

Eyes to See (1 of 2)

by Jackie Pullinger

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing God's glory in our lives, trusting in His love and mercy, and walking with Him in our daily lives to experience transformation and healing.

Duration: 41:31

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1, Zechariah 8:5, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:5, Mark 7:33, Luke 4:18, Luke 14:15-24

Topics: "Vision"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeing and having a clear vision from the beginning. They share personal experiences of witnessing the plight of the unborn and the struggles of abandoned children. The speaker also discusses their attempts to reach out to people through booklets and invitations to Christian meetings, but realizing that these methods were ineffective. However, when they started living out their faith and demonstrating God's grace, forgiveness, and power, more people were drawn to them. The speaker encourages perseverance in helping others and reminds the audience of the unconditional love and forgiveness they have received from Jesus.

Transcript

I don't know whether you've noticed, but so far everything this evening has been about seeing. And we sang, Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord. We sang about catching a glimpse of His glory.

We've seen a bunch of people and a special lady who saw something that God revealed. The plight of the unborn and those who'd parented the unborn. And we heard about some university students who saw.

You want to talk about seeing? And I want to pray for eyes. Jesus said, seek first my kingdom and my righteousness and everything else will be added to you. Sometimes people would ask me how I can get through difficult times.

They always asked me what I would do in the middle. And I always think that's the wrong question. It's really how you start, not what you do in the middle.

It's what you see. It's what you see when you start. Because if you don't see the end from the beginning, you will get upset in the middle.

When I was very small, I had the very, very unhappy impression that God was watching me. Now, this was very unhappy because I didn't like him and I had looked around and it seemed to me quite clear that other

children were doing wrong things and getting away with it. And so I sort of worked this out.

I was about five. I can remember doing it and I thought, well, God, if people get away with it, is it worth being good? And came to this distressing conclusion, but he got you in the end. That was why I decided to be a missionary.

So I thought it would count in my favor. And that was long before I liked him. And I just had this unhappy understanding that he was counting things up and one day I would meet him and I would have to answer for my life.

But now, no, it's not like that. It's not like that at all. For the moment I understood, and you can only understand by revelation, by faith.

The moment I understood that the maker of heaven and earth in mercy sent his son to fetch me and to put me and my shortcomings and my pain and everything that would stop me being acceptable to him, that he put all this upon himself when he died on the cross. Then I saw differently, a glimpse of heaven. And this time so different, so different, so different.

It is, if I'm going to spend eternity with a lover who loved me so much that he would risk his son to fetch me forever, I really can't wait to be with him. I saw a glimpse of heaven. Whom have I in heaven but you? And being with you, I desire nothing on earth.

The fact is, if you know him, that is true. Because when this Psalm says, whom have I in heaven but you and being with you, I desire nothing on earth. This is actually a fact.

It's not a feeling being with you. I desire nothing on earth, but most of us think we desire everything else on earth, which is why we have a trouble concentrating on where we're going because we're distracted by where we are. The fact is, if we ever have understood by faith and by revelation a little bit of his love and his glory and his sweetness and his forgiveness for us, which is forever, of course we can get through anything on this earth, can't we? It is but for a second.

And when we for eternity live and dwell with him, will we not look back and say, oh, I was so worried for that time, but it was so short. Or maybe we won't even remember. I don't know.

Maybe we'll be too busy singing and in that wonderful place in heaven where there's a door standing open and the voices come up here and I'll show you, I will show you. I saw a new heaven and a new earth and in this holy city, there's no more pain, there's no more crying and God dwells with man. This is where we will be.

And I always wonder, well, I have many thoughts about what it will be like, but first of all, when I meet him, I don't know whether I'm going to fall on my face or whether I'm going to run into his arms. I'm torn. I don't know which.

I suppose I will know when the time comes, whether to prostrate myself in front of the king of glory or whether to run into the arms of my father. And the other thought I have about that place is that as there's no more pain and crying, as there's no more death, as there's no more sickness, we are all perfect because of him. And we wash clean because of him.

The only one scarred in the whole of heaven is him. For that book called Revelation tells us that there's a lamb looking as if he's been slain. How strange that for eternity we are perfected in the presence of a scarred lamb and we sing these songs of glory, you, me.

We have to have a glimpse of this glory before we can proceed with our feet on this earth. And I know that this week, David and Philippa have been talking about Abraham and I'll read some verses about him from Hebrews 11. By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, he obeyed and he went even though he did not know where he was going.

By faith, he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise, for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And from him, from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars in the sky in multitude, innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

All these people were living by faith when they died. They didn't receive the things promised. They only saw them and they welcomed them from a distance.

