

What do you see?

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“For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

Matt 13:17

What do you see?

We live in the heartbreak of sinful Babylon, this is the name given to the symbolic city in Revelation, it represents the world without God, because Babylon has fallen, and satan is its god. All hope for life and peace in Babylon is futile. Vanity of vanities, all is futile in Babylon.

But in Christ we have God with us who rules over all that has been created. While satan rages in Babylon against the people of God, Christ is our peace. While we wait for our new home in heavenly glory, God is with us to uphold us in our suffering with Christ in our obedience to the will of God.

In a real sense, we are already home with Christ, for Christ is the image of glory with the Father, and He is our home, He lives in us and we will live in Him in Glory. In Christ we have all we need for life and godliness. Our Christ has joined us to Himself even though we are still in the world. *“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”*

John 17:15

“I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

John 17:26

Christ lives within His followers so they have the presence of His peace in the world. *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”*

John 14:27

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matt 6:34

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?”

Psalms 27:1

“But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t worry or be afraid of their threats.” 1 Pet 3:14

While we are in the world we are often given to fear. The very fear that the Bible tells us to avoid is concern and anxiety or dread of the unknown. It is a feeling of alarm when we expect trouble or danger. With Christ in us, we are not to live in a state of worry or anxiety. We have higher expectations than simply expecting trouble. In Christ we have the means to rise above fear: *“God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control”* 2 Tim 1:7

Suffering in the world is unavoidable. We will suffer from the degradation of the natural world, including the wasting away of our bodies, and from the actions of others, including being burdened by our own many mistakes. But in all this struggle we have the God of all comfort to comfort us while we are in the world. Therefore, our peace is not to be lost due to any of these disturbing things in the world, because the love and grace of God is ministered to our hearts and minds by the indwelling Spirit of God. *‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction.’* 2 Cor 1:3-4

‘Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ 2 Cor 4:16-18

The answer to all our concerns in the world is Christ living in us to will and to do for His good pleasure. *'for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.'* Phil 2:13

As God works in us, He will keep us from falling. Jude 1:24

And Jesus Himself has prayed to the Father to keep us from falling from grace.

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."

John 17:13-21

Jesus didn't pray that His followers wouldn't suffer loss and heartbreak in the world. The bible tells us that *'through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.'* Acts 14:22

Jesus prayed for our eternal security, and for our witness to Him to bear fruit in the lives of others who would also believe in Him. Jesus didn't leave us here for a good time, He left us here so others can live with Him in glory.

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not

fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.'

1 Pet 1:3-9

Nothing we experience in the world can separate us from the love of Christ. *'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.'*

Rom 8:35-37

It is therefore futility to want God to fix what bothers us in the earthly city of Babylon, because Babylon is under the judgement of God, and its destruction is coming, because the New City of the glory of God is coming. In the providence of God, He is using what is not godly to train us in godliness by exposing what is not in the image of Christ in us so that we can put it off and be made full in Christ.

While we live in the world as the place of our sanctification, Jesus is all we need. Our security and peace is with Christ, in whom we need to always abide as we seek to glorify Him.

Abiding in Christ is both life giving and painful as the Father prunes away what is not Christ like in us. *"Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."*

John 15:2

Even our earthly fathers disciplined us for our training to be good but God disciplines us in a way that works. *‘For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.’*

Heb 12:10-11

Our hope is present in us with God working in us for the revealing in our lives the glory of Christ our saviour and Lord, even as we suffer in the world. As Overcomers of temptation to compromise with the world, we are called by God to be glorified with Christ.

‘The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.’

Rom 8:16-17

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:24

We need to pray that we can see the glory of God in Christ while we bear witness to Him as we serve Him in Babylon's futilely.

And while we wait with all perseverance, we are warning everyone. *‘We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.’*

Col 1:28

‘Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.’

Col 3:1-4

Being joined to Christ means all His priorities are now our desire, so we serve Him by serving others. *'Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.'*
Phil 2:4-9

The Revelation of Christ shows us that the battle between the forces of darkness and the Light of God is not restricted to life in the world of spirits, because compromise from the world has already entered the church in the world. Jesus had previously spoken of the weeds belonging to the world having been planted by satan amongst the Harvest of God.
Matt 13:24-30

The weeds are a planting of what is not holy and intended to upset the work of the Spirit of God in the church.

