

Getting a Glimpse of the Lord

John 1:43-51; Mark 10:17-25; Luke 13:10-17;

John 21:15-19; Luke 18:9-14

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

There are so many things happening in this chaotic merry-go-round called life that to keep from succumbing to its chaos we tend to treat most of what we see as mere noise. You would think that having brains capable of calculating the equivalent of up to “a billion billion calculations per second”¹ would mean plenty of time to take in and process everything happening around us, but even the best of multitaskers finds taking in the chaos of this interconnected world impossible. While some people become consumed and enslaved by chaotic living others choose to slow down and enjoy the beauty that is all around them. O how nice it is to walk by the still waters and



listen to the bubbling brooks. To stair into the eyes of one’s newborn child is a moment in time that one will always cherish. To look up at the magnificent paintings on the Sistine Ceiling one can’t help but stand in awe of the work of Michelangelo. The intricacy and detail of one who was suspended so high up is truly breath taking! And as the evening sun casts long shadows over the horizons of the mighty mountaintops how difficult it truly is to dismiss the truth that all creation testifies to God’s existence (Romans 1:20)!

Though there is much pleasure to be obtained through money, fame, and power; would not a mere glimpse of the Lord make temporal things seem at best mere trinkets and toys of fleeting pleasure and at worst snares of sinful folly? If promised but a mere glimpse of the Lord whom of us would not trade our treasures and pearls (Matthew 13:44-46) and be like Simeon who stared deeply into the eyes of Jesus, our Lord (Luke 2:25-32)?

While transporting ourselves back in time to see the Christ child lying in a manger (Luke 2:1-21) is beyond our abilities, surely the image-bearers and redeemed masterpieces of God’s grace (John 3:16) can see His Spirit living inside of themselves (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and rejoice in the Good Shepherd’s divine care and ever-loving presence (Psalms 139)!

¹ Taken from the following website: [The Human Brain Vs. Supercomputers... Which One Wins? » Science ABC](#)

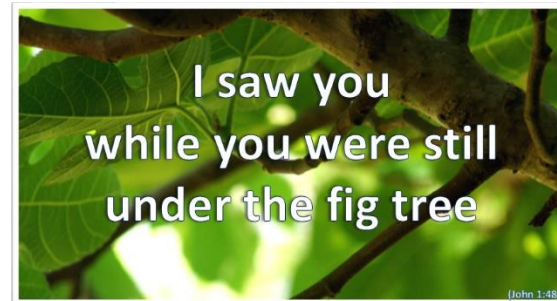
Did He not promise if we come nearer to Him, He will come nearer to us (James 4:8) and did He not say if we seek Him with all our heart, we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13)? A glimpse of God is not an impossibility but a divine gift the Creator has given to those He created in His image. The fact that so few Christians are seeing glimpses of His love, justice, peace, power, knowledge, and holiness is not due to Him hiding Himself from us but due to us having an earthly rather than heavenly focus (Colossians 3:2-4)! The following sermon is going to review five people from the Bible who got a glimpse of the Lord. As I describe the glimpse of each person please reflect upon your own relationship with the Lord and how by seeking Him with all your heart you might also see Him indivisibly present in your own lives; Him holding, loving, and caring for you as your Good Shepherd!

A Glimpse of what Christ Sees in Me - Nathaniel (John 1:43-51)

The first person that I would like to mention who got a glimpse of the Lord was Nathaniel. When Phillip told Nathaniel that he had “found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about who the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (45), Nathaniel initially responded with great

² John F. MacArthur Jr., *Twelve Ordinary Men: How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness, and What He Wants to Do with You*, 140.

skepticism! Nathaniel asked Phillip, “Can anything good come from Nazareth” (46)? Nathaniel likely reasoned, why would God’s own Son and Savior of humanity choose to take up residence at an “uncultured place, full of evil, corrupt, and sinful people,”² like Nazareth (46)? When Jesus saw Nathaniel



approaching Him the Lord investigated his heart and said, “here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit” (47). Even though Nathanael

was tainted by prejudice and sin, Jesus saw into his heart and found there to be no hypocrisy but only a genuine love to see the Messiah.³ Nathaniel then asked Jesus how He knew him, and the Lord responded, “I saw you while you were under the fig tree before Phillip called you” (48). Jesus’ intimate knowledge of what was likely Nathaniel’s time of prayer, meditation or study was all it took to break his skepticism and cure his spiritual blindness as can be seen in Nathaniel’s profound Christological statement “Rabbi, you are the Son of God and king of Israel” (John 1:49; Psalms 2:6-7)!⁴ From Nathaniel we learn that the Good Shepherd watches us when we read the scripture, pray and worship Him! Jesus has an intimate knowledge of our hearts

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Twelve Ordinary Men: How the Master Shaped His Disciples for Greatness, and What He Wants to Do with You*, 142–143.

