

Seeing What God Sees
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Opening Hymn 100 "Great is Thy Faithfulness"
Scripture Heb 11:1-7
Closing Hymn 608 "Faith is the Victory"

In the beginning man was made in God's image. In many ways man reflected God. When sin came that reflection was almost totally destroyed. God purposes to restore that which was lost in us that is like Him. One way this is described is to learn again to see as God sees. Let's explore that theme.

The concept of seeing is woven through Heb. 11, the faith chapter. Faith can be understood as seeing the unseen things revealed to us by God's word:
Heb 11:1 Now **faith** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not **seen**.

Heb 11:3 Through **faith** we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are **seen** were not made of things which do appear.

Heb 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that **he is**, and *that he is a rewarder* of them that diligently seek him.

Heb 11:7 By **faith** Noah, being warned of God of things not **seen** as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by **faith**.

Heb 11:13 These all died in **faith**, not having received the promises, but having **seen** them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Heb 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he **endured**, as **seeing** him who is invisible

- (1) Things of the past Heb. 11:3 God's creation of world
- (2) Things of the present Heb. 11:6, 27 God is
- (3) Things of the future Heb. 11:7, 13 God's judgment; reward

We understand that God can see the past and future as He does the present. Faith is in a sense learning to see what God sees.

He gives us a window into what He sees. That window is His word. That is why we are told:

Rom. 10: 17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. His promise is also His word, picturing what He sees for us.

But what God sees is not just some heartless vision of events past, present, and future. Remember Heb. 11:1

"the substance of things **hoped** for"

Are there things God hopes for? There are hidden things that God sees that He does **not** hope for, that have no future in His plan. As we learn to see with His eyes, we will see these, and face the choice to leave them. But let us focus now on those things He hopes for.

Since God Himself cannot change the past, this statement of faith being "the substance of things hoped for" is forward looking from the present. God is involved with changing the present and thus the future. But in order to understand what is happening in this regard, we need to remember that His work to bring about what He hopes for is connected to and affected by two things: the existence of sin, and the freedom of choice He gives us. Both of these mean what He hopes may not come to pass. He knows what will come to pass. We call that His foreknowledge. He sees the future. But that is not always what He hopes. What He hopes He can also see. And that vision He has is faith, "the substance of things hoped for." Sometimes we call it seeing our potential in His plan.

We know God knows the future, and because of sin and freedom of choice, He knows many will reject Him. But is that what He is hoping? Is that what He sees when He looks through the eyes of faith at any of His creatures?

What are some of the dynamics of this perspective God has?

Ro 5:5 And **hope** maketh not ashamed; because the **love** of **God** is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. [Adam and Eve were ashamed after sinning, because they had not yet been given the hope of the gospel. They had only been given the law, disobey and die. The gospel unfolded to them God's love and brought hope. They began to see what God saw.]

Ro 15:13 Now the **God** of **hope** fill you with all **joy** and **peace** in **believing**, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost. [When we see what God sees (believe what He believes), He becomes to us a God of hope who fills us with joy, peace, and hope.)

Notice the words that are intimately connected in these verses:

Hope

Love

Joy
Peace
Believing

Sounds like the fruit of the Spirit, of which the first, the root, is love, agape.

We must recall that love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1Cor. 13:7). And we must recall that "God is love." (1 John 4:8, 16)

Since a love that "believeth all things" and "hopeth all things" is not coercive, is it also not powerful? No, it is the most powerful thing in the universe. If it were coercive, its power would be destructive, which would in fact be a limitation on its power in the sense of building up. But love is the greatest power of building up. "Love edifies" (1Cor. 8:1). It does it because it fuels this thing called faith.

A paraphrase of Gal. 5:6 could be, "The only thing that has power to overcome is faith working by love."

This faith and love are the gold standard of the universe, how it does business on God's original and eternal plan.

Picture it a little more: This attitude of God nurtures growth. To convey love, faith, and hope to an individual is empowering to him. This works in a sinless environment where sinless beings are still growing, dynamic, intelligent creatures. Can you see what happened when sin came and ruined millions of God's creatures? Is it as easy to have faith in a sinful creature as it is a sinless one? Is it as easy to give to someone who will selfishly keep the gift and misuse it, as it is to give to someone who will give in return, using the gift to bless others and glorify God? So sin became a tremendous test of God's faith and love. The gold entered the fire. But the fire did not destroy the gold. It comes forth from the fire shining with a brilliance the universe had never seen.

1John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us

Eph. 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent that now **unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,**

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence **by the faith of him.**

Calvary proved the gold cannot be destroyed. Faith and love are victorious.

The Bible connects faith and love frequently. Study the references. It speaks frequently of God's love. It even says "God is love." And as we have seen, we are told this love "believes all things." So the question is, does the Bible anywhere speak explicitly of this aspect of God's love, something we can call "God's faith"?

