

Seeing the Unseen is What We Need to See

by Mack Tomilson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing the unseen, focusing on the eternal and spiritual realities rather than being consumed by the temporary and physical aspects of life. It highlights the need for believers to have their spiritual eyes opened to perceive God's invisible workings and to live with an eternal perspective. The message encourages living by faith, not by sight, and challenges individuals to prioritize the unseen realm over the visible, earthly distractions.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 7:29, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 12:1, Ephesians 1:17

Topics: "Faith over Sight", "Eternal Perspective"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing the unseen, focusing on the eternal and spiritual realities rather than being consumed by the temporary and physical aspects of life. It highlights the need for believers to have their spiritual eyes opened to perceive God's invisible workings and to live with an eternal perspective. The message encourages living by faith, not by sight, and challenges individuals to prioritize the unseen realm over the visible, earthly distractions.

Transcript

God and Father, what a glory it is to be here on a beautiful day, to have the privilege and the freedom and the responsibility of corporate worship. Lord, we are so blessed and so privileged, and thus we are truly responsible today to draw near in faith, to worship You, to hear Your voice through Scripture by the Spirit, to respond in our hearts in faith. Lord, in a few minutes from now, to sing unto You and to share fellowship, thank You for this morning.

We do remember Brother Michael in San Antonio. Lord, anoint Your Word through Your servant. Lord, send Your Spirit down upon Grace Community Church.

Bless Your Word with power there two times this morning. Thank You, Father, that You are faithful and true, and Your purpose is to honor Your Word, to build Your Kingdom, to glorify Your Son, to build Your Church. We pray You do that this morning in our midst.

For His name's sake we pray, Amen. Let's turn in the New Testament to two places. The first place we'll read is 1 Corinthians 7. 1 Corinthians 7, verses 29 through 31.

1 Corinthians 7, 29. The Word of God. But this I say, brethren, the time is short.

Let's just stop at that phrase and realize the significance that Paul is putting in here in this parenthesis in the context of many topics in 1 Corinthians 7. When he says the time is short, he's saying that God has worked providentially, supernaturally, historically to compact time in history to bring about redemptive purposes that are working out. It's an amazing phrase, and you could read more on that yourself. But he's saying the time is short.

It's almost like he's saying the time has been shortened. So that, here's why. From now on, even those who have wives should be as those who have none.

Those who weep as though they did not weep. Those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice. Those who buy, meaning doing business, as though they do not possess anything.

And those who live in this world as not misusing it. In other words, who have to live in this world and function, but you don't become worldly and carnal and attach yourself to this earthly life and all that is tainted that comes with it. Not misusing it.

Why? Because the form and the fashion of this world is passing away. Aren't we thankful for that? There will be a new heavens and a new earth wherein only dwells righteousness. David, we could take a road trip then together.

We probably won't even need gas in the car, I don't know. But anyway, this world's passing away. Now fast forward to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. If that is all true, here is the perspective that the believer must have and walk in.

2 Corinthians 4 beginning in verse 16 through 18. Therefore we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Now I want you to notice this connection.

Even though our outward man is perishing, the outward man is connected to the seen realm. But the inward man that is being renewed is connected to the not seen realm. And Paul here says that we are to look, not at things that are seen, but at things that are unseen.

William, how much have you been looking lately at invisible things? The Christian is to live that way, the apostle says. And so I want to speak this morning on seeing the unseen is what we need to see. Seeing the unseen is what we actually need to see.

You know, the Old Testament prophets were always getting in trouble, weren't they? They were God's spiritual troublemakers. They were always rebuking the nation, preaching against idolatry, calling the people to renew their covenant with God. They were the spiritual troublemakers.

They were hated. They were lied about. They were opposed.

And often they were punished and killed. Elisha was the greatest miracle working prophet, really in all the Old Testament. He did twice the number of miracles that Elijah did.

And he, like Elijah, they were wanted men, wanted by the king, wanted by soldiers. Always a bounty on their heads. So you remember the king of Assyria, the king of Syria, wanted to find Elisha.

And one of the servants said, well, Elisha, he knows what you're doing behind closed walls. He even knows what you say in your bedroom. And then ironically, the king says, well, find out where he is.

I want to get him. As if Elisha couldn't be prepared for that. So what does the king of Syria do? He sends a massive army to surround the city where Elisha and his servant was at night time.

They come by stealth in the night. They surround the city with horses and soldiers. A big army with chariots.

