



Date: Feb 14, 2021

Title: I Want to See

Speaker: Chris Gaynor

Scripture: Ephesians 1:17-23

Well, good morning Mercy Church. I'm glad to be back with you guys this morning. I don't know about you, but I'm glad to be out of 2020. Though I'm not entirely convinced that 2021 is going to be the year that all my dreams come true. So let me ask you, "What are you hoping for this year?" What is it that you want to see God do this year in your life? in the lives of your family and friends? In the people Mercy Church? What do you want God to do? What are you asking Him to do?

Jesus has an encounter with a blind man, on the road to Jericho, that's recorded for us in Luke 18. This blind man is shouting as loud as he can "Son of David, have mercy on me" So Jesus asks him (Luke 18:41) "What do you want me to do for you? and the man says "Lord, I want to see." verse 42 ^{Jesus} *said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."*⁴³ *Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.*

As confusing as these days are for us. As disorienting as this season is in our lives and in our country. As uncertain as the year ahead of us may be. I think the cry of our heart ought to

be "Lord, I want to see." Because you and I cannot follow Jesus into 2021, into whatever is in front of us if we can't see."

That's why I think Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesians 1 has resonated with me and why I think it should become our prayer for ourselves and for each other. If you've got your Bible, turn to Ephesians 1 and we're going to look at verse 17-23. Ephesians 1:17-23. Let's read it.

Ephesians 1:17-19

¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Paul, who had his own eyes opened to the truth of who Jesus was, already knows what the church at Ephesus needs. "Lord, they need to see." *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* The goal of Paul's prayer is a deep and experiential knowledge of God. The word for "know" is the word "epignosis," meaning intimate knowing that comes from personal relationship. He's not talking about head knowledge and facts. It's knowing God because you've been with God. This kind of intimacy with God is cultivated in the private place, communing with God in His Word and in prayer.

And in order for that to happen, we need the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Revelation is the uncovering of what is hidden. You aren't going to figure it out on your own, the Spirit of God must reveal it to you. I need God to uncover for me, in His Word and in my relationship to Him, the awareness of His greatness, the wonder of who He is. And then I need wisdom to know how to apply the insight I've been given. I need Holy Spirit discernment in order to know how to live out of the insight I've been given. It's the Spirit of God that reveals the character of God to me and then leads me to respond rightly to that character. So Paul says, I'm praying that the Spirit of God will lead you by revelation and wisdom into this deep knowing and understanding of who God really is.

And Paul tells the church at Ephesus that this is a prayer that he keeps on praying for them. "I keep asking," he says. Praying continually for intimacy, because there will always be a need for them to know God more deeply. And to bolster their confidence that this prayer will be heard and answers, look at how Paul describes the One he is praying to. *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father.* The God of our Lord Jesus Christ – the God who gave up his only Son for your salvation. The glorious Father. The Father who sent His Son into the world, for the express purpose of showing us what God is like.

Listen church, this is a prayer we can pray in confidence, believing that God will answer. We can ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. because *He who did not spare his own Son, but*

gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Roman 8:32 We can cry out to the glorious Father and ask Him to pour out His Spirit on us so that we can know Him better. Because good fathers give good gifts to their kids. And Jesus said in Luke 11:13 *If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

Church, we need to SEE God, we need to know Him deeply, personally, intimately. Y'all, honestly, the reason our faith is so weak, the reason we are so rattled and scattered, so prone to wander is because we don't really see. The reason we chase after so many other things – looking for life in the idols of the word, convinced that something more will make us happy and give us life – is because our view of God is lacking. We are filled with fear and worry because we simply don't have a **confidence inspiring, faith-fueled view of the greatness of God.** Our worship is often anemic and lacks passion, because there's no awe. We don't really see and know the One we say we are worshipping. We struggle to trust and obey because we don't have a vision of God that fuels our faith and leads to absolute surrender. Let me say this loud and clear – your obedience to God, or the lack therefore, is a clear indication of what you think about who God is. And our greatest need is to have our thinking about God transformed by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

And Jesus says to us this morning: what do want me to do for you? And we need to stop with the "fix this, fix that, give me this, give me that" and cry out "I want to see! I want to see!"

Listen to me my brothers and sisters, if you walked out of this place this morning and God by His great power and might remove every trouble, fixed every problem and gave you everything you ever wanted, but did not draw you by His Spirit into deep and abiding intimacy with Him, you would be worse off than before. You don't need a better circumstance, you need to know the God who is over and above and in and beyond every circumstance. You don't need a different situation, you need a deep, intimate, personal knowing of Jesus.

