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Last week we talked about how our treasure focuses our heart, will & spirit. A heart rightly directed brings health & wholeness to our whole personality. To bring this truth home to us, Jesus compares our “heartsight” to our eyesight.

*“The eye is the lamp of the body.*

*So, if **your eye is healthy**, your whole body will be full of **light**;*

*But if **your eye is unhealthy**, your whole body will be full of **darkness**.*

*If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”* Matthew 6:22-23

Eyes tell a lot about a person. There are so many songs about eyes because they reveal so much about us that you can almost match a situation to a song, even if you may not know every song. Take a look at the eyes of a bride & groom as they are walking briskly down the aisle at the conclusion of their wedding ceremony & you can hear Sheena Easton singing, *“For Your Eyes Only.”*

Try to look at the eyes of a politician who has been accused of a crime or some sort of ethical violation. When they face the cameras with their head buried in a prepared statement, hardly looking up, blinking frequently, you can almost hear the Eagles’ singing, *“You can’t hide your lyin’ eyes.”*

The eyes of someone who is crying because they are hurt or sad, reflects the song, *“Don’t It Make Your Brown Eyes Blue?”*

What should we do when we are living in those difficult moments?

*“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.”* Pray to God, *“Be Thou My Vision”* because *“His Eye Is On The Sparrow”* & I know he watches me.

Our eyes have it. They reveal whether we are happy or sad, excited, angry, fearful, or calm. It is not an accident that so many poker players you see on television wear sunglasses to shield their eyes because it is hard to bluff with your retina.

I want to talk to you about why the eyes have it. First of all, obviously, our eyes enable us to see. **Our eyesight enables us to effectively & easily move around in our environment.** When we are young children we often have the experience of playing “pin the tail on the donkey” at a birthday party. The fun & laughter around that game comes from the fact that our eyes are covered, we can’t see, & after getting spun around a couple of times, we are often so disoriented we usually pin the tail anywhere but on the donkey. Some times we don’t even get the correct wall. Many of us who are older have had the experience of getting up during the night to check on a child or for

some other reason & tripping, stumbling, or walking into something in the darkness because we couldn't see clearly where we were going.

Building on what we talked about last week regarding our treasure & our heart, Jesus is saying the person who treasures what lies within the kingdom of God, which he has been describing in the Sermon on the Mount, **sees things for their true worth & value**. If we treasure what is "on earth," what is material & temporary, we'll see everything from a distorted perspective that misleads us.

If you've ever put on prescription eyeglasses that belong to somebody else, you know what it means to see from a distorted perspective – objects may appear blurrier, larger or smaller, closer or farther away than they actually are in fact. **This is what happens when we don't see with the eyes of the kingdom – things may appear bigger or smaller than they should be or they may be distorted or misleading.**

We may make a bigger deal out of something that in the larger scheme of life is pretty small & unimportant. Most of us have experienced this enough, even in church, that I'm not even going to bother to illustrate it. We also may overlook or fail to notice someone or something that is in reality quite important or valuable, even when it is staring us in the face.

Robertson Davies, a Canadian novelist & journalist observed, ***"The eyes see only what the mind is prepared to comprehend."***

A Coloradoan moved to Texas & built a house with a large picture window from he could view hundreds of acres of rangeland. He looked out & said, *"The only problem is there's nothing to see."* About the same time, a Texan moved to Colorado & built a house with a large window that looked out on the Rocky Mountains. He looked out & said, *"The only problem is, I can't see anything, the mountains are in the way."* People can miss what is right in front of them.

Human beings have a tendency to see things that confirm what we already think or believe about a person or situation & to not "see" or to process information or events that contradict, refute, or repudiate what we believe or feel strongly about. The political divide in our nation is a clear example of this truth.

**We misperceive the relative importance of things when we're not seeing with the kind of eyes Jesus is describing in the Sermon on the Mount.** For example, in the cases when people get addicted to drugs or an activity, everything is seen only in terms of how it helps or hinders the object of the addiction – getting the next drink or hit or high or look or taste of what they want. The value of truly important

matters like one's health, relationships, family, or relationship with God can be misperceived, devalued, or distorted when we're not seeing clearly.