Very intimidating. And the servant goes out early in the morning and he sees that they're there. And his heart is fainting and fearing and panicking.

And he runs in and he says, Master, what shall we do? And he tells Elisha. Elisha's calm. He says, don't fear.

Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. And then what did Elisha pray? Lord, open his eyes. And suddenly, the servant's eyes were open when he went back outside and he saw a different bunch out there.

What did he see? Do you remember? He saw other chariots of fire. He saw supernatural protection greater than the human army surrounding them. He saw the invisible reality.

He saw the unseen. And it was because God had to open his eyes. We often only see primarily, we're shaped by, we're controlled by what our physical senses see, what we read in social media, in the newspaper, the news reports, what we see in the world and the dangers.

We often are controlled by the seen rather than the unseen. So that's what Scripture calls us to, to see the unseen. That is to see reality in what's really true beyond the veil of the physical.

Because you see, beyond the warfare that goes on in the earth, the physical realities among men and kingdoms and nation and political parties and the cultural, beyond that, beyond the physical eyes, there's an invisible reality greater than all of it that's going on all the time. Kingdoms in conflict. The kingdom of God and the kingdoms of Satan and the kingdom of man.

And so, that's why Paul tells us, for we look not at that which is seen, but we look at that which is unseen. We look not at that which just affects the outward man that's perishing, the temporal, this world passing away, but we must look increasingly with our focus and our perspective, a radical perspective, to let the unseen shape our lives and govern our perspective more than anything in the earth that's seen. And I don't know about you, but I still have a long way to go in not letting this world and what I see, hear, and observe affect my faith and try to rob me and discourage me.

Lord, open His eyes that He may see to see what's really true, to see the eternal and not just the temporal. This is why Hebrews 11 says what it says so often. Think about it.

Faith is the evidence of what? Things not seen. Noah being warned about things not seen, moved with fear. The Christian is called to live by faith, not by seeing reality that is not earthly, temporal, or physical.

To live by looking continually and increasingly at what is not seen. Now, we know, don't we, that the Christian lives in two worlds simultaneously. One that's seen, one that's not seen.

The unbeliever only lives in one world. He only believes in one world. The one that's down here that physical eyes can see, that physical ears can hear.

Earthly, physical experience. The unbeliever, that's the only world he knows anything about. The mind of the unbeliever is blind to spiritual reality.

He can't enter or see the kingdom of God until he's regenerated and born again. But the believer lives simultaneously in both worlds. Now let's think about those two worlds.

What's true about both of them? Well, the seen is physical. It's visible. It's tangible.

It's connected with all five of our senses. It's temporary, dangerous, and deceptive. And it is, Paul says, and John the Apostle says in 1 John, it's passing away.

The unseen is spiritual and invisible. And it's a greater reality. It's not experienced through our senses.

It's experienced through a regenerated heart that sees spiritual truth through a renewed mind that views all things through God's perspective and God's truth. The unseen is true and spiritually eternal. And unlike the seen, it's not passing away.

It's here to stay. It's eternal. Which world, the seen or unseen, is more real? And which one is more real to you and me? Is this world, and all you see, feel, smell, touch, taste, experience, is this world more real to you than the unseen world? Lord, open His eyes.

Open her eyes to see. It's visible. It's right out there and that's real.

It's far greater than the physical world. Which one is lasting and which one will soon be gone? It's the unseen that is to be real to every Christian. It's the unseen we're to believe more than the seen that's down here.

The question is, what kind of eyes do I have? What kind of eyes do you have? What kind of lenses of your mind and heart do you view this world in all its vanity, all its wickedness, all its corruption, all its alluring pull to lust and covet and get greedy and have power plays to be somebody in this world and to accomplish much? All that the world pulls us to and wants us to see, do we have eyes to see it correctly or are we blinded by it and therefore we don't see the unseen enough? Paul says, just as a declarative statement, we look not at things that are seen, but we look at things that are unseen. And then he unfolds that in a parallel way in 1 Corinthians 7. So go back there to that passage we read, verse 29, and he unfolds really because the seen is passing away and we're not to look at it, he wants us to see how we're to live and look at everything we experience in the earthly realm. Some of you are married.

Some of you want to be married. Some of you are a long ways from marriage. Some of you work at good jobs.

Some of you don't know what you're going to do as far as work in the future. Some of you own businesses. Others work for businesses.

But we all live and function in this world. As Paul said there, we have to use this world by living in it, but we're not to abuse this world. So 1 Corinthians 7 tells us the what and why about learning to live by what is not seen.

