

The Glory of That Which Cannot Be Seen with the Mortal Eye

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A very familiar and often used passage of Scripture, 2 Corinthians 4:14-18: Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Now, I think it doesn't take a great deal of intelligence to know that the man of God, who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, is contrasting two kinds of seeing here. He was not advising us to try to see the invisible with our naked eye. He said that there were two kinds of seeing, the external eye that saw the visible and the internal eye that sees the invisible. And while we cannot go through life and not see the visible unless we should be among the unseeing persons whose eyesight has failed them. They're not many, thank God, but a few of our friends are like that. And others of us get along by means of lenses out in front. But for the average human being manages to see things as he goes about, and Paul is not telling us not to. But he is saying that there is a gazing, a looking, and that it is to be done with the inward eye and not with the external.

Now life, all about us, is charged with mystery. I've said this so many times that you must be weary of my saying it, but it is this that gives a quality, all the quality, all the value there is to life, is that mysterious part of it. The part that can be explained does not explain the value of the life. We can study anatomy and biology, and know all about children, babies. But that doesn't explain why people love babies. There isn't any explaining. You can paint and write poetry and orate until we're blue in the face, and yet, there is an overtone, a rainbow color of emotional color about it all that makes babies precious to us.

And so, with almost everything, we can explain it and look and see physically, but that doesn't explain it. That is the basis of it. That's the foundation upon which it may rest. But there is a glory in the imponderable things, the instinctive things; the things that are unlearned. That is, they've not been learned. They are just there. They give the meaning to life, the glory of our lives, the value of them; that by which and for which we live, lies in the intangibles, the imponderables, the things that we can't get at, but we can see with the inward eye.

For instance, it is not what's before us. It's who sees it that matters. It's two men, a farmer and an artist who take a walk out, they're friends. And temporarily, they're together and they take a walk out of an October afternoon. And the farmer sees the corn and the fat cattle, and he'll talk and talk well and pleasantly about having to bring in this machine and it's about time to take those 100 off of that particular field and bring them in or shift them to another field. And what he sees there is what you can buy and sell and put in the boxcar, and weigh and measure and evaluate in terms of dollars and cents. He sees the soil and the cow and the steer and the corn shock.

But all the time, the artist is all thrilled. He sees the cattle, but he doesn't know how much they cost. He sees the corn shock but has no idea of its value. What he sees is that which can't be weighed nor measured nor bought nor sold, but nevertheless gives value to living in the world.

The other man is fixing it so we can physically live in the world by having milk and meat and vegetables. But the other man says, all right, you've made it possible for us to live in the world, but why live in the world? Why? Why? Well, when he sees the blue skies and the fleecy clouds and the colored leaves, he knows why. You can't explain it. You can't write a book on, "Is Life Worth Living." It either is or it isn't. Everybody knows that it is, that has felt the thrill of a love and known the glory that belongs to God. And everybody knows. You can't prove it. You just know it.

Or you take a dog who may be running out the night and may for a moment take a quick, casual glance at the starry sky. Well now, dogs have eyes, and they have pretty keen eyes. They go on their sense of smell more than eyesight, but they still have good eyes, and they see it. The dog, he sees the moon hanging there and he sees the stars. He sees them. But what does he do about it? Nothing at all. He's looking for a coon or for some other animal that he may pull down and eat. But he sees the stars.

But David goes out and the dog runs alongside of David. And David sees the stars. And so, David writes the eighth Psalm. My God, how wonderful thou art. Thy Majesty, how great; and talks about the stars by night and the moon and the heavens above and what they tell about God. Forever singing as they shine, the Hand that made us is divine.

Now, both eyes saw the heavens, but the eyes of the dog saw nothing. The eyes of the spiritually inspired poet, David, saw the wonder and the glory of it all. It's the intangible thing, the thing you don't learn, the thing that's there because you're human; because God made you and stamped you with the royal imagery of Himself.

Now, religion has tried, always tried, any religion, all religions, with possibly except Buddhists, have tried to show the glory that belongs to that which can't be seen as over against that which can. And I suppose it's an open question whether it's better to have no religion or to have a wrong one. I suppose it's an open question. But I would say that religion may have done the world some

good, even the poor, pagan, animistic religions may have done the world some good in that they did do this. They did and they have taught the world, did teach and have taught the world that there is something; there's another world than this. That this isn't it. That you can have all of this and lose your own soul and be nobody. The Parsis know that and the Mohammedins know that. They all know that. And certainly, it is the very essence of the Old and the New Testament.

And the busy men have not taken this very seriously. They have reversed the apostle's text which says the things that are eternal, that are seen, are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal. And they've reversed it and edited it a bit. And while they would agree that this is true in their living, they prove that when they quote it, they mean it like this: for the things that are invisible and unseen are rather shaky and unreal, but the things you see they are the real thing.

