**Seeing Reality**

**2 Corinthians 4:18**

**Objective:** Help people to focus on right priorities by “seeing” what is really important.

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:7-18.

**Introduction:**

1. Last week, I tried to dial a phone number that started with 746 and I dialed a wrong number because I dialed 764. Most likely I had seen it as 764 because that is a Massena prefix. It is what I am used to, and so I did not recognize the reality. I did not “see” what really was.
2. I wonder how often we do this with other things. Far more important things. With eternal realities?
3. The Apostle Paul speaks to this in today’s Scripture reading in 2 Corinthians 4:18, ***“…while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”***
4. So, what are we missing? Would that we could see things as God sees them! The passage infers that we can, if we are willing to take a “look”.

**We ought to “see” things as God sees them.** (HOW?)

 The assertion is that we would live differently if we saw things as they really are, the true, eternal spiritual realities. Let’s *consider what life would be like if we saw things that God sees*.

*We tend to be “near sighted”, in this physical life. To worry about immediate needs and miss seeing what is really important! If we could see as God sees, we would see …*

**I. The immediate priority of the Kingdom of Heaven.**

A. More important than present, physical matters.

1. We would know to focus on heaven over the cares and worries of this world.
2. Jesus says in Matthew 6:25, 33, ***“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”*** then he asserts in verse 33 ***"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*** If I could see as He sees I would alter my priorities. I would really have ONE GOAL in life because there is really ONE THING that matters!

B. What do we “prioritize” when we fail to see this reality?

1. How will I cope with my busy schedule *today*? How will I handle things at work *today*?
2. Better get some groceries. Make a list of errands so I don’t forget anything.
3. Got to fill up the gas tank. Got to pay some bills. Got to do laundry. What will the other folks think about what I’m wearing? Hope I get to spend some time on my hobbies. Got to mow the lawn. Maybe cook dinner and eat with the family. Then I get to “crash” and maybe watch some TV.

C. How might life be different if we “saw” this reality?

1. What would spiritual-sighted person be thinking about? One who could see the unseen?
2. Let me have a cup of coffee with God to start the day, spending that time in prayer, reading His Word, meditating on it. That time would be important time, not just wasted or idle.
3. Wonder what God has in store for me today? What challenges, what opportunities.
4. How can I be “light” to someone? Thank you Father for providing for me and my family
5. I don’t get much time with my kids today, how can I nurture them in the short time I have?
6. I know I belong to God. I am the fullness of Him Who fills all in all. How exciting to think I will be used to bring glory to His name today.
7. Suppose you “looked” and knew this was your last day on earth and you would be stepping over into the “unseen” realm? What would you focus your day on?
8. We’d SEE that physical prosperity is not nearly so important as spiritual wellness.
9. We would focus on being right with God. Every moment.
10. We would focus on dealing rightly with people. On being kind. Generous. Forgiving.
11. If we really saw the sad state of so may souls who would stand in Judgment we would reach out to them with light and love and truth. We would focus on embodying the Spirit of Christ.
12. We would focus on asking God to help us help them.
13. If we saw how temporary our house, care, lawn, financial inheritance are, we wouldn’t fight over them or for them We would fight to get to heaven, to be righteous, etc.
14. We would “see” that money is not all that important. Nor clothing. Nor even food.
15. 1 Corinthians 2:9, speaks of knowing the heart and intentions of God and ***“…THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."*** If we could “see” that, we would face each day with eager anticipation, living with joy and peace, excited for each day, even for each trial, knowing God is working in us and knowing the unimaginable reward that is awaiting us.

*What would it be like if we learned to “see” …*

**II. The soul rather than the body.**

A. Of the average person.

1. Suppose you could “see” the value of a soul? People you see (physically) every day.
2. The clerk that simply pays attention to his or her job – what if you could see the condition of their soul – whether they are clean or dirty, lost or saved – their eternal destination? Would you be moved to talk to them differently? To show them Jesus?
3. The “hood” in a dark ally that you are so frightened of encountering. Those loud and raucous neighbors that are so undisciplined, and cuss so loudly that you don’t like to go outside.
4. Those 12 year old urchins that are practicing their shop-lifting in Walmart.
5. Who is it that buys or sells drugs in that rough neighborhood? Who is it that is leaving hypodermic needles all over town? Should we just pray that we can rid the town of them, or should we help them by praying *FOR* them and bringing them into the kingdom of light?
6. One who is voluptuous and attractive to you; What is their soul like? Is it lost, dirty, destitute? Is it black darkness or sweet light? Is it in agony, dis-spirited? Like a sheep without a shepherd?
7. Would you learn to disregard their social position in society?
8. What if you could see the actual sin-stains on someone’s soul?
9. What would it look like? Black blotches on a white shirt? More embarrassing than that?
10. What would a lie look like on someone’s soul?
11. What if you saw what it did *to them* when you degraded them with your gossip?
12. What if you saw what it did *to your soul* when you degraded them with gossip?
13. What would simple spiritual apathy or negligence look like? (maybe a wrinkled shirt?)
14. Would you be embarrassed to stand before Christ as His Bride with sin stains on your soul?
15. I don’t know what it would “look” like, but am convinced it would be alarming to us.

