

ENJOYING GOD III: - Seeing God's Glory!

I. Attention Getting Step.

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning at the third tee (par 3, 185 yards, slight dog leg to left, water hazard on the right) while a particularly slow group of golfers were flailing away ahead of them.

Engineer: What's with these guys? We must have been waiting for 15 minutes!

Doctor: I don't know but I've never seen such ineptitude!

Priest: Hey, here comes the green keeper. Let's have a word with him.

Priest: Hi George. Say George, what's with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow aren't they?

George: Oh yes. That's a group of blind fire fighters. They lost their sight while saving our club house last year. So we let them play here anytime free of charge!

Priest: That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight.

Doctor: Good idea. And I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist buddy and see if there's anything he can do for them.

After a short pause ...

Engineer: Why can't these guys play at night?

In case you wondering why I shared a joke about blind folks, our message today is about spiritual vision.

II. Review

- a. Week 1: Enjoying God – finding our satisfaction in Him.
 - i. We fill our lives with things that don't satisfy.
 - ii. God made us with a God sized hole that only He can fill.
 - iii. "God is most glorified when I am most satisfied in Him."
- b. Week 2: The Joy of God.
 - i. Joy is an experience irrespective of circumstances, happiness is based on circumstances.
 - ii. All joy is God's joy. He delights in us. He is full of Joy.
 - iii. Joy is the felt experience of God's presence AND pleasure.
 - iv. We feel joy when we are experiencing His pleasure, and we lose joy when we grieve (disobey) Him.

III. This morning we are going to look at the gift of sight.

- a. Open your bibles to John Chapter 9 – keep your bible open to this passage because we are going to examine it carefully.
- b. ¹ *As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.*
- c. Jesus and his disciples are on their travels and Jesus sees a man blind from birth.
 - i. Have you ever thought about the incredible gift that sight is?
 - ii. Eyesight is something we take for granted until we begin losing it.
 - iii. You get an itch or infection in your eye or and you think...what would it be like to not be able to see?
 - iv. We can distinguish colors, distance, size, shapes, beauty, light and dark.
 - v. Our eyes are the best of any creature, and while some may have greater acuity (like a hawk) none have the breadth of ability to perceive movement, color, shape, detail, hue, light, dark, etc.

IV. The opposite of sight...blindness is a loss of potential.

- a. Imagine never seeing a face, a color, a sunset, or even the color of the coffee you pour, or the food you eat.
- b. The blind also have a tough time surviving in a seeing society.
 - i. You are often at the mercy of the sighted.
 - ii. What we take for granted, crossing streets, driving, playing softball, reading books... these are difficult or impossible for the sightless.
- c. The Jews believed illnesses such as blindness were caused because someone sinned.
 - i. ² And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "*It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*"
 - ii. Jesus counters the beliefs of the Jews concerning the cause of this man's blindness and the added stigma that their society has placed on him and his family as a result of being born with this tragic loss of sight.
 - iii. In fact, Jesus even goes so far as to say that the blindness, the tragedy, occurred so that the works of God might be displayed in him!
 1. I find it tough to get my hands around that statement!
 - a. That God allowed, an illness or a handicap so that His glory and His works might be made known and demonstrated through it?
 - b. We aren't going here today...but this is something that can have a profound impact upon how we view tragedy, hardship and suffering.

V. Spiritual Sight

- a. Scripture (John 9) John 9:1- -----Healing the Man Born Blind
 - i. ⁴ "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." ⁶ When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent).
 - ii. So he went away and washed, **and came back seeing.** ⁸
 - iii. Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Others were saying, "This is he," *still* others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." ¹⁰ So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."
 - iv. They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." ¹⁶ Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ So they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."
 - v. ¹⁸ The Jews then did not believe *it* of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, ¹⁹ and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this

because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. ²³ For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

- b. Folks, at this point the story gets really interesting. There is a controversy over Jesus healing him, and how he did it.
 - i. ²⁴ So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; **one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.**"
 - 1. This is the testimony of most of us...we can't answer a bunch of theological questions but we can say, I was once miserable and now I have joy. Jesus touched me.
 - ii. ²⁶ So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear *it* again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" ²⁸ They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we ^{R618} do not know where He is from." ³⁰ The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and *yet* He opened my eyes. ³¹ "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. ³² "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.
 - iii. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have both **seen** Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." ³⁸ And he said, "Lord, I believe." **And he worshiped Him.**
 - 1. The only appropriate response to seeing the glory of God is worship!
 - 2. If his life was had just gotten better from getting his sight, it got eternally wonderful, because He now had a relationship with the Savior!
 - iv. ³⁹ And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

