

THE EYE OF FAITH!

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7.7.18

We have been looking recently at Psalms 90 and 91. Then last week about encouraging ourselves in the Lord ... and a couple of times we have touched on a topic ... not looking at things that are seen ... but at things that are not seen.

It sounds a bit contradictory ... but actually is very Biblical and I want to delve into it a bit more today. Because it has a very practical effect on how we should live.

Most of us are (probably) very blessed to have 5 physical senses. These are gateways to the physical world around us.

If one sense is missing (e.g. blind) then to a degree we're handicapped. We can't be as efficient. You can't drive a car if you're blind.

But ... if we're going to walk with God ... there's a potential danger. Because not everything in our lives can be detected by our 5 senses. They deal only with the physical realm ... but true reality also includes the spirit realm. In many ways ... it's actually more "real"!

2 Kings 6:8-20 (NKJV)

8 Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, “My camp will be in such and such a place.”

9 And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, “Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.”

10 Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. (*thwarting the King of Syria's plans*)

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, “Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?”

12 And one of his servants said, “None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”

13 So he said, “Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him.”

And it was told him, saying, "Surely he is in Dothan."

14 **Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city.**

15 **And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"**

16 **So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."**

17 And **Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see."**

Then 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.**

18 So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19 Now Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria.

20 So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria!

Before the Lord opened the servant's eyes ... the spirit army was already there! Elisha "saw" them.

There is a spirit realm around us. We can't normally see it ... but it's absolutely real ... and with the "eye of faith" we should discern it.

Numbers 22:18-34 (NKJV)

18 Then **Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."**

19 Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the Lord will say to me."

20 And **God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do."**

21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

22 **Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the Lord took His stand in the way as an adversary against him.**

And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

23 Now the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road.

24 Then the Angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side.

25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again.

26 Then the Angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

28 Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!"

30 So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?"

And he said, "No."

31 Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

32 And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me.

33 The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live."

34 And Balaam said to the Angel of the Lord, "I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back."

The donkey saw the angel. Balaam didn't see the angel until his eyes were "opened" to see the spirit world ... which was real.

We might be curious to see what's "there" if our eyes were opened in a similar fashion?

God has a greater purpose for us than "just" opening our eyes ... God desires that we learn to walk through our lives by faith ... that we learn to see consistently through the "eye of faith".

Romans 1:16-17 (NKJV)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.
17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (Cp. Hab 2:4, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38)

The just shall live by faith. Faith isn't just a luxury optional "add-on" ... something that's nice to have ... we're supposed to LIVE BY FAITH ... just like we live by breathing.

By definition ... faith involves us in things we can't reach with our physical senses.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (It doesn't say they aren't there)

Evidence — of reality. Things not seen — they do exist ... THEY ARE REAL!

No vague ... wishy-washy ... nebulous ... made-up thing. Faith is a conviction.

Hebrews 11:1 (ISV)

1 Now faith is the assurance that we hope for will come about and the certainty that what we cannot see exists.

Faith allows us to be certain of things we cannot see.

George Müller's Definition:

Faith is the assurance that the things which God says in His Word are true and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence is faith.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

18 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, (subject to change) but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Look at things “not seen” ... look at invisible things.

Paul could see things that are seen ... trouble ... persecutors ... hostile parties ... rocks being thrown! He could feel the rods beating him ... but he didn't focus on these. With the eye of faith he focused on things not seen to the physical eye ... the spirit realm ... the angels ... the Lord Jesus ... God's promises.

He used the eye of faith to see the invisible. So must we!

It's a carnal mind that reacts only to what we see ... hear or see what comes via our 5 physical gateways.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Our "Sixth Sense" - The Eye of Faith". Believing is seeing!! NOT --- seeing is believing.

Like an aircraft pilot in the fog or clouds ... he may not see if he is up or down! He has to fly by instruments ... to trust them. He can't fly by sight.

The Bible is our instrument set ... it provides information and revelation.

Romans 4:16-22 (NKJV)

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—**God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;**

18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

19 **And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body**, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

20 **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,**

21 and **being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.**

22 And **therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."**

Abraham did not look at his body/circumstances. He could have said: "We are both old. Sarah was barren even as a teenager. You can't ignore the hard ... scientific facts. The evidence of my own eyes ... it's not going to happen".

Walk by faith ... evidence of things not seen.

