

# Hinderances to Beholding Him

by Alan Martin

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*We must seek a personal, spiritual, and mystical vision of Christ to live an abundant life and overcome the hinderances that prevent us from beholding Him.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:8, Proverbs 29:18, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Galatians 5:22-23, Hebrews 12:1-2, 1 Peter 1:8

**Topics:** "Hinderances"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a clear vision of Jesus in order to avoid perishing and living a purposeless life. The story of Mary and Martha in Luke chapter 10 is used as an example of how distractions and worldly concerns can hinder our vision of Christ. The preacher urges the audience to lay aside anything that belongs to the sinful nature and to run in the Spirit. The sermon also highlights the failure of the Israelites in the wilderness, despite being delivered from Egypt and experiencing God's provision, due to their aimless wandering and lack of vision.

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## Transcript

We're grateful because of all that you've done. We have confidence to draw near unto you so that you can draw near unto us. We are entirely dependent upon you to make your words living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, and able to do the piercing deep, where those inner hidden attitudes of the thoughts will be exposed for good, for cleansing.

We are completely dependent upon you, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, to be able to comfort those in any affliction. We bless you that you have chosen that the sufferings of Christ would abound into our lives and that equal to those sufferings, the comfort of Christ abounds into our lives. We believe, Father, in the ministry of wholesome teaching, of exhortation, of admonition, of instruction, but apart from you we can do nothing.

We cannot make your words living. You speak the living words to the heart of every man. That doesn't occur from a teacher.

That occurs by the ministry of your spirit in every man's heart. We're dependent upon you to purify our ears, to purify me, that together, collectively, by faith, we can benefit from the ministry, the gift of teaching. We acknowledge one teacher, our Lord, your Son, the Teacher.

And we acknowledge that there are several here that may have that gift, but we acknowledge whichever of us may have the gift, that you are the same God working all and in all. And it's not of men. It's not by study.

I acknowledge it's not possible with all the effort I could put into it to draw life from your word. I can draw information. I can assemble facts and I can manipulate it.

But I acknowledge only you can make it life, living, edifying and encouraging. Well, because you're able to do so and you have intended to do so for the joining together, for the perfecting of your saints, to come to the greater stature of the fullness of our Lord and your son, according to your will, make your word alive in our hearts and let it do what only it can do. Let it effectually work in the believers today.

Let us get a glimpse of your son and your glory through our time together in your word. We ask in Jesus name, Amen. You know, it says then where there is no vision, but what happens? The people perish.

And the word there in the Hebrew can mean to wander around aimlessly without a sense of purpose. To wander around aimlessly without a sense of purpose, who perished in the wilderness, the children of Israel, the same children delivered out of Egypt, who drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them. And that rock was Christ, who ate of the spiritual bread, who was who was led by God's presence in the pillar of cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night.

And yet it says with them, nevertheless, God was not pleased and their bodies were scattered over the desert. But that didn't stop them from wandering around aimlessly for 40 years. What was aimless about it is wandering around only to fall short of the land of promise.

Well, there's only one way to really enter the land of promise and to live an abundant life. And that's what's on my heart today, because we need a vision and it's something that I can't give you by teaching. Neither is it something that you can get from reading words on a page.

You and I need a personal, spiritual, mystical vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you hear me, you and I need a personal, spiritual, mystical vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you don't think so, what how can the scripture say, beholding as in a mirror the what the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

How can you see something you can't see, didn't Peter say, whom not having not seen, he believe and even not seeing that you love. But are we not told, turn there with me, Hebrews chapter 12. Are we not told that since there is all encompassing around us, such a great cloud of witnesses to run with endurance the race marked out for us? And what are we told to do in that same passage? Fix our eyes upon you.

Now, how are we to do that if it's not possible? Why didn't he just say, read your Bible? Is that fixing your eyes upon Jesus? No, you're going to have to do that personally, spiritually. It is a spiritual, mystical, personal experience. Looking unto Jesus, actually looking away and let's read the whole passage together so we get the ramifications of it all.

Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every encumbrance, every weight and the sin which so easily encompasses us. In the Greek word, there is is you peristason. It means it does well to surround us.

It completely surrounds us. There is a sin that just completely surrounds us like a long robe. What is a long robe do if you're running? And it trips you, it hinders you, it does not let you get your full stride.

