

Stand Still and See
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Stand Still and See The Salvation of the Lord

Often after JW Luman is here I spend a week or two or three and unpack some things that struck me or that I felt were really helpful for where we are as a congregation. I thought it might be good for us to do that this morning. As I mentioned last Friday night after his first message, much of what JW shares can be hard to hear. Spiritual reality is always that way. Jesus once said to Nicodemus - John 3:12 "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" Heavenly things are hard to hear.

But it is these heavenly things we have come to in Christ. Faith sees these heavenly things. But then there is the extremely difficult experience of trying to describe them. So, not that JW is infallible or anything close to that, but so much of what he is attempting to do when he is here is take the things of Christ that faith has seen and present them to us in words. And regardless of who's doing it, when that happens, it's almost like a **collision of two worlds**. A collision of contrary universes. It's using the words of one world to describe the realities of another. And worse than that, we're often using the mind of one world to try to grasp the mind of another.

So, when spiritual reality is presented to our minds, there is often the awareness that something you hear is real and true, but that is accompanied by an utter confusion as to what is being said. There is sometimes both an uncanny awareness of truth, along with an adamic bewilderment as something other-worldly bounces off our carnal minds. If you feel like that when JW comes and shares, you're not alone.

But God will show you whatever you are willing to see. There's nothing that He is trying to hide from you. That doesn't mean that seeing it will come naturally. By definition it does not come naturally. And it doesn't mean that seeing it won't cost you anything. Everything you see of Him will cost you something you no longer see of yourself. But if you want to know the Lord, God is present to reveal His Son.

So often when we read something in Scripture or hear something said that sounds like it must be true, but we don't really understand....so often we just walk away and think "huh....I don't get it". Or "hmm...that was interesting, I should probably look into that". But that is the end of it with us. That is the where our interest ceases, and we quickly have other things on our mind.

The natural mind always bumps into and bounces off spiritual reality. The question is always - what are you going to do next? Are you going to bounce off and be on your merry way...like most people did when they encountered Christ in the flesh. They followed him as long as he made sense in their world, but as soon as he dropped a heavenly bomb, two worlds and two minds collided, and they went their way. **Some**

went their way offended, others were confused, and others were maybe just bored. There's a lot of ways to refuse to see the truth.

Truth comes naturally to no one, but is available to everyone. Its always going to confront and contradict you, because you are the lie. Its never going to confirm or validate anything you already thought or assumed. In one of our Friday night groups, we're reading The School of Christ by T. Austin Sparks. In the first chapter Sparks discusses Jesus' response to his own mother at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. She asks him to deal with the fact that they had run out of wine and He says "Woman, what have I to do with thee?". But sparks says –

"That is a weak translation. Far better would be, 'Woman, you and I are thinking in different realms; we have at the moment nothing in common....I am altogether other than you are. The difference is such that we move in altogether opposite worlds'".

That's a good way to say what I'm trying to describe. And the reason I'm saying it is because I know that JW can be difficult to hear for the same reason. So, I thought I'd just share a few things this morning about the conference, hopefully to both sum up some things and perhaps to clarify a little where our minds might be bouncing off another world.

His intention was to share on the hearing and seeing of faith that brings us to the experience of salvation, the transformation of the soul. But he started in the first session or two talking about purpose – something he's been sharing on for several months now. A lot of people in the world are chasing hard after one idea or another of purpose. I say "a lot" because there are some people who seem to be somehow content just blowing through life like a tumbleweed, living from one felt need to another. But many have some concept of purpose and are, in some way or another, seeking to find it and live according to it.

Christians especially are a people that are driven by a quest for purpose. You might even say they are looking for a purpose driven life. I think that the list of best-selling books in this country would prove that to be true. But what is our purpose? Unfortunately for the natural mind, our ideas of purpose and God's have nothing in common. We are constantly asking God or seeking in books to find our purpose so that we can do it. We think that purpose is something we learn with words and then do with our bodies. We think we can discover what God is expecting and then steer our lives towards it. But finding and living in purpose is really nothing like this at all.