Give me, said the communists in early days and the socialists and the agitators, give us something here. Don't put it off until the world over yonder. And they parodied our songs and said you will have pie in the sky by and by. And thus, they turn the attention of people from God to earth, and from heaven above to this veil of suffering and woe. And they put their emphasis upon the things that can be seen. And they said, don't talk to us about invisible things. Talk to us about things we can get our teeth in. We want to have more. We want to have bigger cars and bigger farms and better cattle. And we want our women to dress better and we want to dress better. We want to be paid more and we want to work shorter hours. Don't talk to us about heaven. We want to know about earth.

Well, this reminds me of what the man Paul said a little further back in his Corinthian epistles. He said, howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor one of the princes of this world that come to not. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. Even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew. For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Then he goes on to say, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of a man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

And here, we break away from the, give us more of this, now. Give us what we can see and weigh and measure and feel and touch. And we rise to the wisdom that says I must have something to see and hear and touch. I'm a human being. God has given me a body. And it's got to be stoked occasionally like a furnace. It's got to be gassed up occasionally like a car. I have to recharge it sometimes, and so I will not despise God's humble gift of pumpkins and corn and fat cattle. I won't despise it. But I will only say these are temporal.

And the things that are seen are temporal, whereas the things that are not seen are eternal. The woe of the world has been its bondage to visible things, reflecting men in all parts of the world at

all times, not only religions, but philosophers themselves were not particularly religious, that held this to be the prime curse of the world. That we are victims to the things that we can see. That we've allowed ourselves to be chained down to visible things. And it's a great error to hold that the things visible are ultimate reality. They are not ultimate reality. They are evanescent. They're passing. They're like a shadow across the meadow on a cloudy day. But the things that are not seen are the eternal things.

The things that are seen are the balls and chains that are on the ankles of the race and hold us back so we can't fly. Our feeble wings will not lift us because we've got a ball and chain. The farmer has his acres and his fat cattle, and the worldling has her jewelry.

I thought if you were to offer a woman a hangman's noose, she would scream, turn pale and perhaps faint. But offer her a \$10,000 necklace and she'll strut around even though she's in danger of her life. She'll strut around with that thing. And I wonder which is the more dangerous, the hangman's noose, which with a quick snap ends at all, or the \$10,000 or \$20,000 necklace that binds the spirit of the woman, binds the spirit of the woman and holds her down, holds her down. She's got her head in a noose and doesn't know it.

Or the businessman with his profits and his interest and his bonds. I wonder if any of you have ever happened to notice the word bonds. I wonder if the bonds issued by great companies or by a government, which we so eagerly buy and put away, may not be bonds in more ways than one. I think it is entirely possible that it should be so.

Somebody sent me a book recently, a republished, written by an old man of God who lived in England a couple of hundred years ago. It deals with the whole question of laying up treasures on earth. Now, I think he carries it further than I would carry it. But I think we Christians need to rethink this whole business of profits and bonds and treasures laid up. They may be bonds; indeed, to bind us and hold us to the earth.

The man of God talks about the evidence of things not seen. Remember my brethren, when I preach what some enemies call mysticism, which is only the Word of God, that I am not asking anybody to look at a dream world. No, no. I don't believe in dream worlds. I don't believe in imaginary worlds. I don't believe in anything imaginary. I don't like imaginary stories. That's why I don't like fiction, particularly. I don't particularly like Christian fiction at all. Because it's imaginary. There's nothing there. I want to be able when I talk about a thing, to be able to go and say, look, there it is. That's what I'm talking about. There it is.

I can't go along with the fairy tale tellers who have the woods populated with little dancing girls, little waspies or whispies that come crystallized out of the sky. It's pleasant I suppose to talk about it, and there have been operas written about it. And there have been plays such as Shakespeare's

Midsummer Night's Dream. It's pleasant, you know, to listen to it, like listening for 20 minutes to, say, one of these little music boxes. But after that, I want to get away from it and get down to something solid. Is there any anything there that it is talking about?

And when Scripture says that faith is the evidence of things not seen. Faith is not a place where you go and hide. It's not a retreat from reality. It's a gateway to reality where we see the real things. We're not asking anybody to accept imaginative things or imaginary things. We are asking them to build their faith on that which is.

Abraham saw a city that had a foundation whose Builder and Maker was God, but Abraham never saw it with these external eyes. He saw it with his inner eyes. And that was not an imaginary thing. We're not asking him to become dreamy and write silly poetry about it. We ask him, Abraham, look, look, there's a city, a city. Look quick, you won't see it long. There it is. You're a busy man. And you'll only get a glimpse, but there it is. And Abraham looked quick and saw it with his inner eyes. Somebody said after that he never would live in a city. He lived in a tent. He couldn't stand any city after he'd seen that one, by comparison.