Let's look first at the NT:

Mark 11: 21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. [**Literally, Have God's faith (BBE). Have the faith of God. (DRV, YLT, and others) In context, see what God sees in terms of judgment. Understand what brings the execution of judgment.**]

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. [**mountains of unbelief, rebellion, removed in God's plan; "whatsoever he saith" because he learns to speak God's word**]

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. [**What things soever ye desire = desire what God desires**]

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. [**See your offenders as they could be, and be willing to "give for" that goal; this is God's hope, His desire in dealing with sin, to forgive it, not to bring a curse against the sinner. But what did He "give for" that, in order to "forgive"? Christ was made a curse for us. Gal. 3:13**]

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. [**How can you enter into heaven's environment and method of operation while rejecting it? Cf. parable in Matt. 18.**]

Again, because of this freedom we have, His vision for us, His faith in us, the potential He sees for each one of us, is not coercive. We can reject it through unbelief. Our next passage speaks of that:

Rom. 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. [**How does faith come? By the word which is stories of His faith working by love.**]

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? [**What if some did not respond to faith with faith?**]

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Let apply this passage to a real person. Perhaps Judas is the best NT person whose life experience portrays the dynamics of God's faith working by love, along side God's foreknowledge.

Right to the end, Christ washed his feet and gave him the bread of intimacy. But Judas' unbelief rejected the heart of it. Did that make Christ's faith of no effect for Judas? I picture Judas in the day of judgment confessing that everything good he ever had was from Christ's faith working by love for him. Christ's faith (which was but revealing the Father's faith) had tremendous effect, but Judas' unbelief did thwart the intended final effect for Judas: conversion and eternal life. But "let God be true." Christ's loving Judas to the end vindicated Christ. So Judas will bow along with all other creatures, and confess also God's love that believes all things. "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." This is the most tremendous effect of God's faith. It shows Him to be true in the great conflict, to be faithful. Our unbelief will serve only to highlight His faith!

And so the entire life of Christ on earth portrayed this dynamic. The hope and faith that this revealed love of God produced in Him, made His ministry powerfully effective, drawing all to Him. The faith of Jesus manifested the righteousness of God. Paul repeatedly spoke of this reality as the heart of the gospel, of righteousness by faith.

Rom. 3: 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by **faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through **faith in his blood [the faith revealed in His poured-out life]**, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. [**literally, the Justifier of the one out of the faith of Jesus**]

Gal. 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the **faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the **faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the **faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Php 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the **faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

So then what is this faith and love?

1Th 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of **faith and love**; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of **righteousness**;

1Ti 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with **faith and love** which is in Christ Jesus.

Faith and love = righteousness

Righteousness is by faith!

Consider briefly the OT:

English translation of LXX of Hab. 2:4

"If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by **my faith**."

Same word in Lam. 3:

22 *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 *They are new every morning*: great *is* thy **faithfulness**.

BBE: 23 They are new every morning; great is **your good faith**.

God is faithful because He has faith. We can trust dependently upon Him because He has such great creative faith in us!

And so we come to the time of the end, our day. God is preparing a people to stand in the "great day of His wrath" when the devil will throw everything he can at them, and they will stand. And God Himself will hide His face from them for a moment, and they will stand. How does this happen? It is not a miracle saved just for some future end-time crisis. He is now restoring to the human race the understanding and experience of how He designed them to function. The description of that ideal is law, and the method of restoration is gospel, revealed to us in "the faith of Jesus." Those who receive these two gifts that have been given, and keep them, come what may, will endure. (Rev. 14:12)

This end-time setting, and what God is attempting to do was described 127 years ago:

Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law. This was no new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel's message. What is the burden of that message?

John sees a people. He says, "Here is the patience of the saints: **here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus**" (Rev. 14:12).

This people John beholds just before he sees the Son of man "having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle" (verse 14). {1888 211.2}

Have we grasped yet the fullness of this truth that is in the third angel's message? Is it missing in our lives? How can we be prepared for Christ's coming without it?

