

“Seeing, You Will See and Not Perceive”

By Paul R. Blake

“And seeing, you will see and not perceive” (Matt. 13:14ff). Thus spake the Savior in the parable of the sower. He taught that people would hear the truth, but would fail to recognize and understand it; that folks would see evidence of the Divine, but fail to identify and distinguish it. They would hear with ears of flesh, but their souls had self-inflicted deafness. They could see with eyes of flesh, but the eyes of their heart and mind were shut tight. The will of God and its attendant blessings were right in front of them, and they would not see either. How sad.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2Cor. 5:7). They were having the same difficulty with this principle as did Christ's audience. How is it that one cannot see what is right in front of him? Perhaps he is not looking for it.

The human mind is a wondrous organ, perhaps the pinnacle of God's physical creation. We have been given the ability to focus our attention on one item, and at the same time screen out nearly all other activities, sounds and input around us. Visualize sitting under a tree in the summer while studying the Bible. What is going on around you? There are birds singing, children playing across the street, a lawn mower at the end of the block, a breeze blowing, dappled sunlight through the leaves making spots on the pages, ants a few feet away dragging a grasshopper home for supper, a robin tugging a worm from the flower bed nearby. How do you get any studying done?! Simple; your mind filters out all of these distractions. You have decided to read, and your mind complies by screening out all of the extra things going on around you.

How does this work in spiritual matters? Quite the same way, in fact, Paul told the Corinthians that they were looking at and concentrating on the wrong things; they needed to shift their focus. Instead of looking at things that were visible, they should have been concentrating on invisible matters.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2Cor. 4:16-18).

This principle is easily understood when we realize that one of our five senses can distract the others from full function. When listening to a particularly beautiful sound, we instinctively close our eyes for fuller appreciation; that way our mind can focus on hearing without the powerful distraction of vision. Likewise, when we are trying to see by faith, our physical sense of sight distracts our thinking. Our eyes get in the way of our faith. For example, the evolutionist peddles his moldy bones in the classroom. Our physical eyes see those bones as alleged evidence for Darwinism, and this distracts our vision by faith... that God created all things. In another example, our eyes see the factory being shut down and our job ending; this vision distracts us from seeing by faith that God has promised to care for His own. Therefore, when we focus our attention through our physical sense, our walk by faith becomes addled and confused by the extraneous input. We need to focus our attention and thinking on seeing the unseen by faith, and block out the senses of the flesh in spiritual matters.

Why should we direct our attention to the invisible while living in a physical world? First, for security. For precisely that reason... we live in a physical world. A physical world changes; it decays; it dies. God does not change; heaven does not decay; the soul does not die. In a short space of time, relatively speaking, this world will be gone. In an even shorter period of time, our bodies will be dead. The physical is ephemeral, delicate and limited. The spiritual profound, powerful and permanent. The body dies easily, but no force exists that can harm, let alone destroy, the soul.

Second, for encouragement. Paul said the outward man is perishing while at the same time the inward man was being built up. The eyes of flesh become discouraged when the outward man declines, but the eyes of faith are uplifted by the growth and strength received by the suffering of the flesh. It is inevitable that the flesh will age and that the Christian will suffer. Our soul has been created by God in such a way as to derive power and health from the aging and privation of the body. By faith, we rejoice that our spirit grows as our body shrinks.

Third, for perseverance. With the eyes of flesh, we see only the trials and the effect that such pressure has on our lives and bodies. It makes us want to quit; after all, who wants to deliberately harm himself? Without the vision of faith, we would not see the reward that awaits, and makes the suffering

worth the sacrifice. The un-distracted eyes of faith allow us to see that our physical trials are "light" and "momentary," while our reward is "far more exceeding," "eternal," "weighty" and "glory." Seeing this way, we can put up with light, momentary afflictions in view of what is to come.

And fourth, for growth. One who can see with his eyes is limited and spiritually impoverished. He cannot see beyond this earth and has no hope of the riches in Christ. One who walks by faith can see the unseen and set his affections on things above this plane of existence. To him, this world is a brief stretch of highway on his pilgrimage to the heavenly presence of God. Kind reader, walk by faith. Do not allow the eyes of flesh to distract you from the beauties of the eternal and unseen.

OMG is SIN **By Kent Heaton**

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Ex. 20:7).

The name of God is holy and reverend. A lot of folk do not think so from what is heard and seen on social media. It is not uncommon to hear people use language that dishonors the Lord. Cursing the name of the Creator goes from blatant foul language to socially accepted use of His name in vain. The real danger comes from the children of God cursing their Father’s name with terms like OMG (Oh my God) or more direct use of the name God in various formats. Misguided souls think as long as they do not ‘curse’ the name of God in the obvious language of cursing they are safe to use the name of the Lord in any other fashion. Wrong! The Lord will require judgment upon all who use His name in a flippant manner.

There was a case among the people of Israel where two men got into a fight. One was the son of a woman from the tribe of Dan whose husband was Egyptian. The woman’s son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed. He was brought to Moses to determine what must be done. The Lord told Moses to take the young man outside the camp and to require all those who heard him curse the name of the Lord lay their hands on his head and then stone him with stones. And they did. The penalty under the Law of Moses for blaspheming the name of the Lord was death. While the Law of Moses is no longer binding, God’s view of His name is unchanged.

God’s name is to be feared because His name is who He is. Using His name in a vain manner insults the character of the holiness of the Lord. One of His names is THE LORD YOUR GOD. This name is to be feared. It is a glorious name and is awesome. Another name of the Lord is JEALOUS because He is a jealous God. All through scripture the Lord God Almighty reminds us that His name is not to be used in a vain fashion. Because the world approves of this kind of language does not suggest God does.

It must be made clear that using God’s name in vain does not limit itself to speaking but also what we hear. The world of media has no honor for the name of God. Television shows will use God’s name constantly in many forms. Movies will use God’s name in cursing. We have become desensitized to how God’s name is used and will watch show after show that decries the name of God. People of God will mention movies they have seen where the name of God is cursed. Have we decided the Lord allows a certain number of times for His name to be cursed before He gets angry? If you knew a movie you were going to watch used God’s name ONCE as a curse – would you watch it? Sadly many brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ will. When God declared His name holy and His name should not be taken in vain He did not allow latitude. Movies, television shows, music or books that use foul language including the socially accepted use of God’s name in vain (like OMG) should not be on the list of a child of God. He will not hold His children innocent. Pretending like you did not hear it does not make it go away. “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12:36).