

Eyes on Jesus: Denying Eyes

This Lent, we will use the metaphor of eyesight to examine how the various people in Mark's Gospel viewed Jesus during His Passion. In most cases, they misunderstood who He was and what He was doing; then again, sometimes by faith people did recognize Him correctly.

We have these forty days of Lent in which we may look within ourselves as people of faith in our day. How are we like or unlike the people who saw Jesus in the flesh? Most important, as we gather for worship, we will see what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death.

At first, Peter and the other disciples cannot see how they could ever fall away from Jesus. Then, when Peter is spotted by a servant girl and realizes that his own neck is on the line, he sees fit to deny Jesus, which leads to his weeping in remorse. What does it take for us to move beyond our own remorse to the discipleship we and our Lord desire?

Our Eyes Behold the Savior's Face

- 1 Our eyes behold the Savior's face
And yet cannot perceive
That His perspective held our grace
Before we could believe.
- 2 Our focus flits and fails to see
The One whose steadfast gaze
Propelled Him to the darkened tree
Enveloped in death's haze.
- 3 Our sights train on the dreadful cross.
Beneath His knowing eyes,
Our sins are bare and set for loss;
He sees us as His prize.
- 4 Our vision blurs with anxious tears
As Jesus' eyelids fall
To conquer sin and all our fears
And tear in two our pall.
- 5 Our view scans for the coming Day
That evermore grows near,
When Jesus wipes our tears away
And all is crystal clear.

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Prayer

Heavenly Father, focus my heart and mind upon your Word by the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may be strengthened in my faith and my Christian life. May the eyes of my faith be always fixed upon Jesus the founder and perfecter of my faith. In Jesus' name I pray Amen.

Mark 14:26-31 English Standard Version (ESV)

²⁶ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' ²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." ²⁹ Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." ³⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." ³¹ But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same.

Denying the truth can lead us into denying behavior. Jesus shares with His disciples an Old Testament prophecy, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." Jesus will be put to death and His disciples would all run away in one way or another. Peter and the rest of the disciples refused to see this happening. "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same.' So what does this particular denial entail. First of all, it is a refusal of God's Word. Secondly, it is ignoring who Jesus is, the Word made flesh. Finally, it is an ignoring of who they are, particularly Peter as Jesus speaks particularly to him. "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." Peter is ignoring God's Word. Peter is ignoring who Jesus is and most of all Peter is ignoring who He is, a sinful imperfect human being. Peter is denying his sinful human nature. We do not want to see our sin. However to deny our sin is to deny the need for forgiveness which opens the door to Satan to have his way with us just as he did with Peter.

Mark 14:66-72 English Standard Version (ESV)

⁶⁶ And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." ⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." ⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." ⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

Peter denied Jesus' words. Peter denied his weakness because of his sinfulness. It was only remembering Jesus' words that brought him back to the truth. 'And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." Just as it was necessary to be confronted with his sin so it is with us. We need to see our sin so that we

can then see our savior, Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. It is through confession that we in faith receive the assurance that God forgives us through faith in Jesus Christ. We can see this in Peter's response, "And he broke down and wept." This leads us to Jesus' words when He came to the disciples in the upper room when He appeared to them after His resurrection, "Peace be with you."(John 20:19) Jesus shares with us His forgiveness.

In the Old Testament we find a verse that clearly promises that God promises that His response to confession is forgiveness.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (English Standard Version)

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

The old saying, "confession is good for the soul," is proven with God's own words. We are released from the guilt of our sin and free to serve our Lord. As Isaiah writes, "with His wounds we are healed."(Isaiah 53:5) This challenges us to respond to Jesus' words to, "Love one another as I have loved you."(John 13:34)

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Psalm 67:6-7 (English Standard Version)

God, our God, shall bless us. ⁷God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!