1893

A chain is no stronger than is its weakest link. We might pronounce such a chain good on the whole, but if one link is weak, the chain cannot be depended on. The work of overcoming is to be the study of every soul who enters the kingdom of God. That impatient word quivering on your lips must be left unspoken. That thought that your character is not rightly estimated must be put from you; for it weakens your influence, and works out the sure result, making you of light estimation in the minds of others. You should overcome the idea that you are a martyr, and lay claim to the promise of Christ, who says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." {RH, August 1, 1893 par. 13}

It is a sad fact that **the great proportion of God's professed people have not had faith in Christ as their personal Saviour.** If they had believed the promises of God on record for them, they would have been daily receivers of the grace of God, and would have overcome through the merits of a crucified

and risen Saviour. It is the privilege of the children of God to be delivered from the control of the lusts of the flesh, and to preserve their peculiar, heavenly character, which distinguishes them from the lovers of the world. In their moral taste, in their habits and customs, they are separate from the world. Who are the children of God?--They are members of the royal family, and a royal nation, a peculiar people, showing forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. They do not worship idols, they love God with all the heart, and their neighbors as themselves. {RH, August 1, 1893 par. 3}

1892

The precious, golden links of truth are not separate, detached, disconnected doctrines; but link after link, form one string of golden truth, and constitute a complete whole, with Christ as its living center. {PH002 25.2}

1888

The faith of Jesus has been overlooked and treated in an indifferent, careless manner. It has not occupied the prominent position in which it was revealed to John. **Faith in Christ as the sinner's only hope has been largely left out**, not only of the discourses given but of the religious experience of very many who claim to believe the third angel's message. At this meeting I bore testimony that the most precious light had been shining forth from the Scriptures in the presentation of **the great subject of the righteousness of Christ connected with the law**, which should be constantly kept before the sinner as his only hope of salvation. This was not new light to me for it had come to me from higher authority for the last forty-four years, and I had presented it to our people by pen and voice in the testimonies of His Spirit. But very few had responded except by assent to the testimonies borne upon this subject. There was **altogether too little spoken and written upon this great question**. The discourses of some might be correctly represented as like the offering of Cain--Christless. {1888 212.1}

The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but **the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand**. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness. {1888 217.3}

"The faith of Jesus." It is **talked of, but not understood**. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs, to the third angel's message? **Jesus becoming** our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. **He was treated** as we deserve to be treated. He **came to our world** and **took our sins** that we might take His righteousness. Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus. {1888 217.4}

Is the faith of Jesus still Adventism's weakest link? Could it explain why we are still in this world of unbelief?

Observe statements as to how this principle works. In a letter to her son Edson in 1895, as he struggled to relate to imperfect church leaders, EGW wrote of this dynamic:

If you can do so in an unobtrusive way, try to help Bro. Olsen, and stay up his hands. He needs sympathy, and words of hopefulness and courage. But please do not cast reflection upon the men who have not a living connection with God. If you are considerate, you may do good to A.R. Henry, and Harmon Lindsay. Show by your attitude that you hold no bitterness toward them. Whatever their attitude toward you, let it not discourage you or embitter your experience. Hold fast to Jesus. He has helped you, and he will help you every hour. But do not be off your guard for one moment. Do not indulge in hasty speech. If possible, we want to save these men, who know so little of the Spirit of God. In order to do this, while you should not depend on them as gods, be kind and courteous, **treat them as respectfully as though they had been your best friends**. {1888 1463.1}

Also in 1895 she wrote of the need to work for the blacks in the South, and to see them as God sees them:

...Those who are workers together with God, who are filled with divine compassion, will **see and estimate men in the same way that God sees and estimates them**. Whatever may be the nationality or color, whatever may be the social condition, the missionary for God will **look** upon all men as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and will understand that there is no caste with God. No one is to be **looked** upon with indifference, or to be regarded as unimportant; for every soul has been purchased with an infinite price. {RH, December 3, 1895 par. 1}

In 1900 EGW described this principle in her application of the parable of the pearl of great price to how God Himself functions:

The parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls has a double significance: it applies not only to men as seeking the kingdom of heaven, but to Christ as seeking His lost inheritance. Christ, the heavenly merchantman seeking goodly pearls, **saw** in lost humanity the pearl of price. In man, defiled and ruined by sin, He **saw** the possibilities of redemption. Hearts that have been the battleground of the conflict with Satan, and that have been rescued by the power of love, are more precious to the Redeemer than are those who have never fallen. God **looked** upon humanity, not as vile and worthless; He **looked** upon it in Christ, **saw** it as it might become through redeeming love. He collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to buy the pearl. And Jesus, having found it, resets it in His own diadem. "For they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land." Zech. 9:16. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Mal. 3:17. {COL 118.2}

So God's "faith is the substance of things hoped for" because He sees what can be. His faith is "the evidence of things not seen" because His eyes of faith can see what physical eyes cannot. Thus He in His very actions toward us sinners bestows the substance and the evidence without which we have no hope of ever seeing and thus having the possibility of entering into what His real plan is for us. He makes it possible to see what He sees! By His word He tells us what He sees. If we receive it, we can believe what God Himself believes, and love as He loves.

1Jo 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, **even our** faith.

It is ours because He has taken of His, given it to us in Jesus Christ, and we have kept it.

And so I appeal to you today, "Have the faith of God."