This being the case, conflict in the world and the church between the Spirit of God and the god of the world is inevitable, and the way through the narrow gate to the heavenly City will be difficult to endure, but we have the assurance from Christ that all who persevere will be saved.
Matt 24:13

The battle for souls means the peace of the world is futile, and anyone who desires to live with God will suffer (2 Tim 3:12) due to the conflict of the forces of darkness resisting the light of God in Christ. *'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.'* Eph 6:12

Jesus warns us against false promises that seek peace in the world. *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”* Matt 10:34-39

What we see depends on where we are looking. Do we believe more in the world we can see rather than God we can't see? Do we live by faith and not by sight? When we are disturbed, we show evidence of believing in the world.

If the Lord our God and saviour Jesus Christ is our greatest treasure and the one divine companion we love before all things and all people, are we not going to be diminished by investing our interest, our time, and our resources in anything else other Him who made the world?

How can we honestly be united with Him by the Spirit through His death and resurrection, and having received all His precious and magnificent promises so that we have become a partaker of the divine nature, (2 Pet 1:3-4) and having been adopted into the Family of God, we still want to look for what we need in the world?

And we do, because we are not yet fully mature in Christ so that His life is revealed in us in all things. This is why our Father has provided for our constant sanctification as we learn to put off the ways of the flesh and put on the life of Christ by the power of the Spirit, so that we can be transformed into the image of Christ who lived in devoted union with the Father and the Spirit, and now with us.

The amount of interest we give to the world compared to living by the Spirit for the things of God in intimate fellowship with Christ will indicate the progress we have made in putting on Christ who is the greatest treasure of all.

We should be convinced by reading the works of the great pillars of faith that have gone before us, who were able to understand and write beautiful deep things of faith because they spent much more time in the presence of God than we do

Therefore, we can conclude if we want more of God, He must have more of us. To have more of Him we must want more of Him than all the things of the world. We must be made willing by the Spirit to give all to receive all.

To help us see the extent of our spiritual poverty God uses every dissatisfaction and distress produced by our weakness to call us back into His presence and glory.

Where we are looking for our meaning reveals the influencing disposition and desires of our hearts. The flesh looks to the world, the spirit made alive in Christ looks to the things of God. The less transformed we are the more we look to the world.

Is our life restricted to the temporary existence of the world, or do we live for the eternal life of God? If temporary, we have no hope of glory, but if eternal, then nothing that can happen to us in all creation can separate us from our eternal relationship with Christ, because He lives in us. For there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

'If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.'

Rom 8:10-11

‘While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ 2 Cor 4:18

Those who are made alive in Christ now have a spiritual mindset, thinking about the things that concern the Spirit of God. They have a spiritual sight not available to those who still live for themselves.

‘For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.’ Rom 8:5-14

John Piper wrote:

As we endure our trials, we are to take Jesus as our example (Heb. 12:3-4). We are to "[look] to Jesus." Specifically, we are to take notice of how He "endured the cross," namely, "for the joy that was set before Him"-the joy of resurrection, and sitting at God's right hand (Heb. 1:3), surrounded by "innumerable angels in festal gathering" (Heb. 12:22) and a cloud of witnesses, the righteous redeemed (Heb. 12:1, 23). In

other words, Jesus was able to endure the cross because of how real in his own soul were the "things hoped for"-the joy set before Him.

Jesus is given as an example for us to follow in how to endure suffering by faith. The reality, the substance, of things hoped for was powerfully effective in the present in Jesus's life, enabling Him to love people to the uttermost. This, I am suggesting, is the way Hebrews 11:1 is to be understood. To put it another way, "the joy that was set before Him" was not merely "before Him" at a great distance; it was "before Him" as an experienced reality. By faith, as it says in Hebrews 11:27, He could see the unseen. The "substance" of what was hoped for the essential spiritual reality, the well founded joy before Him-became by faith a present, sustaining power in Jesus's last hours.

What do you see?

We are called on to overcome the attraction of the world by looking to Christ who is working all things for our good. Unless we look to Him and see what He is doing by overcoming the darkness in us we will compromise because we are looking in the wrong direction.

'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.'

Rom 8:28-29

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

‘We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ 2 Cor 4:18

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