

Sermon Psalm 27 Luke 13:31-35 Philippians 3:17-4:1 March 4, 2007
Amazing Grace #2 Beyond our Blindnesses - Through His Blessings

How can it be? How can it be that we can't, or don't or won't see.... Won't see the way things really are? Amazing Grace, How Sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind, but now I see.

Would that we did - see. See God more clearly - and our need for God, more clearly, too. John Newton, the Hymn writer, a Christian and - yes - the captain of a Slave Trader ship, was blind. O, he could see, alright. But he was blind. Blind to the injustice, the inhumanity, of what he was doing. Making a profit off the treatment of human beings as less than human.

How long it took him to see. And what about you... and me? What am I blind to? What do I simply not see in my life that would seem to deny that I am a Christian? What sin in me can I not see, and others can? Does my wealth, my comfort, do my possessions, hinder me, blind me, from seeing the world as God sees it? Does the glitter of the world's goodies distance me from doing the good things I know I ought to do?

Do I need, do you, too, a little laser like surgery to help us see better God's will, and Christ's way for us to live? Will you please pray with me.

God - in the glitter of the goods of our world, we can lose sight of you and your will for us in Christ. This day, give us ears to hear your word, and eyes of faith to see the way of Christ in our world. Amen.

The Lord is my light and my salvation. I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord! I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say - blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Wait! How hard it is for us to wait. And - for that reason, it is at the heart of the meaning of this Lenten Season. Wait. 40 days - til Easter. Wait and see! Watch - Jesus says. Watch and see that the Lord is God.

Come here - to this simple table. Come - Watch - and maybe, maybe see this time, see what life is most about. God's great love for you, and for all. See here - who is the source of everything that you and I will ever need.

But, we are often blind. Blind to the truth. We think, not about what we need, but more, too much more, about what we want. Our whole economy is geared to make us see what we want - from Pepsis, to Escalades, more than what we truly need.

And then, and, over and over again, strangely, when we don't easily get what we've been taught to see we ought to want - when life's goodies are hard to get - we can give up on God, and on the ways of God - that we thought would get us what we want.

Let me say that again - When we, good Christians though we are, when we don't get what we've been taught by the world to want, when life's goodies are hard to get, we can give up on our faith, on the faith we thought would get us what we want.

And then we can begin to turn from God, from faith, and we try instead, by our own strength, to wring from life the things we want. We go for the pleasure and treasure instead of the goodness and light in Christ.

Not long ago a survey was carried out among 2,000 college students. They were asked - are the 10 commandments worth keeping? 80% said - Yes - But... they also said, that it was perfectly okay to break the commandments if and when it could help you get something you really want.

In other words, the light of God's truth is good - until something seems to shine a little brighter in our eyes. Telling the truth is good, until a lie could get you what you wanted.

So, is it any surprise that we seem to have our eyes on the prizes the world offers - and less on the truth God calls us in Christ to see? And to keep.

It is no new problem. In fact, there is hope in the fact - that we can see that we can't see - that we can see the sin at work in us - the greed and the selfishness and self-centeredness that clouds our vision and our judgement. Remember Jesus' words? *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I desired to gather your children together as a hen her chicks, and you were not willing. See - your house is left to you.*

And Jesus meant - your house, the mess you have made of your house, is left to you, you who were unwilling to see and seek God's will.

See - the mess of your house is left to you. We have been so busy getting the goodies we've wanted, that we've neglected the good we cannot live without. Listen to that again... We've been so busy getting the goodies we've wanted, that we've neglected the good we cannot live without. It is a fact of life in our country - where we have let the infra structure of this place, our home, fall into incredible disrepair. It is true of the environment that we have spoiled. And it is true of the values we have watched be corrupted.

We strain for pleasure and drive ourselves to get the treasure we use as a measure of life's success. But what is the treasure we seek? What is the treasure we really seek in the war on terror? Do we know? Do we see clearly - the cause and the cost? Do our actions as a nation square with our call in Christ to be ambassadors for his way?

Have we been blinded to the truth that no matter what stuff we get, we cannot take it, any of it, all of it, anywhere that finally matters.

The young man could not see. And so it was a strange statement he made. I have come to the place where I can give thanks for my blindness. He was young, but wiser than his age. An accident. Blind. And all the despair. But day by day by week by month by - year, he learned to see as he had never seen before.

He came to see, not things, but how things best work together for good according to God's plan. And if he could see thiscan't we?

Can we see - in new ways? Can we blind ourselves to the lure, and sometimes the lurid, temptations of our day, and find instead a hope and happiness built on nothing less than Jesus and his righteousness.

Which one of the 10 commandments would you set aside in order to get what you want in life? Or do you see, do we, how we have already tried this way - and it takes us no where near the happiness we need.

Keeping the Sabbath. We live at a pace of a rat race - with very little Sabbath time.

Faithfulness - We've fled from fidelity in marriage and hardly honored family.

Truth telling - truth in politics or business or personal life is rare to find. And we work more to justify war than make peace.....

And.... Though we choose from time to time not to keep them, the Commandments still remind us of what it is we should be seeking – the good we should be doing –

And - thanks be to God - for God's amazing grace. That grace that is the very ground of our being - the power of God's presence and love that will find us when ever we seek it.

There is in us a disease - an unhappiness with the way things are. There is a restlessness, a discontent with the way we are living, no great ground swell yet, but you can sense it. There is a hunger growing - there is an urge, a desire - to see life more nearly and clearly as it really is....

To see life according to God's Plan.... And to echo in our own day, in our own lives, the Psalmist's words.. The lord is my light and my salvation..... And to say anew the words Jesus called us to say - Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord..

We have been a little lost - but of late - of late - we have been found, and there is a hunger, A hunger to taste and see ... that the Lord is good - That in Christ, with Christ, through Christ is the way, and the truth and life ... Come - taste and see - God's 'Amazing Grace' - anew. For you. Amen.

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