

Seeing God in Our Life

Matthew 5:8, Psalms 16:8, Philippians 4:8

Slide 1

As Christians, we're to know that God is at work in our lives every day... guiding, shaping, growing and strengthening us all the time.

In VBS this past week the children learned several things about God. They learned that:

- God is a friend who's real.
- God is a friend who loves.
- God is a friend we can trust.
- God is a friend forever.
- God is a friend for everyone.

In the world, we rely heavily on what we can actually see. This dictates our response and reaction in and to our life.

Things like, a sunrise, birds flying overhead, beautiful flowers, natural wonders of the world, the cycle of life, etc.

Because we take these things for granted, VBS has helped the children to actually understand who God really is.

Each day we face the challenges of life, financially, vocationally, relationally, physically, and even spiritually. The circumstances of life are what capture our attention. We focus on them.

And, in this busyness of our day-to-day life, many of us forget that God's always there for us. He's not a fair-weather friend, but someone on whom we can always count.

Many people believe that there's no God because they can't see Him, but in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*"

The phrase "*will see*" comes from a Greek word which means to perceive, discern, be aware.

The Greek word for "*will see*" has a more metaphorical meaning, i.e. "*to see with the mind.*" In other words, to spiritually see, or see with an inward spiritual perception.

Jesus said, "*for they will see God,*" He wasn't talking about some future event, or appointed date when you leave this earth, He was speaking about seeing God in our daily life here and now.

But, what did Jesus mean when He said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*"

The Greek word for "pure," in Matthew 5:8, means to be "*clean, blameless.*" The word specifically refers to that which is purified by fire or by pruning.

John the Baptist told the people that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. Malachi speaks of the Messiah as being like a "*refiner's fire.*"

Jesus referred to believers as being the branches and Himself as being the vine.

Those who are "pure," are those who have been declared innocent because of the work of Jesus Christ and who are being sanctified by His refining fire and His pruning.

Pure doesn't mean, without sin, but that of being cleansed, being pruned, held blameless.

The Greek word for “*heart*” in Matthew 5:8 refers to the spiritual center of life. It’s where thoughts, desires, sense of purpose, will, understanding, and character reside.

So, the pure of heart to whom Jesus is referring are those who, through the redemptive work of God, are held blameless, and are being cleansed, pruned and refined through God’s grace.

The “*pure in heart*” have a singleness of thoughts, desires, sense of purpose, will, understanding, and character towards God.

The “*pure in heart*” is a person whose life, through the redemptive work of Christ, is now focused on spiritual matters, the things of God. A person who is “*pure in heart*” keeps their eyes on God.

Slide 2

Psalms 16:8, “*I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*”

David, a man like us, a sinner, was forgiven, cleansed of his sins, and refined by God. This was accomplished because David had an awareness of God’s presence and involvement in his daily life.

Even as a child, David saw the fingerprints of God in his life:

1 Samuel 17:37, “*The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.*”

The evidence of God’s power is all over our life, if only we’ll open our eyes to see it.

In the Bible story on Day 1, the children learned that God showed Himself to Elijah through his many ups and downs proving that He was a friend Who’s real.

Yet many of us refuse to see God in our daily lives because our eyes are focused on the busyness of our day-to-day activities.

However, we can train ourselves to be more spiritually perceptive of God's hand at work in our lives. Viewing the world with wide-open spiritual eyes changes one's perspective.

But seeing with spiritual eyes isn't a now-and-then kind of thing, it's a lifestyle. Like David, we must train our spiritual eyes to notice evidence of God's presence in our daily life.

Before going to sleep, try to recall the events of the day, and look for evidence of God at work.

How did He guide you? How did He protect you in situations or discipline you? How did He help you with this relationship or that relationship? Reflect on and notice God's fingerprints in your life.

Then, as you reflect on the things that occurred during the day, your faith will grow, as will your prayer life, and your ability to recognize God's work in your life.

It's through reflection that we learn God is a friend we can really trust, because He is always watching over us.

When we start to see God at work in our life, we'll want to see more and more. It's like a continuous stream that builds our faith and deepens our relationship with Him.

Living with an awareness of God in our life brings a spiritual clarity that sharpens our awareness of God's presence and involvement.

And, as with David, we'll begin to realize that we can train ourselves to be more attuned to God's presence by nurturing an awareness of the Lord at work.

There's no mystical or magical way to be ushered into God's presence. Walking in God's presence only requires trusting and nurturing our relationship with Him.

It's more like the things you do when you want to deepen your intimacy or friendship with a spouse or best friend—things like going on a dinner date, writing a personal letter, or taking a walk together.

It's in trusting and realizing God working in you that brings an awareness of His presence. When you draw near to God, He promises to draw near to you.

James 4:8a, *"Come near to God and he will come near to you."*

Slide 3

If you want to see something, you must know what you're looking for. All of God's promises, all of the world's truths are held in the Bible.

It's all there, we just have to choose to keep filling our minds with it. The more we hear about His promises and truth, the more able we are to see them coming to fruition in our lives.

Scripture instructs us to renew our minds and set our minds on things above. It's through the lens of Scripture we see God, ourselves, and the world clearly and correctly.

By keeping His Word before us in our daily lives, we're more able to recalibrate our values and agenda to God's and see the things of God through His revealed truth.

When we hold this promise in our heart, we can start seeing Him providing for us on a daily basis. He doesn't want any of us to fail.

This was brought in the Bible story on day 2 when the children learned about how God is a friend who loves.

God's love is so great, He didn't even want the godless people of Nineveh to die without getting a chance to know Him better.

Slide 4

Finally, our brain is designed to grow and adapt quite quickly, and similar to our bodies, it grows based on what it's fed.

God created us with the ability to choose our thoughts, to choose what we feed our minds and our souls.

When we focus on love and gratitude, we begin to transform how our brain functions. We begin to see God's fingerprints on the good things that came from Him in our daily lives.

The children discovered about this on day three. They learned that God is a friend we can trust in any situation. Paul talked about this in his letter to the Philippian church.

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Filling our minds with Godly things transforms our thought patterns. It helps us become more attuned to the presence of God in our lives.

It helps us know that there is One person who actually cares, Someone whom we can trust to help us make right decisions.

Slide 5

Conclusion

In closing, we must understand that prayer opens a space for God to work in our lives.

When we bring our requests to God, when we pray continually, God has the space to transform us. It also makes it easier for us to see His work because we see our prayers answered.

If we think about the fact that what we feed our minds actually transforms our physical brain and body, then it's easy to see that prayer is one of the best things that we can do to grow.

When I say grow, I don't just mean in size, but spiritually. This growth transforms our lives to be able to perceive the presence of God in our lives.

God has not retired. He's as busy now as he has ever been. God may seem distant or impersonal but He's active in our everyday lives. We can see it if we just learn to look.

God's present, passionate and powerful. God's not an impersonal being, but a loving God who wants to be our friend. He is someone, probably the only one that we can truly trust.

We need to make it a habit to give God credit where credit is due. We must develop a God focused view and a grateful heart remembering God is a friend to everyone.

As you leave today, remember that:

- God is a friend Who's real.
- God is a friend Who loves.
- God is a friend we can trust.
- God is a friend forever.
- God is a friend for everyone.