In those verses, 29-31, Paul lumps together all of life. It's amazing. The thing he says there in putting it all together, in verse 29, just look at it again.

He says the time has been shortened so that from now on, here's the perspective we must live with. It's an unseen perspective. An eternal perspective.

It's not governed by living life down here by the seen. Notice what he says. Those who are married should live with a bigger perspective as if they weren't married.

Those who weep and have sorrows must have the perspective that they're not always going to weep. Those who have great joys must realize that the joys, the earthly joys, are only temporary. Those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice.

Those who buy, do business as though they don't possess anything. And those who use this world is not misusing it. Why should we be that way? Because all that's earthly and physical and temporal and verse 31 says it is all passing away.

Now let's just think about that. Marriage. Human sorrows.

The worst of them. The loss of a baby. The loss of a loved parent.

Tragedies. The deepest human sorrows and the greatest joys. Having your first baby.

Marriage. Seeing a child converted. Seeing God do amazing things that produces inexpressible joy.

The greatest sorrows and the greatest joys. Your career and what it will do for your family. Your income and your business.

All that you possess. When Linda and I got married in May of 78 and that winter we moved to Fort Worth. We had a little car and the smallest U-Haul trailer you could have.

And everything we owned was in it. A small U-Haul trailer now? No, possessions. They accrue, don't they, Ian? I mean, possessions.

Stuff. It grows like mold in families. Where does it come from? The bigger your family gets, the more you go.

The more you have to live. So, possessions. Possessions.

Paul says we must live as if we really don't own anything after all. Why? Because that U-Haul is not going with us to glory. We'll take nothing but what is eternal and spiritual.

So, all that he says here, how you live your life in this short period of earthly existence and all those things, all of that in Paul's few words summarizes the temporal, the earthly, the seen, the here and now. What eyes can see. What ears can hear.

What the nose can smell. What our hands can touch. The places that our feet can take us.

What emotions can be experienced. What money can buy. The present life for the Christian should not be marked by the seen.

It must be marked by the unseen. Marked by an eternal perspective. And you know what? It already is.

Our lives are already marked by eternity. We're already in eternal kingdom realities. We now possess eternal life, don't we, as a Christian.

We've got it now. Our sins are already forgiven. Now we're the sons of God.

We have passed from death to life. We're heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Our life is hidden with Christ in God and we are already glorified, Romans 8 says.

This amazing reality that the unseen is what marks our life much greater than anything that's seen down here below. In other words, the reason is eschatological. This present world is passing away.

And all marriage and family and possessions and houses and cars and 401ks and everything under the sun that we as believers experience for decades will be gone. Michael, we're going to heaven. Just us with Jesus.

Angels will carry us there and we won't have any carry-on luggage. It's real. It's eschatological.

The form of this world, the present temporal system of this world is passing away. And the danger is why Paul says we've got to look at things not seen rather than things that are seen is because of the danger and enemy of earthly mindedness about marriage, singleness, jobs, relationships, possessions. Earthly mindedness, not those things, but earthly mindedness about this world is damaging, hindering, and controlling and it hinders our spiritual mindedness and our heavenly... It clouds the eyes of seeing the unseen.

Earthly mindedness puts spiritual cataracts over your eyes and you will not see spiritual reality clearly with earthly mindedness causing us to only primarily be dominated by things we see in the earth. Doesn't it still try to shape how we see things? If we're honest, it does. How we see everything.

Our past and our present even regarding earthly life. Our past and our present tries with all its might to rob us of spiritual clarity, of spiritual vision, of spiritual freshness, of being on the front line spiritually. We're in tune with the things of the Kingdom of God and you're marching forward.

You're not on the fringe. You're not in neutral. You're not in second gear.

You're in first gear. You're in forward. And you're moving on to see things clearly and walk by faith and not by what? Sight.

We walk by faith and not by sight. We look at things not seen rather than things that are seen. And the new is our reality that must control and shape our lives because we are marked by seeing the unseen, marked by eternity, and not marked anymore by time.

We're pilgrims and strangers in the earth only passing through. Now brethren, the more that happens in this world, in this county, in this state, in this country, and in this world, that seems urgent to the natural mind, to the thinking mind as we hear news and we see things, more that seems urgent and dangerous and critical in the seen realm, in the culture, in politics, in society, toward the church and society, toward

the church and the kingdom, in this world which are kingdoms in conflict, they'll never be reconciled. It's all in the category of things seen, the physical and earthly, the now, the all around us we see, the physical like Elisha's servant saw, but not seeing the invisible like Elisha did.

