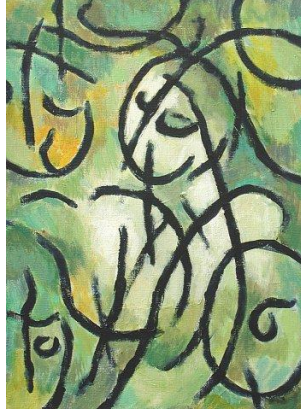


I SEE MEN, BUT THEY LOOK LIKE TREES WALKING



During the Great Awakening of the early 1800's, this land was hit with an outbreak of unusual signs following the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Healings and outpourings of the Spirit followed the proclaiming of the Word in many places. The movement spread until it has touched every denomination of the Christian world.

Again a little over fifty years ago, a movement of the Holy Spirit spread among disaffected young people, the Jesus freaks....sparked new life, release from captivity and Kingdom pursuing hearts across North America, Central America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Today, our churches, world, and culture are still feeling the effects of that Jesus revolution.

And now it seems to be happening again, causing joy in some places and controversy in others. Most of us cannot afford to approach this gospel movement, this revival as critics, since our lives were in shambles, our bodies were sick, and our minds were flying apart at one time. We ourselves have experienced the supernatural touch of God in some way. The Jesus of the New Testament has brought healing into our lives.

Many of us have experienced inner quickening of the same order as the believers at Pentecost.

At some point in our lives the Holy Spirit

- visited us,
- opened our minds to the reality of Jesus,
- caused the Scriptures to come alive,
- inspired prayer unlike any prayer we had ever known before,
- freed our tongues, enabling us to proclaim Jesus to the world.



But now that a certain amount of time has elapsed since our first encounter with the risen Jesus, we have begun to realize that a supernatural touch from God - wonderful as it is - will not by itself hold us close to God for the rest of our lives and eternity.

It is possible, as it says in Hebrews 6, to see the Kingdom, taste the Kingdom, and yet drift from the Kingdom.

It is possible...

to experience the power of the Holy Ghost,
to speak in tongues,
to prophesy,
to heal,
to break bars of iron and gates of brass with sheer faith,

.... and still drift into complacency and lose touch with the Source.

The book of First Corinthians addresses this problem. It was a powerful church, that church in Corinth. They had healings, prophecies---and yet they were a carnal people torn with strife, because they lacked the essen-tial ingredient of the Kingdom of God in their living.

When Jesus healed the ten lepers, every one of those ten lepers was touched by the power of heaven. Heaven came down into their wasted bodies and yet only one of those ten whose bodies had been touched by heaven turned around and entered the atmosphere of Heaven.

The other nine lepers had a wonderful blessing, but that wonderful blessing - even though it was supernatural - was not able to quicken them to eternal life.

And so many of us who have been wonderfully touched by the hand of God are still living lives that mark us as carnal---as children of the world, lacking the essential ingredient of the Kingdom of God.

What is the essential ingredient of the Kingdom of God?

And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, "Do you see any-thing?" And he looked up and said, "I see men; but they look like trees, walking."



Mark 8:22-24

Isn't it interesting that the one instance in which Jesus touches someone for healing and the healing is incomplete, the incompleteness of the man's healing manifests itself as his inability to see the people immediately around him as they really are.

"I see men; but they look like trees, walking."

This man knew that if he couldn't see men as they really were he was still, for all practical purposes, blind.

- No touch from God is complete,
- No vision from God is clear,
- No miracle from God has accomplished its purpose...

...if our vision of those around us is distorted and blurred.

This essential ingredient of the Kingdom of God is that God has so taken possession of our heartsthat when we look at other men and women....

We see them with the eye of divine mercy.

How often we Spirit-touched supernatural dynamos, who are so full of enthusiasm for pursuing divine blessing, but when it comes to the people around us in daily life, see only trees walking, moving blurs.

For all our insight into spiritual things we stroll right by the wounded ones.

- We see trees walking.

We fail to see....

- the hurt,
- the pain,
- the torment of guilt,
- the pleading eyes,
- the outstretched hands.

We don't see these people as God sees them.

- We see obstacles standing in our way.
- We see heads that are stepping stones for our climb to "success."
- We see objects of lust.
- We see human cockroaches, vermin.

- We see trees walking.

That's how it was in Corinth for all the supernatural fireworks.

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men? (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

They were obsessed over who had what gift.