⁴ Raymond F. Collins, “Nathanael (Person),” 1030.

and yet despite our skepticism the Spirit of truth is always willing to lovingly correct our false beliefs concerning Him.

With just one glance Nathaniel was corrected about nothing good coming from Nazareth and with just one glance may the Lord reveal false teachings in our hearts, correct, and train us to be like Apostle Paul and see “everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord” (Philippians 3:8)!

A Glimpse of His Unconditional Love – Mark 10:17-25

The second person that I would like to mention who got a glimpse of the Lord was the rich man. One day a man ran up to Jesus and fell on his knees before him and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life” (17)? Jesus looked upon the man and lovingly told him to follow the Ten Commandments such as do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, and honor your father



and mother (20). The rich man stated he had kept all these commands since he was a boy (21) and yet something was keeping him from being saved! Jesus told him if he truly wanted a relationship with God to sell off all his possessions and then he would be able to follow Him (22). The rich man left very sad because his money meant everything to him and in essence was his god. In this glimpse of God, we learn how easy it is to perform religious activities without reverence!

Since not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 7:21), we need to ask the Good Shepherd to take a glimpse into our lives and give us a spiritual health check.

We would do this ourselves, but Scripture tells us that above all our hearts are deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9) and incapable of seeing giant planks of sin (Matthew 7:3-5) that are entangling (Hebrews 12:1) and keeping us from being holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). We need not fear what our spiritual health card might look like for there is no sin that once confessed is not forgiven (1 John 1:9) and washed white as snow (Psalms 51:7). Like the rich man Christ loves us even when we are enslaved by our earthly desires. In but a glimpse we can see His eternal love which in turn compels us to seek Him while He might be found (Isaiah 55:6).

A Glimpse of His Healing – Luke 13:10-17

The third person that I would like to mention who got a glimpse of the Lord was the crippled woman. While Jesus was teaching in one of the Synagogues, he met a woman who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years (10)! We all know what it is like to have a bad back, but we are told this woman could not straighten up at all (11). When Jesus saw her, He



called her forward and said to her, “woman, you are set free from your infirmity,” and after placing His hands on her she immediately straightened up and praised God (12-13)! The Bible tells us that our bodies like

jars of clay and therefore easily broken (2 Corinthians 4:7)! And yet the moment the Lord wishes for the body to be restored it is instantly healed! When the man with leprosy came down the mountain and said in great faith, “Lord if you are willing, You can make me clean” (Matthew 8:1-4); Jesus granted Him healing. The moment Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and commanded him to never enter a father’s son, the spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently but came out (Mark 9:14-29)! When a woman subject to bleeding for twelve years touched Jesus’ cloak her bleeding stopped (Mark 5:25-34). And the moment Jesus spoke the words, “Lazarus come out,” he came back to life (John

11:38-44). Just a glimpse from our Good Shepherd is all it takes to realize He truly is sovereign over all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16)!

While not all sicknesses and thorns are removed through faith and prayer, by looking at the compassion of Christ hanging on the cross in our place, how could one ever say He owes us anything?

And even should He let our bodies perish while He is tenderly holding us in heaven where there is no more sorrow, pain, or death; who would ever dream of accusing Him of insensitivity or lack of loving care?

A Glimpse of Second Chances – John 21:15-19

The fourth person that I would like to mention who got a glimpse of the Lord and was forever changed was Apostle Peter. After the rooster crowed three times Peter remembered Christ’s words to him, “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times,” and Peter broke down and wept (Mark 14:72)! Though Peter ran with excitement to the empty tomb with John (John 20:1-10) and even had a private meeting with Christ before He appeared to the other disciples (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5), Peter was far from over the shame of denying Christ! In John 21 we find Peter and six other disciples have returned to catching fish rather than men (Matthew 4:18-19)!

After Christ enabled them to catch more fish than they could haul in (21:6) and invited them to have breakfast with Him (21:12), Jesus singled out Peter and asked him three times if he



loved Him (21:15). To restore Peter and remind him of his calling the Lord told Peter if he truly loved Him, he would “feed My lambs” (21:15), “take care of My sheep” (21:16) and “feed My sheep”

(21:17)! Then Christ spoke the words Peter’s so desperately needed to hear to know that he was forgiven and reinstated as one of Christ’s main apostles, “follow Me” (21:19)!