I liked it when JW Luman said that people had come up to him and said "you've shared for several months now on purpose, but you have not yet even once told us what our purpose is!". That is because purpose cannot be found or taught that way. Your purpose is not something you will discover and do or believe or accomplish. Your purpose is bound up entirely with a Life that you find and come to live in.

That may sound too abstract, but think of it in relation to a part of your body. Imagine that somehow you were taking a walk and your arm fell off. I know that's bizarre, but just imagine that. You get home, reach for the mail, and realize that somehow along the way you had accidentally misplaced your arm. Well, out there somewhere in the neighborhood is an arm separated from a body. An arm separated from life. What is the purpose of that arm? What do you want for and from that arm? Well, first things first. That arm doesn't even have a chance of accomplishing

any of your purposes until it is attached to your body. Until you are the life and movement of the arm, the word "purpose" cannot even really be considered. There is no such thing as an independent purpose for a human being.

Well, somehow your arm finds its way back to you. You find it and reattach it to your body. And immediately the arm starts showing you all the things that it can do and asking which one is its purpose. It brushes your hair and says "is this my purpose?". It grabs a hot dog and says "is this my purpose?". It turns on the TV and says "is this my purpose?". But you answer no in every case because nothing that it DOES can really be said to be its purpose. Its purpose is not any one of those things. Its purpose is quite simply being your arm. Its purpose is you living in it. Not a specific activity. Not a specific goal or destination. **Just you. Anything that shares your life has YOU as its purpose.** Its difficult to describe that the arm, so you just keep telling it "I'm your purpose". Its my life, not your activity. Its just me.

Well, that is something of what purpose is in the heart of God. First of all, there is no chance of purpose if you are a dead arm lying in somebody's front yard. If you are dead in transgression and sin and the uncircumcision of the flesh, purpose is a meaningless world. An unbeliever cannot even talk about purpose. But even after you are joined to Christ, your purpose is then not in tasks to be completed or goals to be achieved. Your purpose is bound up entirely with the Life that you have found and living in and by it. Purpose for a member of Christ's body is just Christ. Anything that shares His Life has Him as its purpose. The experience of purpose is the experience of Him. The discovery of purpose is the discovery of Him. The expression of purpose is the expression of Him. And that is difficult to describe. That is a heavenly reality that bounces off the natural mind. But there is nothing really for the Lord to say except "when you see me, you find purpose", "when I am revealed in you, you've come to purpose".

And the ONLY way to live into that purpose is to live by faith. And that is something of how JW brought purpose into a discussion of faith. The only way to live in and by Christ is to live by faith. Paul says "the life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God". In other words, we who have been joined to Christ in life, must now live in one Son, with one mind, and by one Light. Faith accesses the grace in which we stand.

And so much of what he was dealing with throughout last weekend was the reality of faith. And in a couple different ways he made a distinction between what he called the "hearing of faith" and "the seeing of faith". This is maybe a little different language than we are used to here, but its not any different than or contrary to what we talk about all the time. In whatever language you want to use, **there is a difference between hearing truth from the Lord and seeing the Lord as the truth.** There is a difference between the Lord dealing with your heart with regards to something that is real, and seeing the reality itself in the face of Jesus Christ. The one can and should lead to the other, but that is not always the case.

It is very possible, in fact it is extremely common, to be a Christian who hears but does not see. We hear the Word of Life, Christ Himself, as the Spirit of God seeks to teach Him to our soul. We hear true things, and are even convinced of those things. But our learning of Him never passes into the seeing that can transform the soul. In other words, **we come to know the truth of the Lord, but not the Lord of the Truth.** And in this way we become ones who hear the Word of Life, but do not change into His image, or produce in ourselves the "fragrance of knowing Him".

James calls this being “a hearer but not a doer of the Word”. Now that has nothing to do with being someone who listens to a sermon but doesn’t act on it. Or somebody who reads the Bible but doesn’t “walk the walk”. It’s not talking about that kind of word or that kind of doing. The word that James is talking about here is first of all the “implanted word” in chapter 1:21 that we “receive with meekness” unto the transformation of our souls. And a doer of this word is not somebody that runs around trying to be like their idea of Jesus, but one who is changed into His image and manifests His reality in all things.