And we need to learn to lay aside the things that hinder our full stride. And with perseverance run, looking away unto Jesus. And so that we can get a personal, personal vision of him without a personal vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will perish.

You cannot make it to heaven on the sense of right and wrong. You cannot make it to heaven on the sense of having had a vision of Christ. Remember the song we sang several weeks back, Do You Know Him? Today, how is your vision of Christ today? Is it hindered? Or are there weights that need to be laid aside? Now, we're told to lay aside something.

Paul says it to almost all the churches in one way or another. What are we told to lay aside? The sinful nature, anything that belongs to our flesh, we're to lay it aside. You know why? You can't run with it.

You can't run in the spirit with it. You can't see a vision of Christ in the flesh. It's nothing but a hindrance.

You're not only to lay it aside. Once you lay it aside, you're to put it to death. You're to cut your ties to it.

But what are the things that really hinder, that encompass around about, that keep us from seeing a vision of Christ? Because it's clear you and I need to see it personally. And I'm emphasizing the word mystical because it's non-natural. Didn't Paul say in Colossians, I want you to know the mystery of God, namely Christ Jesus, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I want you to have the full understanding of this glorious mystery. We need to learn to be able to experience personally, personally experience Jesus Christ, the living person, so that we can literally say he walks with me so that his words are fulfilled. He and us and we in him brought to a complete unity.

When that happens, then the world believes he was sent by the father. But what hinders us, what can hinder you and I from seeing a clear vision of Jesus? And it's just to look and to try to understand some of these things so that we can lay them aside. These all encompassing things that hinder us.

Let's look at some examples in the word so we can learn from things they went through. Turn to Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10.

Find verse 38. We're all familiar with this story. Who are the players in the story? Mary and Martha, I was Martha this last week.

I know I had lots to do. I did it under the Lord, though someone has to be Martha. You know to me, someone someone has to be Martha so others can be Mary.

You know, Martha's sweet servant. But in this particular place, she was used of the Lord to bring about something. So in verse 38, now it happened as they went out that he entered a certain village and a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.

She also had a sister, Mary, who sat at Jesus feet and heard his word. But Martha was what was Martha distracted? What was she distracted about? OK, much service. The word here is it is the deaconing deacons.

She was deaconing, ministering, serving. Do you realize it can be a distraction? If you're what are you mothers doing, you know what it's easy for you young mothers to do, get totally wrapped up in your serving. It's a good thing.

Loving your husband, loving your children, it's a good thing. It won't keep you alive spiritually. Serving others will not keep you alive spiritually.

You had better be beholding the face of Christ on a regular basis. If you're going to live the effort, the Ephesian church there in Revelation, they were testing false apostles. They were enduring hardship.

They had not grown weary. They were doing more than they had done at first. But Jesus said, but I have this against you.

You have left your chief love first, chief love. Those are good things, but they are not the chief thing. The chief thing is an adoration of Christ.

It is a beholding him personally, spiritually, mystically seeing him, spending time with him in intimate fellowship. He said, remember the height from which you have fallen. If you and I are not experiencing a wonderful, renewing, being able to see Christ personally and intimately, even if you are still busy, even if you're deaconing, even if you're serving, even if you're enduring, you have fallen from a great height.

And what will happen is you will begin to wonder about aimlessly without a vision of Christ, without being renewed on a daily basis. And here's what the situation here was, Martha. She was distracted.

The Greek word here is perispheo, here's what it means. It means to be drawn around. What to draw, what is what is to draw? Not not not like this draw, not with crayons to draw.

Oh, what's got you? What draws you around? What draws you? Are you drawn to intimate communion with Christ or you or you is your attention, your vision constantly being drawn here, drawn there, drawn to your husband, drawn to your wife, drawn to your son, drawn to men. You know what happens when you really get a good glimpse of men? It's called discouragement. All you need to be discouraged is get is have your attention drawn to men.

But you want to live. Let your attention be focused upon the Lord Jesus Christ and what is there to discourage you, how can you be discouraged if you have a clear vision? But Martha was distracted about much service and coming up, she said, Lord. Do you not care? Is it not your concern that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me.

And Jesus answered and said to Martha, Martha. You are worried is what the New King James says. What what is some of the other versions say here? Anxious, careful.

Well, that's the next word. Mine says you are worried and bothered. Well, the word here in the Greek language is marine.

