

“Perfect Eyesight”—Luke 2:29-32

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Perfect Eyesight”, is Luke 2:29-32 → *Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.* This is the text.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus:

Most of us have been exposed to an eye examination of one kind or another. Whether it is an exam at the eye doctor’s or in connection to obtaining a drivers’ license we are required to read sets of letters such as this

. . .



. . . to determine our vision capabilities.

In the midst of the exam we discover that there are all kinds of variables which affect our vision. Aside from the obvious decrease in size of the letters, our vision can be affected by fatigue, distance and other medical factors such as glaucoma and macular degeneration.

But what if our eye chart would look like this?

<p>J O H N 3 : 1 6</p> <p>R O M A N S 6 : 2 3</p> <p>E P H E S I A N S 2 : 8 - 1 0</p> <p>M A R K 1 6 : 1 6</p> <p>J O H N 1 4 : 6</p> <p>C O L O S S I A N S 2 : 6 - 7</p> <p>M A T T H E W 1 1 : 2 8 - 3 0</p>

How would you read this “chart?” Since most of us can read English we would probably read the first line as “John 3:16” rather than “J-O-H-N-three-colon-one-six.” Why? Because we are trained to recognize that letters placed together in a certain order convey words and concepts.

Most Christians would immediately recognize these lines as Bible references. This “eye chart” could actually say something about a person’s “spiritual” eyesight in connection to God’s written Word.

When you read God's Word are you simply processing words and concepts or are you responding to those words and concepts by faith in Jesus? Do these Scripture references simply convey facts and information to you or do they create a trust in the promises of God which they proclaim? We may read the words clearly and yet still miss the affect they are intended to have upon our lives!

In our text we are introduced to a man by the name of Simeon, described *as righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.* (cf. Luke 2:25) Church tradition has many times portrayed Simeon as an old man and even as a man whose eyesight was giving out. Even though the text does not specifically give us these details, they could be implied from the special "insight" which he had received according to Luke 2:26—*It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*—along with the expression of his readiness to die implied in verse 29 of our text with the words *depart in peace*.

However, as the experience unfolded we get the impression that Simeon had perfect eyesight—the "sight" given by the Holy Spirit to recognize the Christ for his own salvation! This "sight" was based upon the written Old Testament Word of God which revealed the Person & Work of the Christ very clearly to him. Apparently Simeon had not read the Bible as simply words and

concepts. Reading the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit reveals spiritual insights which affect everyday living and are totally bound up in a relationship with Jesus, the promised Messiah!

Your “spiritual sight” is serious business because it has to do with where you will spend eternity, either in the presence of Jesus forever in heaven or separated from His presence with eternal torment in hell. Satan doesn’t want you to see Jesus **with the eyes of faith and trust!** 2 Corinthians 4:4 says: *The god of this world (i.e. the devil) has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God.*

Sadly spiritual blindness can also exist amongst those who read God’s Word. Jesus described the experts in the Old Testament law as men who read their Bibles and yet missed it’s meaning. He told them in John 5:39-40 → *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life.* They knew the Bible inside-out and cover to cover. Yet, in all their study they failed to see the Christ to Whom the Bible gave witness so that they could trust in Him alone and be saved! Spiritual blindness is the state of anyone who fails to recognize his sin and his need for the Savior, Jesus.

Simeon was able to recognize his sin in the presence of the Christ and

see before him the Messiah Who had been promised in the Old Testament Scriptures as Mary and Joseph were doing by faith what God required in those same Scriptures. In compliance to the command in Leviticus 12:6-7, Mary needed to present herself to the priest in the temple sixty-six days following the birth of Jesus. It says: *When the days of her purifying are completed—in connection with childbirth—she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, and he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean.*

Simeon's spiritual eyesight went even deeper than seeing the *salvation* of God for *all peoples*. During this encounter the Holy Spirit also revealed to him a special insight in connection to the unfolding of this salvation, telling Mary in Luke 2:34-35 that her *Child* would be *appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that would be opposed . . . so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed*. Simeon was given a "glimpse" of the rejection and suffering which Jesus would experience in connection with accomplishing of the *salvation* of God for *all peoples*.

The work of Jesus would serve the purpose of people taking an honest look at their hearts which reveal sin in all it's ugliness, repent and trust the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for their forgiveness. Even the sacrifice

Mary presented that day pointed to and found its fulfillment in the very Child Whom she carried into the temple with His sacrifice on the cross! Simeon was directing Mary's "eyesight" beyond simply her baby and her ceremonial cleansing to see God's Son and His eternally cleansing **for her and all people from sin!** It was a different "eye exam" of sorts, an "eye exam" of faith.

Jesus, as God's Word made flesh, came to deal with the sinful heart. The only way to bring about a life of commitment, love, trust and obedience to the LORD is for the heart to be changed through repentance and faith, to be cleansed of sin. The Holy Spirit still works on our hearts to bring us to repentance and faith through the written Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 describes God's Word as *living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***

This explains why we so often experience guilt while reading God's Word. His law is meant to reveal the sin in your heart so that you will see it and, instead of living in denial and unbelief, accept responsibility for it by confessing it to the LORD. Then you will also see the Gospel of Jesus—His perfect life, death and resurrection to cleanse you completely from the guilt of your sin and give you a new life through which you can "thank and praise, serve and obey Him!" (cf. Meaning of Article 1 of Luther's Small Catechism)

This kind of reading of the Bible produces affects upon your living which Jesus intends for your growth in a relationship with Him. Through it the Holy Spirit produces growth in faith and the expression of faith in the way you look at all of life! **Your spiritual eyesight is actually perfected in Christ so that you see God's desire and His presence in every aspect of life!** With such perfect eyesight you see Jesus at every turn of the page of the Bible and at the celebration of the Lord's Supper amidst His body of believers.

Simeon set a good example for us as we also deal with God's promises in His Word. We wait patiently for them to be fulfilled. Then, when God does keep His promises, we do not let the fulfillment go unnoticed but see Him at work with the eyesight of faith. In response we thank and praise Him—something which can happen only as we look at life with the eyesight of faith, with hearts devoted to our God Who keeps His promises to us! Amen.

*I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,
that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him,
having **the eyes of your hearts** enlightened,
that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you,
what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.*

(Ephesians 1:16-18)