So, instead of ghosts and fairies, we believe in reality. God reveals the real world, having substance. And it can't be seen with the outward eye, but it can be experienced with the inward eye. And it is, I repeat, the only ultimate reality.

You know, I am made to wonder at the wisdom of the Christian. And I repeat that we ought not to be apologetic the way we are. We ought not to gaze with awe and wonder at great minds, great minds. Paul called them the princes of this world, and the mighty and the wise. The man who said it was not a poor little fellow saying sour grapes, I don't want greatness. He was great. Six they say, six great minds have been in the world and Paul's was one. Of all the millions, six great minds. And so, this man Paul was not, sometimes we evangelicals don't have any education, so we preach a whole sermon to prove it's no good anyhow. Like the fox that leaped with a great myth and said I don't like them anymore.

So, this sour grape business, we're not talking about sour grapes. They don't have anything we want. The mighty, the great's of the world. The Christian has a wisdom that's not of this world. A Christian penetrates, passes through, sees, touches, and handles things unseen. He's learned to distinguish that which has value from that which has no value. He's learned the correct table by which he judges things. And so, he no longer wastes his money.

I read; in the rare times I pick up the Reader's Digest. Every article is written by the same fellow, obviously, they all in the same way, anyhow. But I got ahold of it. And I read an article in there about a man and his wife who are psychologists and who had degrees in education and psychology. Their whole life is given over to training animals: turkeys, chickens, pigs, ducks, dogs,

cats and other animals. And they spend their lifetime learning the psychology of a duck and learning how to bridge across from the duck's low-grade mentality or a turkey's low-grade mind to their human minds.

Well now, if a fellow had a good, honest job, and was doing mankind some good and he did that in the evenings to get his mind off of his troubles, I'd say maybe that would be all right. But my God in heaven, to spend your lifetime learning the psychology of a turkey.

Well, Christians have risen above it, beloved. They've risen above it. I can understand how a fellow might want to see a ballgame sometime. But to give the best years of your life throwing a hunk of matter around covered with a skin of a horse and worrying about it. I just don't see it. How can you give yourself to it.

I know one fellow, and if you'll excuse me and not think I'm boasting about it. I know one fellow that had a letter from the Boston Red Sox asking him to come. And he said, I'll keep the letter, but I won't waste my time amusing people. And that was one of my sons. I'm glad he learned that much. I won't waste my time amusing people. There's too much reality in the world to spend your time amusing people.

The Christian has learned what's real and what isn't real. The worldling doesn't know shadow from substance. And sometimes he'll give his life to a shadow and find in the end that he's missed the substance. But a Christian knows where substance is. God has given him x-ray eyes that he can see through shadows. And he won't waste his time on shadows. He won't waste his talents nor his money nor his efforts; and the Christian has found the everlasting reality.

I tell you; I don't know what it is in my heart, but I assume it's in everybody's. But I could never, never, never, let myself rest unless I knew eternity was in this thing. I am not going to be around here long, and neither are you. For us to give our time to that which we can't keep.

So, somebody said to you, let's put it like this by way of a rather awkward illustration. Suppose somebody said to you, I have a beautiful house which I have built, but for reasons I'm not going to occupy it. It's a split level. It's a \$72,000 house; it's got all the trimmings. And I'm going to give it to you on the condition that you give up your friends. And you give up prayer and you give up church and you give up prayer meeting and you give up your Bible. I'm going to give it to you. How long can I keep it? Five years, just five years. I'll give it to you in '57 and in '62, it comes back to me again. Now, those are the terms. You can just have this beautiful, gorgeous home for five years, and then it comes back to me again and you're out on the sidewalk.

Is there a man with soul so dead that he would accept a fool thing like that? Is there a man with soul so dead and a heart so leaden that if he would accept a house, however costly and beautiful,

and however well-appointed and charmingly situated, if it meant that he was to give up friends on earth and friends in heaven, and have it only five years and then be kicked out on the sidewalk?

Well, that's an illustration only which I combed out of the air just now. Here is the application of it. And it is this, that the world says to you, now here, I'll give you this. It's not real and won't last. And after a certain time, you'll have to give it up. You'll be out on the sidewalk with no friend in heaven or earth. But for a little while, I want to give it to you, the terms and conditions being, that you should cut down on this religious business. Oh, we'll let you believe in God and all that, but cut down on this religious business and neglect your soul and you can have all this.

Well, we don't have to make illustrations. Did not the devil say to Jesus, all this I will give thee and the glory of it, for it is mine and I can give it to whom I will. And Jesus, with not one penny in his pocket, no, not one dime in the bank said, get thee behind me Satan. For the Lord Jehovah thy God shalt thou serve. And Him only shalt thou worship.