Thus, the root of it is Maris, meaning divided. You're divided. What are you divided between? Here's another place where the word is used.

Turn real quick just to see the usage of it. First Corinthians chapter seven. Paul uses this word in his teaching about marriage in this life.

Verse thirty five of chapter seven. Someone read that, would you? First Corinthians seven thirty five. Distraction is what it is here.

Same word, though she's distracted. What was distracting her? Good things. You're going to hear that now.

Listen to this. Paul says in Philippians chapter three, for many, I say, even now in tears live as enemies of the cross. It didn't say they were, but they're just living almost like they were.

Why? Their God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, and their mind is on earthly things. Didn't say evil things, just earthly things. To have your mind on earthly things alone, when you lose the vision of the glory of the Lord, Jesus will make you end up living like an enemy of the cross, though you don't want to be.

If you're not careful, you'll be drawn around busy about this and that and shriveling up spiritually and dying. If you're not seeing a vision of the Lord, Jesus Christ, what else is what else is a an excellent thing for dividing the mind in relation to hindering your vision of the Lord, Jesus Christ? There's something that we are all every one of us here are in danger of being divided from Christ by what originally divided us from God. Sin, yes, but unless something, sin is not taken into account when there's no law.

What's the barrier? What is the dividing wall of hostility? The law is. You know what's a much clearer way to be divided from the Lord Jesus? Jesus is to no longer see him personally, intimately communing with him and living only by the principles of right and wrong. Because what does the law do to the heart of those that are not in a sweet communion with Christ? Well, it doesn't get it, but it does something else.

And I'm talking about it prevents them, Christ, from being seen. What's it called? What keeps something from being seen avail to this day? Whenever the law is read, a veil covers. And if we're not careful and we're not spending an intimate time in personal communion with the living real person of the Lord, Jesus, who speaks, who shares his heart, who reveals himself personally to us.

If we begin to only live by the law, what the law is going to do is you're going to look at the law and it's going to obscure your vision of Christ. Read with me there. Look in 2 Corinthians.

I'll share this passage. 2 Corinthians 3, verse 14 and on. Would someone read just 14, 15, and 16? 2 Corinthians 3, 14, 15, and 16.

Okay. So what's happening if you're not turning to the Lord personally? Only in the Lord is the veil taken away. They never saw the glory of God in the first covenant directly.

Where did the glory of God abode in the Old Testament? In the Holy of Holies. And you know what? None of us were permitted entrance there. The whole point of the New Covenant, when Jesus cried on the cross and said, It is finished, the veil was rent to from top to bottom, signifying this.

Entrance to the holy place to behold the glory of God. Now that's mystical, isn't it? Is it? That's the problem with us. We are not mystics.

We're carnal. We would be careful that we don't just live by a sense of right and wrong with Christ being veiled behind the curtain of the law. The law doesn't do you any good.

The law can't make anything perfect. The law cannot make alive. But looking into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are transformed into what? The same image from glory to glory.

And righteousness will happen. You get a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ and you see Him clearly. You want to be like Him.

You get a glimpse of the law and you know what you feel? Guilt. You get a glimpse of Christ and you know what you feel? Liberty. He is a life-giving Spirit.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. It says the same sacrifice is repeated annually. We're never able to purge the conscience of the worshipper.

But when you see a vision of Christ and you realize that's what God wants you to be, God has given His Son to share the very divine nature of Christ with you, by partaking of the nature you're seeing in Christ, you escape the corruption that is in the world by lust. A corruption that you can never escape by thou shalt not. Touch not, taste not, handle not.

It's useless. But when you seek Christ, the things of this world become strangely dim. The problem I had in much of my former Christian life was this.

I tried to make men see that they were wretched so they would see their need for Christ. You know what I've discovered? Hold up Christ to them and guess what they're going to see? They're wretched. You get a vision of Jesus Christ and you won't be satisfied with how you live.

If you've lost the vision of Jesus Christ, you can become easily satisfied in thinking you're doing well. But you see perfect oneness with the Father. You see a man never discouraged.

It says, he shall not falter or be discouraged. When you see a man full of wisdom, full of grace, full of truth, the law will never touch that. What the law actually does is stands in our way from seeing Him clearly.