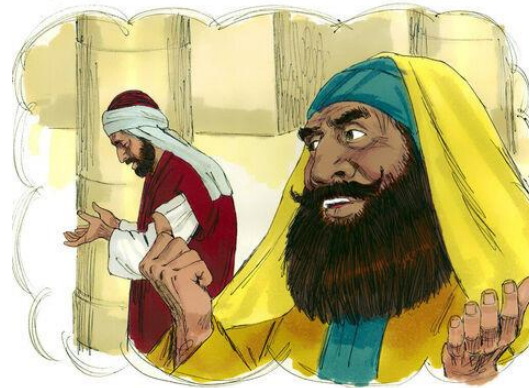
From Peter’s glimpse we learn that while the Good Shepherd is the judge of the living and dead (2 Timothy 4:1), He is also one who forgives (1 John 1:9) and continuously provides opportunities to serve rightly in His kingdom.

When we fall short of His glory, we must not forget that God chooses the foolish, the weak, the lowly to shame the wise, and the strong of this world (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). This does not mean believers have a license to sin (Romans 6:1-14) but instead are to rejoice that upon confession we are forgiven, and by His Spirit’s power we can let our light shine before others so that

might see our good deeds and glorify God the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).

Our Humble Response to but a Glimpse – Luke 18:9-14

So after having heard the testimonies of just four people who got a glimpse of God one can’t help but wonder what we the temples of the Holy Spirit ought to respond to His presence? Even though we have received the new heart and have had the laws written upon our hearts as prophesied by Ezekiel does not mean we view our privileged position on this side of the cross



with sense of either entitlement or pride. How easy it is to fall into “religiosity” and be like the Pharisee who stood by himself, prayed, and thanked God he was holier than others (18:11-12). Our justification to

have God’s Spirit living inside of us comes not from our filthy rags of personified holiness but from the blood of the Lamb who was slain for our atonement! Though we are to boldly approach God’s throne (Hebrews 4:16) it is never to be out of a sense of entitlement but like the tax collector as one who beats his/her chest and cries out “God have mercy on me, a sinner” (Luke

18:13)! For those who are fearfully and wonderfully made to be holy as God is holy then they must never stop asking God to search them, test their anxious thoughts, reveal their offenses, and lead them into the way everlasting (Psalms 139).

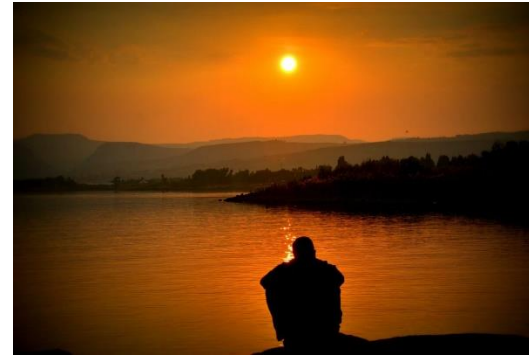
And when we have doubts, when trials and tribulations are crushing our hope for a good future, when we feel our yokes are about to break our backs then may we in great humility shout from the rooftops, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief" (Mark 9:23).

A glimpse of God is not to reflect one's tainted self-image but an invitation to be held, molded, and shaped by our Creator who loves us beyond all measure!

Conclusion

This truly is a chaotic world in which we live. It seems like our calendars are so full that no matter how much multitasking that we do there just isn't enough time or brain power or time to complete everything that bides for our attention. While some people become consumed and enslaved by chaotic living others choose to slow down and enjoy the beauty around them. How lovely is a walk-in nature, cherishing our loved ones, and taking in the intricacy and detail of works of arts. While the world has much to offer us who would not trade

all the money, fame, and power in for but a mere glimpse of one's Creator? From five stories from the Bible, we learned that a glimpse of God is not an impossibility but a divine gift the Creator has given to those He created in His image. From a Nathaniel's glimpse we learn that the Lord knows us intimately



and as our Good Shepherd leads, guides, and empowers us to be more like Him as we read Scripture, pray, and worship Him. From the rich man's glimpse, we learn how important it is

to invite the Shepherd to reveal sin in our hearts so that in confession we might be forgiven and continually molded by the Potter. From the crippled woman's glimpse of the Lord, we learn the Great Physician is a great source of comfort and healer of any malady. From Apostle Peter's glimpse of the Lord, we learn the Good Shepherd offers many chances to have our bad choices forgiven and placed once again on the path of righteousness. And from the glimpse of the tax collector, we learn that while we can boldly approach the Father's throne of grace we must do so humbly, constantly crying out, "God have mercy on me a sinner!" The reason why life is so chaotic is due to our focus being on the world rather than heavenward bound! So, I give you this challenge: seek the Lord with all your heart so that you might see Him indivisible present in your lives; Him holding, loving, and caring for you as your Good Shepherd!