VI. Blindness was a feared condition back then as well as now.

- a. In ancient times conquerors would put out the eyes of their captives so as to prevent them from rebelling against them.
 - i. There are two biblical stories of such events. (2 Kings 25:7; 1 Samuel 11:2).
 - ii. The apostle Paul tells us about a blindness that comes from being captives to our enemy:
 - 1. 2 Cor 4:3-4 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
 - iii. In fact, all who are born into this world are born under the power of the "god of this world." The unbelieving – those who have not known Christ are under the power of the god of this world – they are the vanquished, he has "put out their eyes."
 - iv. They cannot see the light of the gospel – the glory of Christ, the image of God.
 - 1. They cannot see the glory of Christ.
 - 2. It is hidden, they are blind to it.
 - 3. In fact, in John 9, Jesus told the Pharisees that they were actually blind.

b. It is “normal” in our world to be blind!

- i. I would like to paint a scenario for you. Imagine that every person in the world was born without eyesight.
- ii. The entire world would be constructed for sightless people.
 1. There would be no television, just radio, no lights, no flashlights, there would be no need to illuminate the darkness because it would always be dark. And folks would be used to getting around in the dark.
 2. I remember a movie about a blind woman who is terrorized by thugs that she is a witness against. She succeeds in outwitting them by turning out the lights and making her way around her home quietly while they bump into furniture and walls. She is used to the dark.
 3. If everyone was sightless, then we would all live within the limitations of sightlessness and consider it normal.
- iii. But what if someone who had received their sight came along and announced that they had a cure for blindness, that being blind was not normal and that there was a whole new world to explore?
 1. First, the political correctness police would object because we were calling sightless people blind. Any fool knows there are only 4 senses!
 2. Then people would laugh and say that there is no such thing as sight.
 3. After all, we have never seen anything, how can you say there is such a thing as light, vision, and things like that?
 4. A sighted person would be an abnormal person at first, an outcast until they demonstrated their abilities and led a sightless person for a long enough period of time that they realized that they were in fact blind and there was an advantage to being able to see. They would want to have this ‘GIFT’ of sight as well.
- iv. It is the same thing in the spiritual realm.
 1. People in our world do not know that they are spiritually blind until someone with sight leads them by the hand long enough for them to realize that there is such a thing as spiritual vision.
 2. Then they want it too.

VII. People ask, “What do we need spiritual vision for?” I am doing just fine! Just like the example!

- a. Paul prayed “*that the eyes of your hearts would be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.*” (Eph. 1: 18).
 - i. “eyes of our hearts” = spiritual vision.
 - ii. Paul prays that even Christians have their spiritual vision improved as well!

VIII. What are people blind toward?

- a. Blind to the Plans of God.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 2:6-10 *We speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" - 10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.*
 1. The Pharisees wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory had they been able to see who He was.

2. God has a plan for the world He made. He has plans for every person He made. A perfect plan. But that plan cannot be performed by one who is blind to it.
3. *But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.*
 - a. You can know His riches, His glorious inheritance, you can know His plans. You can experience them because if you are a born-again believer, endowed with the Spirit of God, you have gained your spiritual sight and can see into the realm of the spirit!
 - b. When we proclaim the glorious truths of God's word here in our church, in bible studies, we are declaring the plans of God that the world is blind to.
- ii. Why do you think people are so hungry to read "The Purpose Driven Life?"
 1. Because it plainly tells how God made us and has a PLAN for our lives!
 2. Most people do not have a clue to God's plan for their life.
 3. They live their life without any such idea of this.
 4. They live life and wonder, "is this all there is?"
 5. Christians can say, "NO! There is MUCH MORE!"
- b. **Blind to the Gospel**
 - i. 2 Cor 4:3-4 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
 1. Do you see the SO THAT in that sentence? What is it there for? To tell us the REASON why the devil has blinded the eyes and minds of the world...*so they might not see the LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL OF GLORY of Christ who is the image of God.*
 2. Good news – is the translation of the word "gospel."
 - ii. But what makes the gospel, the good news, so good?
 1. That we don't have to go to hell. That's pretty good.
 2. That we don't have to be slaves to sin any longer? That's Good!
 3. That we get a relationship with God that means He hears our prayers? That's nice.
 4. But it is incomplete. There is something more.
 - iii. I believe that **the good news is about being able to see and enjoy the glory of God** –
 1. In fact, the reason a person is blinded by the god of this world so that they cannot enjoy the glory of God.
 2. Satan wants people blind so that they cannot leave his kingdom. (and so they don't want to because they can't SEE anything better, and the bible says they are "perishing.")
 3. Satan wants people to be enslaved to him. So he does all he can to keep them from seeing the "good news" of Christ and a vision of his glory.
- c. **Blind toward the Glory of God**
 - i. All of us were once blind, or are still blind, to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. (verse 4)
 - ii. 2 Cor 4:6 *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*
 - iii. To be lost—to be perishing as verse 3 says—means to be unable to see the glory of Christ in the gospel, the glory of God in the face of Christ, displayed in the gospel.
 - iv. **Lostness is blindness to God's glory.**
 - v. **Lostness is blindness to spiritual light.**