And it says, what are we told in the law to do with the law? Ye who want to be justified by the law, do ye not hear the law? For doesn't the law say Abraham had two wives, two sons? One by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. So what did the law say to do with the bondwoman? Get rid of her! Put her away! And it's time for us to put away this idea that righteousness could ever come by living by the law. Righteousness comes from God through faith and beholding the Person of Christ.

When we actually receive of His Spirit, walking in Him, righteousness happens. Godliness happens. Power and meekness and lowliness happen.

They become reality. In Him we are made, what? The righteousness of God. But that's beholding Him personally, mystically, spiritually in an intimate daily communion.

You know what? I can tell when someone has lost that vision. Because you know how you can tell? They no longer pray. Because they're not comfortable in God's presence.

In thy presence there is... Okay, so we don't really have any fullness of joy here, do we? That's really talking about getting to heaven, isn't it? Now come on now, I'm being honest here. What do you really think? Do you have fullness of joy? No, of course not. You can't really have that down here because you can't really be in God's presence until you get there.

Is that what the Scripture was saying? David said, in thy presence I have, there is, fullness of joy. What has happened to you? Isn't that what Paul asked the Galatians? That having begun in the Spirit, had really fallen away and trying to perfect their own life by a sense of right and wrong? Here's what he asked them

in the King James. He says, wherein is that sense of blessedness? The NIV says, what's happened to all your joy? If you're not spending time being renewed personally in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, your joy will shrivel up.

Not your sense of right and wrong. You'll take that to the grave with you. Having a sense of what's right and wrong is far different than having a clear vision of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know when the things of the earth became... You know what made Paul able to say, the things that were gained to me, I now count loss? When? Compared to what? You have to have had a glimpse of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. You know why the things of this vain world, this vanity seems so special? It's because you've not caught a glimpse of the glory, the far surpassing glory of knowing Christ. And someone who's caught a glimpse of Him is like Paul, straining towards what lies ahead saying, I want to know Christ.

I want to experience Christ in this life. Becoming like Him in His death. And so somehow to obtain to the resurrection out of the dead.

When you see it that way, what do you count the things of this world? Rubbish. Rubbish. I don't mourn when I flush my commode.

Therefore, there's nothing I'm giving up of anything value compared to knowing Christ. Knowing Christ is everything. It's not just part.

It's everything. But if you've lost the vision of Him. And you sink back down into religion.

You'll never live. You will never experience the freedom and liberty God intended for you to have. In becoming one with His Son.

If ye abide in me. Not just His word. And my words abide in you.

You hear that? A lot of us are just content for His words to abide in us. That's not what He said. I am the vine, ye are the branches.

If ye abide in me and my word abide in you. We are abiding is not well if we're not bearing fruit. The person who's abiding is bearing fruit.

For in this is my Father glorified in that ye bear much fruit. But that's only done through abiding in Christ. Through having a clear vision of Christ who is the author and the finisher.

Isn't that why you're looking to Him? Aren't you looking to Him knowing that every time you get another glimpse of Him. You see something else in your life? In a way that you can become like Him. Back to Martha and Mary.

After not only did she say that her mind was divided. She was not fully seeing Christ. The next word is said in verse 41.

You are worried in what? In Luke 10 verse 41. Troubled. The Greek word is turbidze.

Turbidze. We get an English word from this Greek word. Turbid.

What's turbidity? What is turbidity? Who can tell me what turbidity is? We must not be very much mariners here. Turbidity is a term with water. Turbidity is the amount of visibility to water.

They have what they call a turbidity meter. I've seen it. We were shown this in physical science.

It was a white disc with varying white and black marks. And it was attached to a rope. That's the way they used to do it before they had their computers and lasers.

Things now measure turbidity. And you set this thing in the water. And the turbidity reading was determined by how far it could go down.

And you could still... Mary had turbidity. Stirred up in her natural man. And she couldn't see Christ.

See, there's a property in still water. When water's not carrying a lot of sediment, light does what? Passes through. But what if it's got a lot of particles stirred up? What you're actually seeing is the light reflecting off of the dirt.

And the sediment. You're not seeing it pass all the way through. Water and Spirit are both clear.

And they reveal Jesus beautifully. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still water. What is it about still waters? You can walk right up to it and if you look at it just right, what do you see? You see clearly.

And if you're sitting across from it, like we were last weekend, in the early morning waters, in the water still, what do you see? You see the glory of the heavens reflected. But it takes being still. David said, My soul was disturbed within me.