They were jealous, disorderly.

What they needed, Paul explained, was the eye of love.

Love that suffers long and is kind, envies not, vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, and so sees and cares about people as they really are.



And should a brother or sister from the social justice camp be reading this, feeling especially clean because "at least we aren't flaky holy rollers, at least we really care about the down trodden and the oppressed"... it often happens that people who are willing to give their bodies to be burned in the cause of peace, disarmament, human rights, racial justice, gender equality... when it comes to the flesh-and-blood human beings they touch every day... see only trees walking.

How do you see your mate? As a person given to you to love and serve and help and comfort ... just the way they are with all their faults? ... or as a walking tree?

How do you see?

the deliveryman,
the telephone receptionist,
the refugees,
the 'woke' people, the 'Trumpsters',
the 'vaxxers', the 'anti-vaxxers',
the reckless drivers, the slow drivers,
the panhandlers,
the grouchy cashier,
the people who chew with their mouth open,
those people around you right now, who oppose you, who irk you, who get in your way.

Do you see people, made in the image of God, for whom the Lamb shed His blood,



or do you see trees walking?

Some of us complain that we can't find our ministry. Is it because the ministry isn't there? God hasn't given us anything to do? Or, is it because God sends us into the streets and lanes of the city to bring guests to His banquet and we can't even see them?

All we see are walking trees.

So the man lifted up his face for Jesus to touch him a second time.

...and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see men; but they look like trees, walking." Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly.

Two things happened here: -

1. Jesus laid His hands on the man's eyes again.
2. The man looked intently - made an effort - to see men as they really were.

- Then he was restored and saw everything clearly.

Surely if we don't have that compassion which gives us true vision we'll never muster it up from within ourselves. We need to turn to Jesus for a second touch.

"Lord, I know you touched me and I know my life was changed, but I also know that my vision of my fellow man is badly distorted. I'm not seeing what I should be seeing.

I see men but they look like trees, walking. Lord, touch me again. Open my eyes!"

After we have prayed such a prayer, as the power of the Holy Spirit causes the love of God to be shed abroad in our hearts afresh, we then need to look intently,

.... to strive to see....

- our neighbor,
- our friend,
- our enemy,
- our parent,
- our child,
- our mate,
- our brother in the Body;
- Lazarus who sits at our gate,

- with the new eyes God is giving us.

At first they will still look like trees walking, perhaps. But as we look intently a miracle will happen. A miracle which will not only affect our vision of men but directly our vision of God.

For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. (1 John 4:20)

We will begin to see people as God sees them. And when we begin to see people as God sees them...We will begin to see everything clearly, including and especially God.



Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

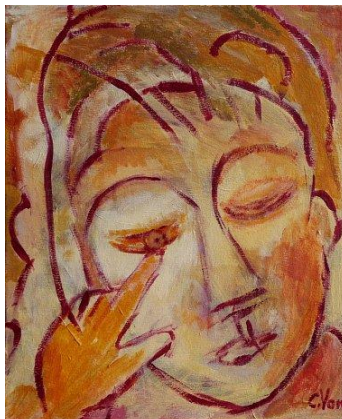
We have come to a time when it will no longer be possible for us to stumble along in strife and envy and lovelessness.

To survive the days which have already come upon us....

- We will have to see with the eye of God.
- We will have to be moved by a love which suffers long and is kind.
- We will need a humility to see us and others as we really are,
- We will have to seek a love that endures all things,

.... even if it means going to Jesus for a second touch,

**.... even if it means straining our spiritual eyes
until we see what God wants us to see in the faces of those to whom He sends us.**



Message: Richard Bieber- 1978... edited to suit the times 2023 by Maranatha Mirror.

Featured Artist: Corinne Vonaesch a c-vonaesch.ch

Prayer- Lord, we admit our blindness. Despite being touched by your healing, by you looking intently at us and seeing our wounds and having compassion on us, we haven't opened our eyes to see what you see, to see people with your eyes. We get so busy in our own pursuits, our own opinions, achieving our own desires that people have become like trees walking to us. They are blurred, out of focus. They get in our way, slow us down, irritate us, annoy us. Forgive us for our cold hearts, for our narrow focus, for walking past and ignoring their wounds. Touch our eyes again Lord...help us to look intently at each human, flood us with love for them, give us the compassion to see others clearly... the way you call us to see them. Move us Lord, move us. Amen.

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