1. It is why lostness is compared to being in darkness. Absolute darkness.
2. Ever played the game of “lights out?” You black everything out so dark you cannot see the hand in front of your eyes, and then play hide and seek?
- vi. Blind to glory: Maybe you know someone like this.
 1. We tell people about how beautiful and great is his love and wisdom and power and justice and meekness and humility and sovereignty.
 2. And they listen, and they hear the facts.
 3. They may even believe the facts of history.
 4. But they see no glory, no beauty, no treasure. They are blind to it.
 5. They don’t want it because they don’t see it. They are simply unable to grasp it.
- vii. God’s plan for us, in creation, was for us to behold His perfect Glory and to exult and rejoice and enjoy Him for eternity.
- viii. **Glory of God: The visible majesty of the Divine Presence**
 1. Glory: visible to spiritual eyes not always to physical ones. His presence can be felt with our spirit. He is so real when you sense Him!
 2. And the gospel, the good news is proclaimed to call us to behold His glory, to gain spiritual sight so that we might see His presence and feel His pleasure and experience His joy – and ENJOY Him forever.
 3. This is the essence of eternal life: Jesus said, *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”* (Jn 17:3)
- d. **The hand of God.**
 - i. The hand of God is often used to describe God’s actions in our lives. Before I was a Christian, I was blind to what God was doing, His protection, His guidance, His love. I had no sense of what He was doing.
 - ii. Now, as a Christian, I can honestly say that I can see His hand moving, directing, guiding, working. I can see what He is doing and I can follow Him.

IX. **Regaining our Sight:**

- a. Adam and Eve, the first created humans had a perfect relationship with God and had the power to see spiritually even though they had physical bodies.
 - i. They could see the glory of God, but not with physical eyes, but spiritual ones.
 - ii. Often it is said that the reason the fallen angels were not given an opportunity to repent was because they saw the full, unimpeded and blinding glory of God...and still chose to rebel.
- b. **God alone can grant spiritual sight and liberation from the blinding power of the devil.**
 - i. We see this in 2 Cor. 4 verse 6: "For God, who said, ‘*Let light shine out of darkness,*’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
 - ii. This is how we all got saved. Light shone out of darkness. Jesus touched our eyes! Jesus took our blindness and now we can see!
 - iii. Salvation is having our eyes opened so that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ shines into our hearts.
 1. And we see it and savor it and treasure it.
 2. It is in the seeing of the glory of God that we know joy!

X. Can Christians lose their sight? Unfortunately, yes.

- a. Revelation 3:17-18 is spoken to a church! *“You are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked. Buy from me...salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.”*
 - i. Many commentators see the 7 churches as 7 periods in church history, with Laodacia as our current age of the church.

