

**Some of us need to ask the Lord to literally *“Fix” Our Eyes.***

*Fix* them so that they stop looking **only** on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

**Psalm 121**

“I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from?

2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber;

4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord watches over you— the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life;

8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

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