Many are hearers of this living Word, but are never changed. Many hear a sound, but do not have a face to identify what they heard. We hear a spiritual word, but do not comprehend it in the light of His appearing. And without light, there is only one other option – the imagination. **The natural man has an extremely dangerous imagination. It will always fill in the blanks where we have not come to light.**

JW gave an analogy of a person hearing a sound out in the woods. As soon as you hear that sound, immediately there are only two things that can happen. Either you will turn to see the sound, and have it defined in the light. Or you will imagine what you heard. Either way you’re going to claim to know what you heard. And that is not a very big deal when it’s a camping trip in natural darkness. But it becomes a big deal if it’s a spiritual word we hear in the darkness of the unrenewed mind, and we fail to turn and see.

John, in the book of Revelation, heard a voice and turned to see the voice that spoke to him. He saw seven golden candle sticks but kept looking until he saw One in the midst of the candlesticks that looked like the Son of Man. It’s a good thing that he turned and looked and waited for the Lord’s appearing. If he didn’t, he may have preached the glory of the seven candlesticks rather than the One whom he saw in their midst. The One who was their life and light.

You cannot hear words, not even true words, about Jesus Christ and come to know Him. Even if the Spirit of God speaks the words into your ears, you will not know Him that way. Prophets in the Old Covenant heard many words about Him who was to come, and yet Jesus came to them and said “no one knows the Father but the Son, and no one knows the Son except the Father”. **God is not defined or known by words. Words are defined and understood by seeing Him.** You cannot say that you know Jesus because you read that he is righteous, good, and true. But you can say that you know something of righteousness, goodness, and truth, if you’ve seen Jesus Christ. The seeing of faith is the beholding of Him in whom, Colossians says, are hidden all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

But there is an inherent danger of hearing without seeing. In the natural realm, we say that is how rumors get started. Hearing without seeing. It’s the same in Christ. Not seeing Christ, we start spiritual rumors. That’s really what religion is – a collecting of spiritual rumors. We learn rumors about a Christ that we haven’t seen, and are blown too and fro by every wind of doctrine. Our concept of faith has nothing to do with seeing. It has to do believing facts and closing our eyes and imaging Jesus. That may sound innocent, but that is how we build and worship our own idols.

I loved what Luman had to say about idols. Whenever we lack the true "seeing of faith" that happens in the Light of the Lord, we create a concept of Jesus, an imagination that exists in His place, and we worship that. An idol is not evil because it is made out of wood or metal or stone. An idol is evil because it is the creation of man's imagination that stands in place of the truth. **Idols exist wherever Light does not.**

The apostle John was very aware of this. In 1st John chapter 5, he says something very much along these lines.

1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

In other words, the Son of God came and defined Himself. He gave us true understanding. We know Him who is true, we are in Him who is true. This is the true God and eternal life...now keep yourselves from idols. That's not a gold figurine that you brought back from your trip to India. That is any concept or opinion of God that is born in the darkness of the adamic mind.

So, getting back to James chapter one. It is essential that we become doers of this word and not hearers only. Again, a hearer fills in the blanks with his own imagination. A hearer is not really changed. A hearer becomes aware of true things, but never comes to the "seeing of faith" wherein a soul is transformed and bears His image in all that He does. A doer is one who hears, turns, sees, and is changed.

In your New Testament, there are two instances where we read about the mirror of God. This mirror is not a literal looking glass; its an analogy like so many others that the apostles use to describe a spiritual reality. The analogy of the mirror is used once by James and once by Paul. This isn't a normal mirror. This isn't a mirror where you go to see your flesh. This is a mirror into which you look and see yourself from God's perspective. It's God's view of you according to His finished work, as He has made you a partaker of *His* nature. You look in this mirror and see a new creation. You look in this mirror and see a new kind, in whom Christ is all and in all. This mirror shows you what God has done, and in it you can see the One who is the life of your soul, the one who is the implanted Word, the one who is the glory of God. That's who you see in this mirror.