- ii. Laodacia is the church he is speaking to about blindness.
- b. **What makes us blind?**
 - i. **Idols do.**
 - 1. Ps. 135:15-18 *“The idols of the nations are the work of human hands. They have eyes, but do not see. Those who make them will become like them, so do all who trust in them.”*
 - 2. Make and trust in a blind idol and you become blind.
 - 3. What are our modern idols in America? In Madison Ohio?
 - 4. Things, toys, and technology. Computers, cars, appliances, entertainment.
 - 5. Idols compress the big open hole in our heart and try to shape it so that it will feel like they fill it.
 - 6. We lose our heart for Christ. He seems less attractive to us than the “exciting” things we have.
 - 7. Idols make the eyes of our hearts grow dull.
 - 8. Acts. 28:27 *“This people’s heart has grown dull, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and understand with their hearts.”*
 - ii. **Loss of Diligence.**
 - 1. Most of us will wear eye protection while operating a grinder to sharpen a lawnmower blade or an axe. It is called “being careful” or being diligent!
 - 2. But many of us won’t exercise the same diligence when it comes to protecting our spiritual eyesight:
 - 3. 1 Peter 1:5-10 *5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence**, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent** to make certain about His calling*
 - 4. **2Pe 1:9** *For he who lacks these qualities is **blind** or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.*
 - a. He lists qualities (faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love).
 - b. But more so in verse 5 and 10 is a verb that describes the action that prevents the loss of these qualities.
 - c. It is the word we translate “diligence.”
 - 5. Diligence means not to be neglectful, careless or to take lightly what God is doing in your life. = Laodacia – lukewarm ~ careless, not diligent!
 - 6. Diligence means to take something so seriously that you set all distractions aside. It is commonly translated as “make every effort” in the New Testament. Do you make every effort or just some effort? How diligent is your diligence?

XI. Joy and Seeing the Glory of God – let me tie all of this together.

- a. **Without spiritual sight there is no spiritual joy.**
 - i. **Joy is a spontaneous response to seeing Christ’s glory and experiencing His pleasure.**
 - ii. If you cannot see, you cannot respond.
 - iii. Spiritual sight is essential to enjoy the glory of God.
 - iv. No sight, no enjoyment!
 - v. Your heart is blind. It is dark.

- vi. Imagine having no eyes. There is nothing to see and delight in.
- vii. That is the despair of the lost! Is that your despair too?
- b. John Piper says that *“there are always two parts to true worship. We can say it in two pairs: there is seeing God and there is savoring God. You can't separate these. You must see him to savor him. And if you don't savor him when you see him, you insult him”*
- c. Once you have been given spiritual sight, sight that allows you to see His glory, then you are accountable for enjoying Him!

XII. Seeing JOY/Hearing God

- a. We exist to see, rejoice in, and reflect the glory of God.
- b. God doesn't get glory from us simply SEEING His glory, but from us REJOICING and delighting in His glory!
- c. Seeing the glory is essential to savoring the glory.
 - i. Seeing is necessary to enjoy the glory of God.
 - ii. The disciples James, Peter and John saw Jesus' glory on the mount of Transfiguration. They even later said, “we beheld his glory.”
- d. Consummation of Joy: 1 Peter 4:13 *“Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”*
 - i. The final revelation of the glory of Christ will result in the consummation of the quest we have for Joy. It is the joy we look forward to. It is the joy that sustains us. It is the joy that is “before us.”
 - ii. Joy is our motivator...joy that comes from the presence and pleasure of God...but you need eyes to see! And you must protect your vision! Your experience of lasting joy depends upon it!

XIII. Seeing will occur through hearing.

- a. Through hearing the gospel!
- b. Seeing the glory of God will only occur through hearing the gospel.
- c. We don't hear the glory of God. We see it.
- d. God wants to use you to help someone who is blind to see!
 - i. Help someone to hear, so that they can see!
- e. Jesus gives Paul his commission on the Damascus Road. Acts 26: 17b-18 *I am sending you¹⁸ to open their eyes [the Gentiles], so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”*

XIV. How much vision have you lost? How diligent have you been?

- a. Just enough to make you lose your joy? (and your reasons for “living” for God)
- b. Just enough to cause him to get a diminished view of God?
- c. Or enough to blind you and make you totally useless?
- d. In every case, joy is lost, the “spark” that drives the Christian life is missing and the Christian becomes as good as one who is blind.
- e. How do you have your sight restored?
 - i. *Buy from me...salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.(and keep on seeing) (Rev. 3:18)*
 - ii. Turn back to diligence!
 - iii. Regard the gift that God has given as something serious and not as something that you can live part-time on Sunday mornings.
 - iv. Don't you want joy? You gotta protect your vision! Your sight is necessary to have a glimpse of God's glory. Your sight is needed for joy. If you want your life to matter and to be worth living, you gotta fight for joy. You gotta protect the gift of sight you have. Won't you do that today?