Our eyes, brothers and sisters, must continually be opened daily. The outward man perishes, but the inward man is what? Renewed, how often? Day by day. Eyes to see, to view things rightly in the unseen world.

Paul says we don't lose heart because we look not at that which is seen. It's all earthly, temporal, and passing. And he says we don't live by sight.

We live by faith. It's the unseen that is greater, that is more important, and that is lasting. Abraham went out not knowing in what geographical location they would land at.

Kind of feel sorry for Sarah. Where are we going? I don't know yet. When are we going to know we're there? I don't know that either.

But Abraham went out not knowing whether he was going. Sarah could see no way to have a baby. And humanly there wasn't a way.

But you know how she had a baby? She had a baby by considering Him, by seeing Him who had promised. Faith conceives children. Faith moves kingdoms.

Faith raises the spiritual dead. Faith accomplishes impossible things that God wants accomplished in the lives of those who live based on what they don't see. Moses saw the invisible reproach of Christ greater than the visible treasures of Egypt.

And the Bible says he endured by what? Seeing Him who is invisible. How clearly and increasingly, dear brothers and sisters, do you see the invisible God? Hebrews 12 reminds us. Look, it's kind of like the writer of Hebrews begins to summarize.

He writes through 11, and then at 12 he begins to say, okay, look, here's the deal. Because we're surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, what should we do? How should we live? Let's lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us and let us run the race with patience and endurance. What's the next phrase? Looking.

Looking unto Jesus. The invisible God. One day, our physical glorified eyes will behold Him and we'll see Him as He is and we'll be like Him.

But until then, the eyes of faith, we're looking unto Jesus. And we see Him. Our hearts see Him.

Our minds know how glorious and beautiful He is. In the world, the scene will rob us of seeing the unseen Christ who to those who believe, He is what? Precious. This is what Paul prayed for in Ephesians 1. Remember? He prayed for the Ephesians and for us because it's written in Scripture that the Father of glory may give you what? The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened.

Seeing the unseen. The eyes of Elisha's servant were enlightened and he saw what was there before but he didn't have eyes to see it. The eyes of our understanding must be enlightened about marriage, about raising children, about work, about possessions, about living in this world and not letting it affect us or us

abuse it.

All of life must be lived and walked through by seeing the invisible. Who wants to see better? I'm a candidate. Do you live by what you see? Or do you live by faith? Do you live by looking normally? Because you just haven't trained yourself enough? You haven't become serious minded enough? Do you live by looking at what is not seen? Or do you live by looking at Him who is invisible? Brian prayed it this morning.

Did you hear what he prayed? Lord, remove anything that would block our vision. And when he prayed that, my heart said yes, this is what I'm supposed to preach on. Lord, remove anything that would block our vision.

Can you pray that today? Can you pray it as you go home? Can you make that a prayer this week? If we just prayed that prayer all week from our hearts, who knows what would happen? We might see angels surrounding us on the freeway. Brethren, blessed are the eyes that see. Blessed are those who walk by faith and not by sight.

Blessed is the one who makes the invisible God of Jacob His trust. If this is in our hearts, as individual believers and as a church body, we have a path to walk. We have a kingdom to build.

We have a gospel to take forth. We have a church to edify. We have missions to do.

We have more praying than ever to do. And we will not do it the more we look at things seen. Lord, open our eyes.

And remove anything that blocks our vision. Make us like Elisha's servant that not seeing, we're seeing more and more all the time. Let's bow and pray together.

We're going to pray right now and then after we pray, we'll have some announcements and then we're going to sing. But right now, let's seek the Lord. I want you right now before the Lord to pray back to Him what He said to you this morning.

Just tell Him. Respond to Him in prayer about what He's made real to you. Father, You see us perfectly.

And we do not see as we ought to yet see. We confess, Lord, Lord, we have a vision problem. We pray that You would work in us deeply and continually more and more open the eyes of our understanding that we would be enlightened to see more clearly, first and foremost, the living God and our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

That we would look unto Him and run the race. And Lord, we would more and more look not at things that are seen but at things that are unseen. So apply this to us today and sanctify Your truth in our minds, in our hearts, in our spirits deeply that we would be transformed transformed into this image by the Spirit.

Lord, make us increasingly like Elisha and less and less like His servant. Open our eyes that we might see the unseen. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/TdTMS8EPSXw.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/mack-tomilson/seeing-the-unseen-is-what-we-need-to-see/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net