That's why, *"If your eyes are bad, your body as a whole is in the dark."* If the eye of your soul, "the light within you," is not functioning, then Jesus says you are in the dark about everything (6:23). You don't know where you are or where you're going. This is what it means to be a "lost soul," or a dead soul.

In contrast to the modern understanding, which regards the eye as a window that lets light into the body, the common understanding in the ancient world was that the eye was like a lamp, an instrument that projects the inner light onto objects so that they may be seen. This is reflected in scriptures such as Job 17:7, *"my eye has **grown dim** from grief,"* & Psalm 88:9, *"my eye **grows dim** from sorrow."* Many of us at BBC are grieving because of the death of family members or friends in recent weeks. When we look into the eyes of those who are grief stricken we can see how the light in their eyes is not as bright as usual.

On the other hand, when someone has something exciting or positive to tell us, the look in his or her eyes lets you know it is good news before he or she can say a word.

Proverbs 15:30 says, ***"Light in a messenger's eyes brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones."***

### **The Bible also teaches us that our eyes can get us in trouble.**

The Tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17), "You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's" acknowledges that coveting usually comes from seeing something that belongs to someone else like his or her house, spouse, or any possession & wanting it for ourselves. That's why Ecclesiastes 1:8 says, *"The eye is not satisfied with seeing,"* because when we look with eyes that aren't illuminated with the light of Christ we can find all kinds of reasons not to be content & to covet.

So Jesus tells us two times in Matthew's Gospel,

*"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out & throw it away; (Matthew 5:29),"* &

*"If your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out & throw it away (18:9)."*

Obviously Jesus doesn't mean this literally or I wouldn't be looking at you & you wouldn't be seeing me. He does mean that we need to ask God to help us to address the spiritual issues inside us so that we no longer look at people or things in ways that are harmful, hurtful, or sinful. God sees us & knows what we're doing. You may be able to fool other people & hide things from sight, but there is nothing hidden from God.

Psalm 94:9 reminds us, *“He who formed the eye, does he not see?”*

Isaiah 64:4 says, *“From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, **no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.**”*

No eye has seen any God who works for those who wait for him.

It doesn't say God works for those who work for him or sing for him or pray for him, but for those who wait, which is something many of us are not good at. As frustrated as we may get when someone will not wait for us, “Wait up! Stop! Wait!”

How often do we wait on the Lord, giving God our focused attention?

If we do we may find ourselves refreshed & refocused as Isaiah proclaimed - they *“who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run & not be weary, they shall walk & not faint (Isaiah 40:31).”*

No eye has seen any God like the God we worship, but in our time our vision is less than perfectly clear. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:12, *“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”* The final book of the Bible, Revelation, reveals about Jesus that one day (Revelation 1:7), *“Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him,”* meaning even those who opposed Jesus & took part in his crucifixion will finally see Jesus as he truly is as our Savior & Leader.

Earlier I shared several scriptures from Job & Psalms about our eyes **growing dim** from sorrow & grief & this is how some of us feel today.

The promise we hold onto comes in Revelation 7:17 & a vision of what heaven will be like: *“The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, & he will guide them to springs of the water of life, **& God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.**”*

Jesus taught about the importance of our eyes not only in today's two verse from Matthew 6:22-23, but elsewhere in the Sermon on the Mount and on other occasions. I began with situations & songs & so I close with one by U2, if you *“still haven't found what you're **looking for,**”* then consider looking to Jesus. Jesus had compassion for those who were physically blind and restored the vision of many people.

He was frustrated by those who were spiritually blind and would not see the hand of God in what he was doing through his healing and teaching.

**Jesus encourages us to look to him so that our eyes will reflect his light & presence within us & so our vision will not be distorted by our own sin, preconceptions & misperceptions.**

It is still true today that one can tell a great deal about a person by looking into her or his eyes. Our eyes can be windows into our soul because the eyes have it.