It's a mirror and not a telescope because you're not seeing Jesus off in outer space or far into the future. You're seeing Jesus where He is, residing in your soul as the glory that fills His temple. The life of His body, the church. You see Him and His finished work in this mirror, and are meant to be changed by what you see.

But there are two things that can happen when a believer looks in this mirror. One is recorded in James chapter one. The other is recorded in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3. In James we read the sad story of a person who looks in the mirror, but doesn't wait for the true seeing. Maybe he catches a glimpse, but its not enough light to abide in. Its not real enough to transform his soul. And he walks away and forgets what He has seen. He forgets what he is and what God has done. This one is a forgetful hearer and not an effectual doer.

Jam 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing the face of his nature (and I believe this is the nature of His new birth) in a mirror; **24** for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what **kind** of man he was.

He hears, but he does not see. He looks, but not long enough to rightly see the most excellent man. What he needs is to see, not the sin and death of the adamic man, but the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus and learn to abide therein. And in that way, the Word that is in Him will bear fruit. James goes on to say exactly that in the next verse.

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

The perfect law of liberty. I love that. That is the freedom that we have come to in Christ. Not the freedom to be ourselves. But the freedom from ourselves, that we might live by the life of Christ. That is how we become "doers" of this implanted Word, blessed in all we do.

Paul brings us to this same mirror, but he describes what takes place when we will stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He describes what happens to a person when he doesn't walk away and forget what he saw. Here is what happens when we come to the "seeing of faith", and not hearing only.

2Co 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory

This is the seeing of faith that transforms the soul. Beholding the glory of the Lord in this mirror we are changed. Peter says "the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls". That word "end" does not mean cessation. It means the goal, result, aim, or purpose. The result of faith, the goal of faith is the salvation of your soul. Not just new birth. Not just salvation from hell. Full salvation. The full experience and reality of God's salvation. Salvation from all things of the first, all things that have fallen short, all things of yourself. That is where the seeing of faith brings you. It fully accesses the grace in which you stand. It brings you into the full experience of the glory of God.

This is where JW eventually landed on Sunday night. He read Romans 5:1-2 and said a few things about our expectation for the glory of God. The seeing of faith leads to the glory of God. Let me read that verse and I'll wrap up by saying a few things about this because it ties perfectly in to everything we've been saying.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in expectation of the glory of God

Our expectation of the glory of God has nothing to do with a future time or location. It has nothing to do with something that needs to happen or something that we still need to be given. You cannot separate glory from the Lord of Glory, and the Lord of glory is in His house. Glory is what Christ left in the incarnation to put away the first man and his creation, and to what He returned "bringing many sons to glory"

with Him. Glory is the fullness of God and relatedness to Him that we have been granted in His beloved Son. In John 17 Jesus prays

Joh 17:22 *And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one*

Glory has become our present reality and relatedness to the Lord of Glory who has given us His Spirit. We are joined to Him. His glory has filled his temple – the temple that we are. And so this is the very glory that we just read Paul say we see with “unveiled face” when we look into the mirror of God.

Where is glory? Glory lives in your soul. The cross has brought glory into you. The cross has brought many sons to glory. What is the expectation of glory? The expectation of glory is exactly what Paul is expecting when he looks in the mirror of God. Beholding in this mirror the glory of God, we are changed into the same image. That is our expectation. Not to one day go to glory. Not to have glory fill our church building. Not to live in a glorious mansion. But that we would behold the glory of God in His house, and be changed into His image.

In Colossians 3, Paul says that this is exactly what happens when Christ our life is revealed. He says that we have already died with Him, and come to live with Him in the Father. We have come to glory. And as Christ, our life, is revealed then we discover ourselves with Him in that glory.

Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 Whenever Christ our life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

When we come to the true seeing of faith, we see the glory of God, and are changed into His image. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. When you see, you are changed. When you see, you are revealed to be with Him in glory. Amen.