

Concrete Vision: Sin Clouds Vision

Day 1

Trash to Treasure

In our sermon this week we talked about the fact that the material for our abundant life is all around us. Just as the Israelites used the items given to them by the Egyptians to build the tabernacle, the kingdom of God, where your abundant life is found, is made by the redemption of things that have been lost, damaged, and broken. Scripture tells us that the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, so even the king in our kingdom has come from the rubbish heap of the world. In the Exodus, what was needed to build the tabernacle from the cast-offs of Egypt was a worker with wisdom filled with the Spirit. Do you have the wisdom to build your abundant life from the things around you? Do you know which things are ready to be redeemed, and which things are not? Do you have skill to match your wisdom? Are you filled with the Spirit? If the answer to any of these questions is in doubt, what should you do? Spend some time today praying for wisdom, and anything else you will need. In addition, identify any other virtue you will need and pray for it. Make a plan on how you will begin to build your abundant life. This is the foundation. It starts here. Take your time on this and do it right.

Verses: Ecclesiastes 2:26, Job 27:16-17, Proverbs 13:22

Prayer Topics: Transformation, Usefulness, Versatility, Flexibility

Day 2

Sin is Blindness

In our sermon this week, we discussed the idea that sin hates us. Sin deceives us, promising something it never delivers. Sin destroys us, marring the glory we were created to reflect. Sin entangles us, even as it promises to be a faster way to our destination. Sin is ugly, though it poses as an angel of light. The biggest problem is, we know all of this, yet we choose sin anyway. This is why sin doesn't just make us blind, it is blindness. Jesus speaks of taking the log out of our own eye so we can remove the speck from our brother's eye. In choosing this metaphor, Jesus is not just pointing out the painful nature of sin, though it certainly is painful to get something in your eye. Jesus is actually reaching back to the original sin with this comparison. Scripture tells us that the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened when they sinned, and they saw their nakedness. This seems on the surface to be seeing more clearly, but that isn't precisely what is happening. It's more of a change of focus. Before the sin, they saw God. After the sin, they saw their own unworthiness. This opening of their eyes was problematic and incomplete, as they thought covering their nakedness with fig leaves was helpful. When Adam and Eve sinned, they could not see the love of God in his command, but instead saw what Satan wanted them to see, the desirability of the forbidden fruit. Sin is blindness, and it always leaves you in the dark, unable to bring to glory the things and people around you. How has sin blinded you? What repentance needs to happen in your life? Repent of your sin today, and begin to see clearly again.

Verses: Genesis 3:6-7, Matthew 7:1-5, 1 John 2:11, Matthew 15:14

Prayer Topics: Transparency, Responsibility, Repentance

Day 3

Distortion

We often limit our thinking about sin to the moral realm. While sin is a transgression of the moral law, there are other aspects of sin to consider if we

are to understand how sin clouds our vision. Sin is a failure to meet the ideal of perfection in any area of your life including in your heart and mind. A sin that involves your thinking will leave you unable to recognize its existence. The apostle Paul is a great example of this. When he was known as Saul he persecuted the church because he believed it to be a heretical sect. This error in thinking led him to persecute the church. He was unable to evaluate his actions clearly, likewise he would have been unable to correct the error in someone else. When someone shares the same sin that we engage in, they tend to get a pass from us. If the sin is in our heart rather than our head, we tend to recognize we are sinning, but we minimize the importance of that sin and downplay its effects. This creates in us a blindness to cause and effect that keeps us and those around us from living abundantly. If you have ever needed to diet and have kept track of your calories, you know how this works. You knew drinking sugary soda was bad, but when you actually add up the calories, you are shocked. When the heart is involved, it doesn't want to blame the sin for the bad outcomes, so it looks for other explanations. It then seeks out the sins of others to keep the focus off the sins that are so beloved. In this way it judges others, for it cannot abide risking the sin it has great affection for. When you begin to understand that most sin affects both heart and mind, as well as other faculties, it is not hard to understand just how blind sin can leave you, and how destructive it can be to the abundant life. What sin have you been harboring in your life? How will you let God remove it?

Verses: 1 John 3:4, Romans 8:7, Jeremiah 17:9, Hebrews 4:12

Prayer Topics: Accountability, Forgiveness, Change

Day 4

Trust

We are told in scripture that we must walk by faith rather than sight. The reason for this is the obscuring of our vision by sin. When we sin, we are trusting our own vision rather than God's. We are leaning on our own understanding. When we sin, we are ratifying a distrust of God through our actions that reinforces and expands that distrust. As a result of this distrust, we shape our perception of the world around us and lose the ability to see it clearly. To understand this more clearly, it may help to consider the example of someone experiencing paranoia. Because of their lack of trust, they will only see things that reinforce and give evidence for a greater lack of trust. Every small detail that they see will be marshaled into the argument, and to them it will all make sense. If they explain it to someone not in the grip of their paranoia, all of it will seem weak and contrived. The person free from the distrust will point out a myriad of things that point to the opposite conclusion, things that the paranoid could not see. In the same way, the one that comes to trust and obey God will begin to develop vision that reinforces their faith, growing ever more confident in the love of Christ. How is your vision? Are you working toward greater confidence or more mistrust? Can you see reasons to place more trust in God? Is there any sin in your life that is breaking that trust? Spend some time today clearing up your vision.

Verses: Philippians 4:6-7, 2 Timothy 1:7, Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 34:4

Prayer Topics: Confidence, Hope, Peace, Strength

Day 5

Connections

In scripture there is a clear link between the heart, the mind, and the eyes. When Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden, we are told about them seeing that the fruit was good for food and pleasing to the eye only after the serpent had spoken and suggested that God wasn't on their side. The implication is that Satan tempted them by attacking their love and trust for

God, and that being successful, they now saw the fruit differently. Scripture therefore tells us to guard our hearts, for it is the wellspring of life. Another verse tells us that if the eyes are seeing darkness, the whole body is full of darkness. The message of these passages seems clear. The things you love will change the things you see by changing the way you think. If you are house hunting and you walk into a place that needs a lot of work, do you see opportunity or misery? If you know someone has an issue with you, do you see possibility or problems? If you know someone who is not a believer do you see future redemption or future ruin? Work to love as God loves if you want to see as God sees. Guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Verses: Genesis 3:1-7, Matthew 6:22-23, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Isaiah 55:8-9

Prayer Topics: Perspective, Meaning, Purpose