If we're carnally-minded (meaning ... predominantly physically-minded) ... we'll tend to rely almost entirely on what we call hard facts ... physical evidence. But ... THAT'S NOT FAITH! Abraham set us a good example.

John 20:19-20 (NKJV)

19 Then, **the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst**, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

20 When He had said this, **He showed them His hands and His side**. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Now ... one of the disciples was missing. Let's look at that situation.

John 20:24-29 (NKJV)

24 **Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.**

25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "**Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.**"

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Thomas was totally reliant on physical evidence. He had no faith. "Seeing is believing". But ... FAITH IS THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN!

It is not necessarily easy to maintain focus on things "not seen"! We "wobble" a lot. Let's look at Peter's example.

Matthew 14:22-33 (NKJV)

22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. (Sometimes ... even if you are following Jesus' orders ... the wind can still be in your face)

25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. (This is faith)

30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately **Jesus** stretched out His hand and caught him, and **said to him**, “**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**” (**Jesus wasn’t impressed at all**)

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

Peter was encouraged by Jesus’ example. He walked on water — even though it was physically “impossible”. For a few moments ... he walked by faith.

But then ... his physical senses ... his “rational mind” took over ... he could **see** waves ... **hear** wind ... **feel** spray ... **smell** sea water ... **taste** it on his lips.

Would you blame Peter? Jesus did!!

What does Jesus make of us if our lives are dominated by physical senses? Peter had the Word of God (Jesus). So do we!

LACKING FAITH ISN’T PLEASING TO GOD.

Hebrews 11:5-6 (NKJV)

5 **By faith Enoch** was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that **he pleased God**.

6 But **without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who comes to **God must believe that He is**, and that **He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him**.

WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD.

So ... if we want to please God ... then we need to be working on this thing called “walking by faith”.

Let’s look at my favourite example. ☺

Mark 5:25-34 (NKJV)

25 Now **a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years**

26 **and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.** (**Nothing new there**)

27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment.

28 For she said, “*If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.*”
(Quite a strong statement there ... a lot of conviction there)

29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?”

31 But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’ ”

32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.

33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

34 And He said to her, “*Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.*”

Look at the lady's physical evidence:

- Issue of blood
- 12 years
- probably “saw” herself sick/unclean
- physicians all failed
- incurable as per the experts

She had no physical evidence (all was to the contrary!)

She chose not to focus on her body “already dead” (cp Abraham in Romans 4)
... but she looked at something she could not see.

She had heard the word about Jesus ... that's all she had. You and I know much more than she did.

But ... SHE SAID ... SHE TOOK ACTION ... and ... SHE WAS HEALED. It wasn't through Jesus' personal will. He said: “Your faith has made you well!”

James 1:2-8 (NKJV)

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,
3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, (to do with a particular trial?) let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. (doubting = diakrino ... to make a decision between this or that ... wavering ... hesitating)

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Aim not to be double-minded ... in two minds. Sitting on the fence.

We need to make a decision ... be single-minded ... the right decision!

Luke 5:1-9 (NKJV)

1 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret,

2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets.

3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken;

Peter made a decision. Contrary to all physical evidence. Contrary to his experience.

"Nevertheless ... at Your Word"

That's a good attitude! Good solution! For you and me too — “I can see all of the problems ... my 5 senses are all telling me this can't work ... NEVERTHELESS AT THY WORD ...”

Do we have a worldly mind ... or a renewed mind? If the former ... what can we do?

2 Peter 1:2-4 (NKJV)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

3 as **His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through *the knowledge of Him* who called us by glory and virtue,**

4 **by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**

Knowledge is required! Greek: Epignosis = full and precise knowledge.

The scriptures contain great and precious promises ... reveal God's mind and nature. Grace and peace are multiplied to us in accordance with our knowledge.

The choice ... as always ... is up to us. Five hours of daily TV? Five minutes of Bible study?

We can't say “Nevertheless at thy Word” if we don't know what the Word actually says! And we won't be familiar with the word if we spend all of our time in “worldly” pursuits.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

17 **So then *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

Faith comes ... BY HEARING ... AND HEARING ... THE WORD. It doesn't say faith comes by having heard!

So ... if we want full knowledge and faith ... we know where to go?!! The Word of God.

It might take some effort ... some discipline ... recognition that some of us have become complacent ... spiritually lazy.

Well ... remember ... we're in a battle. And living by faith is not supposed to be optional.

So — TO THE WORD! AND LET FAITH COME!