What was the solution? His soul being disturbed within me. Be still my soul. I have stilled and quieted my soul.

And this is where many of us are not prospering. Because we have not persevered to be still and know He's God. In Jesus Himself, the living personification of God on the earth, full of grace and truth, what did He do on a daily basis? He withdrew to the lonely place.

And what did He do? He prayed. He withdrew to the lonely place where He could spend time with just He and the Father. And you know why He did what He did? He says the Son only does what He sees the Father doing.

And the Father shows Him all He does. You know when you and I are going to start doing what Jesus does? When we get away, out of our religion, and we get still. And we come to the place where we want to know Christ personally.

And we see what He's doing. And we're beholding Him as in a mirror. And when you behold Him, that's a strange thing.

Now, this is quite a mystery here. When you behold Christ in a mirror, whose reflection are you seeing? Now, think with me. Whose reflection do you see in a mirror? When I look in a mirror, I see my own reflection.

What's He saying? When you look, when you look into the face of Jesus Christ, you'll see what you're supposed to look like. You'll see what God intended man to be. You'll see a man full of virtue.

And you know what you can see about yourself? You can say, Jesus will do this in me. You'll see meekness. You'll see lowliness.

You'll see longsuffering. And you'll see what God intended for you to be. You won't get that from the law.

But when you look into Jesus Christ, when you behold Him, you see what your reflection should be. And you're changed into that image. Because now you know what to look like.

But if all you're living by is the law, what do you see? Christ is no longer visible to you. Only in Christ is the veil removed and the glory of God revealed. That doesn't happen from... It could happen while reading your Bibles.

It can happen while you are in a corporate assembly with others. But where did God intend for it to happen? God intended for it to happen in the holy place of your heart where you and He alone intimately commune together. Where He is your Father and you are His Son.

And that's how this life was meant to be. And if we don't learn to lay aside those things that are dividing our mind, drawing our attention away from, and troubling us in the natural man, and learn to be still and spend an intimate communion with Christ, we're not going to be transformed in the image of God. We need this.

I wish I could produce this in a person. I cannot. This is the fullness of the New Covenant where the Lord says, no longer shall a man say to his neighbor, know the Lord, for they shall all know Me.

What's the danger of this? You had better know the Lord this way. You don't want to stand before Him in the last day and hear Him say to you, I never knew you. Not this way.

We better know the Lord. We had better experience the Lord in this way. This is why Christ came.

Christ came, He came, that we might have access to the Father. Therefore, having confidence to enter the most holy place through the blood of Jesus Christ, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence that we might receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And right now, what we need as a people is to draw near God.

We need to draw near God. And when we draw near God, what happens? God draws near us. That's life.

And if that's not what you're experiencing, what is between you and our Lord? Something is. Whether it's your natural man all stirred up, whether it's your busy being about serving and all kind of good things, or whether you've really kind of lost connection with the Head, and you've begun to live by your principles of right and wrong. Whatever it is, let's just be still a little bit and let the Lord search our hearts.

I want to say something just for the benefit. Please just be quiet and still before the Lord. I want to tell you the truth of every person here.

I can confidently say this of every person here. The mercies of God are new for you. There's not a single person here even close to exhausting God's abundant grace and compassion.

God longs to be gracious to every person here. God longs to renew every heart. All of us together.

We put all of our shortcomings together wouldn't make a dent in God's mercy. He did not send His Son to die on the cross to lose us. We are the glory He's after.

He wants to bring many sons to glory. He's patient. He's at work.

He's not about to cease to work. He is so willing to forgive. He is so willing to cleanse.

He knows what to do with a hard heart. He knows how to bring renewal. He knows how to make you brand new.

Completely clean. Faultless before Him. And He can even use how you've lived as a testimony of His mercy.

I sought the Lord and He answered me. He delivered me from all my fears. He lifted me out of the miry pit and set my feet upon a rock.

He put a new song in my mouth, even a hymn of praise to my God. And many shall see the mercy He's had on me and turn in fear to God. Let His mercy and His grace and His compassion renew you.

But be renewed. I don't want you to sing. If you have your eyes fixed on Christ, ignore me.

Open my eyes, Lord. I want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch Him and say that I love Him. Open my ears, Lord, and help me to listen.

Open my eyes, see Jesus.

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