Well, the unseen. We live for the unseen. We live for God and for Christ and for the Holy Ghost. We live for the new generation. The new age they call it. Back in the 30s, communists were crawling like maggots in and out of Washington and in and out of the State Department; in and out of the White House, all over the world and into our cities. Nobody had risen to do anything about it. Nobody dared to point and say that's a snake going there, nobody. And they were writing their poetry, and you could buy it anywhere. And I got three volumes of their poems, three volumes. I read them and they deal about the new age and the glory of the new world that is being born. But what kind of a new world is it? It is a world where you make more money and eat better, but die, nevertheless.

Lenin lies dead. Stalin lies beside him. And old bald Khrushchev will lie there soon, all together apart from the fact they can come through on their extravagant promises, which they can't. All aside from that still, if they could bring Utopia to the world, and every man could be rich and every woman beautiful and all humanity healthy, they still can't make good on their new age because they'll die. And whatever doesn't take that awesome, awful, startling, terrifying fact into account is no good at all. No good at all. Socialism, Communism, any other the isms, or all the good that men have done to make it easier for people to live, I'm grateful. I'm grateful for unions and I'm grateful for agitators and radicals that got the five-year-old kid out of the textile factory. I'm glad for all that that's been done over the years, inspired by Christians, incidentally. I'm glad for it. I'm glad for the agitation that got the slave free. I'm glad for anything that makes it easier to live. But I deplore when that becomes an end in itself.

And they tell us now, now we've got liberty and freedom and prosperity and everything. I've got so I don't like to hear any talks from Washington anymore. It's ominous. They're all telling us how well off we are-- watch it my brethren--how well off we are. There's nothing like it since the world

began. No. But every man must die and come to judgment. And if there's nothing beyond that, then I refuse to be concerned with it. I absolutely refuse.

Jesus Christ came to Judaism, and he found a religion that stood in meats and drinks and carnal ordinances, that had a heart and a soul and a spirit, but it also had much external. Examples and shadows of heavenly things, but not those heavenly things. And Jesus Christ our Lord swept all the shadows away and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel and projected the eternal into the temporal, and the everlasting into the passing and said, I go to prepare a place for you. That where I am, there you'll come. And he talked about it as a man talks about the house that he's bought or the farm that he owned. It was real. But he said, It's spiritual. This is a spiritual thing. He swept away the shadows and said God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

But He left two symbols. Before coming down here I read some lines by Martin Luther. Martin Luther said, gentlemen, there are only two sacraments, not seven. The Lord's supper and baptism. He said, I want you to know that all these offices and days and forms and feasts are all wrong. The Word of God and the Holy Ghost, that's all we need. Luther said it. You wouldn't think so now, but Luther said it. I've got it up here. Luther knew that all days and all of this we go through is just an external thing. The reality is God. Jesus Christ came to Judaism, locked in those things and swept them all away. He said, the kingdom of heaven is within you. And if you worship God, you must worship Him in spirit and in truth. And where two or three are gathered in My name, I'm there in the midst; and there is your church.

But he allowed us two visible symbols that we might not be cast wholly out on the invisible. We might at least be anchored enough so that while we have a body and an eye and a tongue, that there might be something physical that would be a symbol. And He gave it to us as a man gives a ring to his bride. Not as a substitute for Him. But as a poor little reminder of Him when He's away. Just a symbol, a little sign. And He said, now, there are two visible symbols, bread and wine. The bread to tell of my broken body and wine to tell of my shed blood. As often as ye meet together. The world wonders what you're doing and peeks into see, and they see you eating the bread and drinking the wine and, oh, you're thinking of Me.

And so, the weak that can't quite get things by faith, but demand a little prop from the outside. He said, all right, bread and wine. I give you this. I'll give you this now. And as often as you do it, you do it in remembrance of me. But in itself, it's nothing. It's what it stands for. It's what it symbolizes. It's the ring on the finger of the bride to remind her that her bridegroom is in the glory waiting for her. And they tell of the realities that are eternal.

We're going to have communion right away. And it's not for members of this members of this church only, but the members of the Body of Christ. Here is a little prayer I want to read to you

before we gather at the front. O Bread, of Life from heaven, to weary pilgrims given. O Manna from above. The souls that hungry feed Thou. The hearts that seek Thee. Lead Thou with Thy sweet, tender love. O Fount of Grace redeeming, O River ever streaming from Jesus' holy side. Come Thou Thyself bestowing on thirsting souls and flowing till all are satisfied. Jesu, this feast receiving Thy Word of Truth believing, we the unseeing adore. Grant, when the veil is rended, that we to heaven have ascended may see Thee ever more. Take those four words. We the unseeing adore. So, we'll have the communion service now and adore the unseen Presence. And then we'll gather while we sing.