Honestly, I feel like we could just stop there. But Paul goes on, because there is more that we need to know.

Let's go back to Paul's prayer, verse 18

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Three things Paul is praying that they will know, three things you and I need to see and know.

But in order to see and know these, we need the eyes of our heart opened so that light streams in and we are able to see.

Look at what he says: *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know...*

Again Paul is praying for knowledge, but this time it's different. The word for "know" in verse 17 is epignosis – knowledge that comes by intimate, personal experience, and is progressive and growing. But here in verse 18, the word

Paul uses is eido/oida which means being aware of or understanding, grasping completely. It suggests a fullness of knowledge.

But it's not just knowledge in the head, it's heart knowledge. In the spiritual sense, the way the Bible speaks of it, the heart is the innermost place where we know and believe and place value. it's not just the center of our emotions, but of our will and desire. The idea is that we grasp and understand and discern value and worth and beauty.

And what is it that Paul is saying our hearts need to see?

1. the hope to which he has called you
2. the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints
3. and his incomparably great power for those of us who believe.

Just like we need to "see" and know Jesus, we need to "see" and know these realities.

1. the hope to which he has called you

If you are in Christ Jesus, it's because God has called you. And His calling you to Jesus is a call to hope. Y'all, we are living in a day where people are grasping for hope. Many around us have lost hope. And let's be honest, that's where some of you are today. You're struggling to believe that things are going to get any better. Is it ever going to get better? Are we ever going to get back to "normal"?

But listen to me, we need to set our hearts on the hope of our calling, and that's not a hope focused on our earthly existence.

In your heart of hearts, you need to know that God has called you to hope beyond your time on earth. And you need to know what that hope is. The Biblical idea of hope is not wishful thinking, but rather eager expectation and confident assurance. And it's not temporary hope. In fact, Paul would tell the Corinthian church: *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.* (1 Corinthians 15:19)

The hope God called you to is eternal. It is an anchor for our soul, firm and secure. (Heb. 6:19)
You should know this by now, but no other hope will satisfy. Every other hope will fail you. Sooner or later, all other hopes disappoint.

Listen to these verse that describe what He has called us to:

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Corinthians 1:9

⁹ God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Peter 5:10

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

That's our hope. And you and I need to have our hearts awakened to that hope.

The second reality that we need to see and know is this

2. the glorious riches of his inheritance in the saints.

Commentators argue over whether Paul is talking about inheritance as something Jesus will receive or whether it is an inheritance that we will receive. And honestly there are great arguments for each.

Deuteronomy 3:29 For *the Lord's portion is his people* – the Lord's inheritance is his people.

Then on the other side of the argument 1 Peter 1:3-5

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

And some commentators believe it's both. Romans 8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, -*

But either way, look at how he describes it – “the glorious riches of this inheritance” Gloriously rich – no lack, no deficiency. It's precious and valued. A treasure beyond compare. In fact, it's beyond our ability to comprehend.

1 Corinthians 2:9 ⁹ ~~However, as it is written:~~

~~“What~~ no eye has seen,

~~what~~ no ear has heard,

and what no human mind has conceived” —

the things God has prepared for those who love him

The hope to which God has called us contains a gloriously rich inheritance and when we get there, it will be worth it.

Whatever we gave up, whatever we endured, nothing will compare to glories that will be revealed to us when we see Him face to face.

The third reality that we need to see and know is this

3. his incomparably great power for us who believe...

His power is so great that there is no comparison, nothing even comes close. Nothing can stand against His power or thwart his purposes and plans. Nothing can stop Him.

Jeremiah 32:17

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

And his incomparably great power is **for us who believe** – for our benefit. All of his strength is leveraged to accomplish his purposes in our lives, to fulfill all of His promises to us. His promises to restore us to Himself, to work all things together for our good, and one to bring us to Himself, to dwell in His presence and to enjoy him forever.

And just so you and I know He has the power to do this, Paul says it's the same power He used to raise Jesus from the dead. We didn't read it earlier, but listen, beginning in the last half of verse 19

... That power is the same as the mighty strength²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the

church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

That's power, power like nothing we've ever seen. And we need the eyes of our hearts awakened to know His power that is for us.

He has called you to an eternal hope that is sure, He has an inheritance there that is of greater worth and value than you can imagine, and when we get there by His great power it will be worth it all. And in order to know these truths, we need the eyes of our hearts enlightened.

¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

I can't think of a greater prayer for us to pray for ourselves, for our children, for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Church, I think our greatest need is to see. So ask, cry out like that blind man. Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. I want to see you. Then get into the secret place with the Word of God and let God show us the wonder of who He is.