

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Seeing the Lord in 2020

Therefore, ***the disciples rejoiced at seeing*** (perceiving; having seen) ***the Lord***. (John 20:20)

Well, here we are in a new year. In some unexplained way, I feel relieved to be in 2020, if for no other reason than it has a nice sound to it. 2019 had sort of a harsh sound to it that may have been indicative of the type of year it was. Our new year is different; I like the resonance of saying 2020!

In a search for a word for the year, I came across a verse that speaks to my heart. I cannot say this came from the Lord; nevertheless, it seems to go along with what has been building in my heart all throughout 2019. I woke up the other day wondering if there is a chapter 20, verse 20 in scripture that speaks to the year 2020. Well, there is; and it goes along with having 20-20 vision, which is what the average person can see at a distance of 20 feet. By the way, 20-20 vision is classified as normal vision, but one can have better vision than this, such as 20-15 vision. I remember when I had 20-15 vision; boy, do I miss it. By the way, the number 20 signifies *redemption*.

Here is the verse given to us by John, the apostle of love.

And saying this, He also pointed out (shows) His hands and side to them. Therefore, ***the disciples, seeing (perceiving) the Lord, rejoiced***. (John 20:20 JM-NT [bold italic added])

The Lord appeared to His disciples, not as a spirit but as a resurrected man with a new creation body. On both sides of this verse, Jesus spoke to His disciples: ***Peace [= Shalom] to you folks!*** Then, He breathed on them, giving them the holy spirit. When we see Jesus, we enter into the peace of God that surpasses all understanding!

I don't think we can truly imagine the joy that these men had in that moment as Jesus stood in their midst and they beheld Him alive from the dead. Today, by faith, we believe that Jesus was resurrected three days after the cross, but just imagine what a shock this had to have been to those who followed Him for those few years, listening to His words that, at times, didn't even register with them. Undoubtedly, when they first saw Him with their physical eyes, it had to have been a shock, but this then gave way to great rejoicing and His words prior to the cross began to make sense. Their spiritual sight began to take hold through the spirit of the Lord given to them by Jesus.

Carrying this forward to our day, we who believe have been given the same spirit that these disciples had been given. There is only one spirit and one Lord, and we received of this oneness, this union, when we were given Jesus' faith and we believed in Him as our Lord and Savior, desiring to trust and obey Him as He reveals His father to us.

Of course, what I am saying is understood by most Christians, so this is nothing new. However, I submit that seeing Jesus is something that has been lost in many Christian circles as He has been replaced with

many things that are fashioned after the spirit of the world. Years ago, I began to see that much of what is labeled Christian (including the church with Jesus' name on it) has either lost sight of Jesus altogether or has encrusted Him with so many things of man that He is no longer recognized as central, supreme, preeminent, and actually, the one and only thing to His people. He might be prominent, but He is not preeminent, that is, having first place in all things as all things come forth from His life by His spirit, and not by man's carnal nature. There is nothing worse than ones who are technically in Christ but who live by the nature of the old man that we are told to put off. Such ones destroy the testimony and witness of Christ to the world. However, before we point fingers at others, let us be sure we are not living by the thinking of the old man rather than by the mind of Christ. As Paul wrote: ***Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect*** (Romans 12:2). May we repent of (turn from; change our minds about) our old ways and put on the all-new in King Jesus. In a sense, we cannot put on this new creation nature, but the Christ in us by His spirit can, does, and will as we seek Him and submit to His life, putting to death all that is in opposition to the image of Christ.

For us today, what does *seeing Jesus* entail or mean? But first, what does it not mean? It doesn't mean some mental discovery of Jesus that gets packaged into some doctrine, systematic theology, theory, teaching, or interpretation of scripture (all as examples). It also doesn't mean that we come to a greater understanding of the historic Jesus. Mind you; some of these things might have value but, on the other hand, they can be, and most often are, hindrances to seeing Jesus if they are our starting or reference points. As I have stated, these things can encrust or encapsulate Jesus in such a way that He remains prominent but not preeminent. Or worse, Jesus becomes secondary to the things (just one of the crowd of things) or becomes more of a shadow than the reality. I contend that much of institutional Christianity lives in this realm.

So, how are we to see Jesus? First-hand, individual revelation of Him, that is, seeing Him in our heart! It is a personal, living and active, knowing of Christ that is real to us. It is not a chapter and verse memorization of scripture of truths about Him; it is Him as truth in our heart, light shining in darkness, experienced in our daily walk, and expressed to the world around us in life and in truth. Seeing Jesus is to be captivated by Him or, as Paul described it, apprehended by that which has apprehended me. He becomes the sole passion and domination in our life. We are so utterly captivated by Him that we know we cannot live without Him, we cannot take a step without Him, we cannot raise our hands to work without Him, we cannot even take our next breath without Him. He is our all in all! Seeing Jesus is a living union with Him by His spirit that dwells within us and unites us with His throne and with God's heavenly realm where He is seated in power and glory. What is His has now become ours, and we are to live in this realm of victory.

Seeing is revelation! What is revelation? A continual, progressive enlightening of our spiritual sight, seeing that everything the Father does is centered in His Son and that we have been placed in Him in this capacity! He is our life, the very center of our life that is growing in us until He occupies everything in us from our core to our shell. Seeing the Lord is seeing His grand place in creation, especially new creation, and what this means in the universe which came through Him. Everything in creation (i.e., universe as we know it) is explained and interpreted in God's Son. And, on a very personal level, for each of us, everything in our own lives is connected to Jesus in some way, manner, or fashion. Nothing, absolutely nothing is outside of Jesus in ones who have been called and chosen to have His life dwell in them.

I leave you with this for 2020 vision: ***I have only one passion—Christ and Christ only! The secret of the Christian life is already in me—Christ in me! May my eyes continually be opened to see (perceive) this life and by faith—Let King Jesus live in me and be expressed through me to the world!***