B. Less socially acceptable people.

1. Bums? Sick? With mental or physical disabilities? Scripture teaches us to associate with the lowly. If you could “see” as God sees, would you still avoid such, or be drawn to them, perhaps out of compassion?
2. Who would be most desirable to hang around; the “popular”, good looking athlete, or the good-souled person with disabilities?
3. Who would we pick for leaders? Who would we follow? 1 Samuel 16:7, ***“But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."***
4. Would you naturally honor the one who comes in with poor cloths as much as the one who always dresses well if you saw the heart instead of the cloths and stature?

C. Of a child.

1. What if you saw that baby for a soul? How would you re-focus your child-rearing attention? Harsher or kinder? More time and attention? How would seeing their soul alter your own behavior and mentoring influence?
2. Would you see them as an invaluable treasure which God has entrusted to your care and give of yourself to return them to God holy, godly, clean?
3. What television and other influences would you allow if you could see the changes being made to that soul’s innocence?
4. Would you be more inclined to take time to bring them to church than you are to the playground?
5. What people and influences would you protect them from? Would you decide there are some friends and relatives you really don’t want them around?
6. Would you still laugh and chuckle at their little imitations of sinful behavior or would you be seriously concerned about such?
7. Would you “disregard” any religious, spiritual, moral teachings, and just let them “decide for themselves when they come of age, or would you introduce them to Jesus at the earliest age possible and nurture them toward true godliness – if you saw their soul?

*What would it be like if you could see …*

**III. Spiritual forces arrayed.**

A. See the forces against us.

1. What if, when you sat in your room “alone”, contemplating turning up a pornographic website, you looked across the room and saw two demons sitting chuckling?
2. When you watched television shows (or allowed your kids to watch) that hardened and calloused your conscience (and theirs) against violence or illegitimate sexual relations, and implanted seeds to worldly behaviors, you actually saw a demon sitting on top of the TV rubbing his hands together?
3. What if you could see the force that was prompting you to live together outside of marriage, or to make an irritable, snide remark, or just encouraging you to ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit to your heart?
4. What if you could see the reality of Ephesians 6:12, ***“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”***
5. I think we would take the fight for our lives much more seriously. I think we would look for spiritual armor. We would engage in the fight for our souls and the souls of those around us, looking for every legitimate means of spiritual strength we could find.

B. See the forces for us.

1. What if we could see God’s army arrayed to help us as did Elisha in 2 Kings 6:17, ***“Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”***
2. We would spend more time in prayer. We would be anxious for nothing, we would be able like Paul, to sing praises even if we had been beaten and cast into prison, knowing that His power is with us. We would be able to endure all things knowing Christ is right there with us.
3. We would be bolder, living with knowledge of what it means that ***“… God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”*** (2 Timothy 1:7)
4. Then we could ***“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials…”*** (James 1:2) because we would know and live as though God were growing our Christ-like character, working with us, enabling us and being glorified through us.

**So What?**

 The things that are most important in life are *not* the things you can see with your physical eyes. Those are temporary. They won’t last. The “unseen” is the reality. The “unseen” is what is eternal. *Let’s learn to see as God sees*.

**Closing Prayer:**

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**Corinthians 4:18**

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:7-18.

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 Consider what life would be like if we saw things that God sees.

**I. The immediate priority of the Kingdom of Heaven.**

A. More important than present, physical matters.

 Matthew 6:25 Matthew 6:33

B. What do we “prioritize” when we fail to see this reality?

C. How might life be different if we “saw” this reality?

 1 Corinthians 2:9

**II. The soul rather than the body.**

A. Of the average person.

B. Less socially acceptable people.

 1 Samuel 16:7

C. Of a child.

**III. Spiritual forces arrayed.**

A. See the forces against us.

 Ephesians 6:12

B. See the forces for us.

 2 Kings 6:17 2 Timothy 1:7 James 1:2

**So What?**

 Let’s learn to see as God sees.