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Seeing the Unseen

November 3, 2019

Sermon Text: 2 Kings 6:14-17

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11

2Ki 6:14-17 So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

(15) When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" (16) He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (17) Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

When the Lord saves us he gives us repentance and faith, and along with this faith he gives us *sight*. This is the primary reason we have so many accounts in the Gospels of Christ healing the blind. It is a picture of what He does for us in salvation. Once we were blind, but now we see.

If you are born again, you have what we might call "the eyes of faith." If you are not born again, then you are still blind and in the darkness. You cannot see the glory of Christ:

2Co 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

What I want to do this morning is to encourage us to "see" with the eyes of faith, the things Christ would have us see. And even for the Christian, this is a challenge.

We are still attached to this present world, though like Paul we find ourselves torn between two worlds:

Php 1:23-24 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. (24) But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

It is easy for us to see this world and the things that are in it. There are many things here in this life that we love and that it is not sinful to love. They are good gifts from the Lord:

- Friends & loved ones
- The mountains
- The ocean
- The animals and our pets
- Family holidays and traditions
- Favorite places
- Memories of all these things

Now, in many ways these kinds of things in this present life *are all that we have known*. Things that we can literally see and touch and taste and hear. It is a life of the aroma of pot roast cooking on Sunday afternoon, and potatoes and gravy and apple pie. It is a life of *familiar things*.

But there is a catch. A fly in the ointment. A couple of flies, as a matter of fact:

- These things do not last. Even memories fade away. Everything in this present life is temporal and passing away like a vapor. Cling to it all we want, we cannot stop the march of time.
- In contrast to these good things, this present life and world are filled with evil things. Evil people. Evil events. Suffering and pain and sorrow.

These flaws serve to call our attention to *unseen things* which the Lord has promised us. An *unseen life* and an *unseen world*. Invisible things that can only be seen by people Christ has given sight to.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith hears God's promises and *sees them afar*. This sight is an *assured conviction* of their reality. Abraham had this sight:

Heb 11:8-10 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he

was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

He was *looking forward* by faith and with the eyes of that faith he saw the New Creation which God had promised. Listen carefully to these verses – and there are many, many more in the Bible just like these:

2Co 4:13-18 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, (14) knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. (15) For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. (16) So we do not lose heart. **Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.** (17) For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, (18) as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

And again-

2Co 5:6-7 So we are always of good

courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, (7) for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Php 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Rom 8:24-25 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The eyes of faith see what is unseen. The Christian sees what is invisible. And we see by faith. It is my purpose here this morning to stir us all up to a greater exercise of this sight which the Lord has given us so that we see His promises just as surely as we see this room around us right now.

- Our resurrection
- The new heavens and earth
- Christ’s return
- The end of sin and suffering
- Our justification

Let’s look in more detail at these verses from 2 Corinthians 4 –

(16) So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

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First of all, notice Paul's emphasis here upon *the temporary nature of this present life and world*.

- Outer self is wasting away
- Light momentary affliction
- Things that are seen are transient

And then in contrast to these temporal things in this present life that we can see with our physical eyes, look at his emphasis upon contrasting the eternal yet to come:

- Inner self being renewed
- Eternal weight of glory (in contrast to the "light" present trouble
- Unseen things are eternal

These are the things that last, and these

are the things that we can only see right now with the eyes of faith. And it turns out that the things that are invisible right now are actually *the real things because everything in this present world is passing away*. Think of it. Everything that you can see and feel and touch and smell and taste and hear in this present life *is actually a vapor. A temporary shadow*.

Now, this doesn't mean that we are some kind of Christian Science proponents who deny the reality of physical things! It simply means that the real things we are familiar with, the things we can hold in our hands right now, *cannot be held forever because they are passing away*. As "permanent" as some things may seem in this world, NOTHING is permanent. But these invisible things promised by the Lord – *they are eternal*. So it is to them that we must look and we must order our lives in accordance with what lies ahead. *Look to the things that are unseen, not to the things that are seen*.

This is how we have victory over the world:

1Jn 5:4-5 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. (5) Who is it that overcomes the world except the

one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The people of this world and Satan, the god of this world, *want us to keep our eyes fixed on this present world and to believe that this is all there is.* They want you to live your life and to form your thinking around the lie that “you only live once” so live it to the fullest in the here and now. They want you to be one of them. A worldling. Blind and perishing.

It's true. Just interject into a conversation at a family reunion or some other social setting some truth about Christ and eternal things and see what happens. A great discomfort can be felt. Let's keep the topic on meat and potatoes – none of this weird Bible stuff.

And if you are going to overcome this world, you have to see by faith. You have to look at the things that are unseen and see them. Taste them. Hear them. Feel them.

Now, lest this sound impossible to you (and it is impossible with man), let me remind you that in fact the Lord has given His people the means by which we actually can taste and feel and hear and see and touch these unseen promises. That means is, *the Holy*

Spirit in us.

Rom 8:14-16 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” (16) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Rom 8:23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

The Holy Spirit in us, in a mysterious way we do not fully understand, is able to enable us to “see” the unseen. To know that we are children of God. To know that our resurrection is coming. In fact, as the Apostle to the Hebrews says, the Holy Spirit enables us to “taste” the goodness of the Lord. He is speaking here of apostates and hypocrites, but nevertheless you see it:

Heb 6:4-5 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been **enlightened**, who have **tasted** the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, (5) and have **tasted** the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,

Just as we must use our physical eyes to see something (we can't keep our eyes closed if we are going to see), we must actively use the eyes of our faith and *look*. For example:

Col 3:1-3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (2) **Set your minds on things that are above**, not on things that are on earth. (3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

In contrast, look at what is characteristic of the ungodly-

Php 3:18-21 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. (19) Their end is destruction, **their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.** (20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

The world always, always, always sings its siren song-

an alluring utterance or appeal

especially: one that is seductive or deceptive

Eat, drink and be merry. This present life is all you have so make the most of it. Look at all the world has to offer you if you will just come with us and take it.

But it is a lie. All those who follow this Broadway are headed for destruction, and if you are going to be victorious over seductive lies such as this one, if you are going to conquer this world and not go down with it, then you must be born again, and you must use the eyes of faith to set your mind and goals on the truly real things which are eternal, though for now they are unseen.

One final challenge: If you want to see a very sad sight, take a look at people who are at the end of their present lives and who have set their eyes upon this present world. It is a sad and pathetic sight. For them, their happiness is over. You can hear many of them weep and wail. Why? Because they listened to the lies of the world, and the world told them they could find true happiness and fulfillment by giving themselves just to the things of this present life. And now in the final days of their life, the world has abandoned them. Vaporized. Gone.

On top of that, they know the truth they have suppressed their whole life – that it is just about time for them to stand before God and give account. And they’ve got nothing. They are spiritually bankrupt because they would not have Christ.

You, Christian, have overcome the world and if you are going to increasingly enjoy that victory, use the eyes of your faith to look at the things God has promised you. Real things. Things that are so wonderful we couldn’t describe them if we had to. Things that will never, ever come to an end. A new home where death and crying are never seen again, and where we will never ever have to say good bye to one another again.

At the end of his days, the Christian has every reason to be the most joyful person in this world. He sees the unseen, which are about to become clear and visible to him, just like Elisha’s servant:

2Ki 6:14-17 So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. (15) When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” (16) He

said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” (17) Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Herein, you see, is our victory.