

Fixing our eyes on Jesus

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..."

Hebrews 12:2a

Our souls are made in such a way that the focus of our attention is that which seems most real to us. That which fills our vision, captures our thinking, and arrests our imagination, is what mostly greatly influences our feelings and choices. In the long run, this becomes what we believe.

For this reason, there is a battle for our soul, and much of what we call "spiritual warfare" is an inward war for our attention. The enemy of our soul knows the danger of us fixing our eyes on Jesus. If we do that, he cannot control us! His main goal is to force us to get our eyes off of Jesus.

And, in like manner, we could say that the main work of the Holy Spirit within us is to help us keep our eyes on Jesus. He knows that a soul anchored in Christ is one that becomes like Christ. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit that *"He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."* (John 16:14) The Holy Spirit desires to enlarge the reality of Jesus Christ within us, to help us remember who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He desires to do in our lives. Only then will faith grow, and only then will the obedience of faith -- true holiness -- take root in our lives.

Do you want to your faith to grow stronger? It is Jesus who is *"the author and perfecter of our faith."*

Do you want to be changed to become more like Him, to become more holy, more Godly? According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, that happens as we "behold" Him: *"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory..."*

Do you want to know who God is, and what He is like? Look at Jesus. Jesus said, *"He that has seen Me has seen the Father."* (John 14:9)

How do we then keep our eyes on Jesus? How do we "behold" Him? It would be wonderful if He would personally appear to each one of us, like He did to Paul, and as he does at times to others. If he would appear to us in a dream or a vision, that would also be great.

This might happen, but there is no guarantee that you will see Jesus with your natural eyes this side of heaven.

There is a guaranteed way to see Him, however. It is in the Word of God that we can see Jesus. The Amplified version of 2 Cor. 3:18 says *"And all of us, as with unveiled face, because we continued to behold (in the Word of God) as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transformed into His very own image..."* There is no better mirror than the Bible to reflect the true image of Christ.

I am reminded of how Jesus Himself ministered to some of His followers after His resurrection, before He returned to heaven. It is in Luke 24:13-35. Jesus came alongside two men on the road to Emmaus and began to talk with them. They didn't recognize Him, however. It seemed that in His resurrected body, Jesus could reveal or hide Himself at will. These men talked to Him concerning the death of Jesus, not knowing it was Jesus Himself that was walking beside them.

He questioned them and saw that they were troubled and confused about what had happened at the crucifixion. *"Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."*

Wouldn't we like Jesus Himself to explain the Scriptures to us? Especially the things concerning Himself? I would suggest to you that this is what we need most in the Word: to see the things in the Word concerning Jesus Christ. He is the main point! I would also suggest to you that we have One who is just like Jesus in explaining the Word to us...the Holy Spirit!

Yet, even while He explained the Scriptures, they did not recognize Him -- not until Jesus did something at the dinner table. *"He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him..."*

This reminds me of what Jesus did with His disciples on the night He was betrayed:

"And when they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, he broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'" (Matt. 26:26)

The eyes of the men were opened to recognize Jesus as He broke the bread and gave it to them. They recognized Him in the breaking of the bread.

I would suggest to you that until we see Jesus as The Broken Bread, we will not know Him. Until we see Him in the atoning work which He finished on the cross, we will not strongly find faith in Him. Until we see Him as Savior, we will may not comprehend who He is as our ascended King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We will misunderstand His Lordship, not see His great compassion and sacrificial love. We will maintain a distant relationship with Him at best. Unless we see His blood, see His beaten face, see His wounded side, see His thorn pierced brow, see His nail scarred hands and feet, and see His bleeding back, we will never fix our eyes on Him. Until we see His finished work laid out in the covenant of His Word, we will be tossed about, unstable in our faith.

When we see Him in the Word accused and abused and threatened and mocked and rejected, and know that this suffering was for us -- then will we know Him and love Him and trust Him. We will love Him because we know He first loved us.

Yes, we must know His power, His glory, His excellence and His greatness. But it is the compassion and mercy and grace of the Lord that brings about faith in the human heart. Knowing He is *able* to save -- the knowledge of His power -- is not enough. We must know that He is *willing*. This is knowing His great love, His mercy, and His compassion.

When you fix your eyes on Jesus, how do you see Him?

The apostle John was taken into heaven as an old man. The book of Revelation is a record of what He saw. In chapter 5, He was introduced to *"the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to root of David..."* When He looked at Him, he saw *"a Lamb standing, as if slain..."* The lion who was worthy to break the seals of judgment on the earth... that lion was a *lamb*, a mortally wounded one, yet alive.

Fix your eyes on Jesus. To see Him is to see the One who *"was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised for our iniquities..."* (Is. 53)

In Numbers 21, a strange story concerning Israel in the wilderness shows how we must fix our eyes on Jesus:

"They travelled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go round Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses,

and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived."

Why a snake? Jesus referred to this in John 3:14:15:

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

How can a snake represent Jesus?

According to 5 Cor. 3:21, *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* Jesus literally became evil, and the wrath of God against all sin fell on Him. And the result? that we might become holy!

We have all suffered the serpent's bite of sin. It has brought poverty, sickness and death, the curse of the law. Jesus became that curse for us. (Galatians 3) Our eye of faith settled on Him allows God to bring us full redemption!

The apostle Thomas, remembered as "doubting Thomas", thought He needed to see Jesus in order to believe that He had risen from the dead. He said *"Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* (John 20) Jesus showed Him his wounds, but then indicated a greater blessing would come to those who *"having not seen, yet believe."* He wants us to see and know Him by using the eyes of our heart fixed on what the Word says concerning Him.

Just as any Israelite that looked at the bronze serpent was healed from the bite of the snake, so any person that looks by faith at Jesus, "Jesus Christ crucified, dead, buried, and risen again", will experience what was finished on that cross.

Through faith in the Word concerning Christ, we can see Him and keep on seeing Him. We can look to Him and live! We can see Him as the Lamb "standing as if slain", as the One "wounded for our transgressions", as the One "who became sin on our behalf", as the One who carried all our sin and sickness to the grave, and as the One who is alive forevermore!

Let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus!

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