And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they're looking for a country of their own. Somebody asked me today how I got to Hong Kong, and I really don't want to share that story.

But part of the journey was when I went to see, he was a vicar in London and God had been telling me to go. And he'd spoken to me through a dream and through a prophecy, which was unusual in the mid 60s. And through a vision, which people weren't talking about.

And every time he just said go, and I finally went to see this vicar in Shoreditch in London. And I said, well, God is not being very helpful. Because he keeps saying go.

And when I ask him where, he says go. And when I say, yes, God, I got that where, he says go and I'll show you and I will lead you. And I said, well, that really isn't very helpful.

I've applied for missionary societies and they failed me because I wasn't 25. And so I said, well, to this vicar, I think I'll stay here in Shoreditch and help you. And he said, no.

No, if God's telling you to go, you must go. And I said, well, I can't go because he hasn't shown me where to go. And he said, well, if he gave you an airplane ticket and a pension and a sick fund and a house and a salary, you really wouldn't need to trust him.

So why don't you go out, find the cheapest ship you can, calling in the greatest number of countries, get on it and pray that God will tell you where to get off. Well, it really was like a bell going off in my heart. And I thought, oh, that's wonderful.

But immediately the religious bit sort of got in. And I said, well, you know, I'd love to do that, but it must be cheating. Because I thought missionaries had to suffer and I'd like that.

And. And he said, no, it's quite scriptural. Abraham was told to leave his country and go to the country that God showed him.

And he spent most of his life not getting there, but he went because he trusted. And he was a very wise man. Very wise man.

He shared this with me. I mean, he he later went to right gate, by the way, in in Surrey. He's not at all what you would imagine.

He's a very sort of stiff, correct God's type of man. So it must have been God. And he he he didn't give me the understanding that I had to do anything.

And I think sometimes when people talk about visions. It's. What they've decided.

Would be a very good idea and huge. It's always huge. But what God shows you.

Is what God has decided. And you probably don't share it for a long time. In fact, it's not too smart.

You know, look what happened to Joseph. You keep quiet about some things like Mary did, too. And he said, well, maybe just get on this ship.

And you go all the way around the world and you stop off at Singapore and you play the piano for a week for youth meetings and come back. Or you go all the way around the world just to talk to one sailor about Jesus. And into my mind came shipwreck.

And I thought, great. Maybe I'm going to be shipwrecked. And there'll be I will land on an island where one person is waiting to hear about Jesus.

I thought, can't lose, really. You know, if if you if you let God lead you and you go because he can't lead you if you don't move. Understand that.

Right. Then you can't lose. And so in God's mercy, I was spared from having to think when I got somewhere, I had got to do anything.

And I was also in God's mercy spared from having to because I didn't have a group behind me. I mean, this guy prayed. He never sent money or anything, but I didn't have a group behind me.

So I didn't have to achieve anything in my newsletters. I didn't. I didn't have to feel ashamed that there were no converts, you know, or write moving stories in order to get cash or anything like that.

You know, this really in God's mercy, I was spared. And it was a journey and it still is. And the journey is, it's just telling people about Jesus along the way.

That's all. That's all ministry is. It's terribly simple.

It's not difficult. It's not about starting groups or this or that. It's just about seeing where you're going and then seeing whom you meet along the way and seeing by revelation who they may become and seeing by revelation.

Sometimes those you haven't yet met, but you should be. It's about seeing. And when I got to Hong Kong, I went to many, many different places.

And I was very young and very pompous. And I found all these missionaries, you know, and I said, I'm here. They weren't thrilled.

I can see why now. Because, you know, there are heaps of Christian travelers that travel around the world expecting to stay with us. So I can see that.

And so. But once they saw that I could support myself, they all said, well, maybe you could do this job or that job or that job. Till I got about 30 part time jobs.

And I said, but God, I've got one life. And I would like to use it well. Would you please show me where I should be? By the way, while you're waiting for him to show you, you have to get on with it.

You understand? I'm always having to pray for people who say, where should I be? And I say, it doesn't really matter. It matters what you're doing now, because what you're doing now gets you to where you should be. That's how you get to where you should be.

But if you stop and say, I'm waiting on the Lord for a year, he can't use you anyway and you'll never get there. When people write to me and say, can I come and help your poor in Hong Kong? I write back and say, are you helping your poor where you live? Why would you love mine if you don't love yours? So this, where should I be? Really depends entirely on what you're starting to get involved in here. Because if you cannot see Jesus next door to you.

What use are you going to be wherever you go next? And it's all about seeing him wherever he may be. About seeing them. About seeing heaven.

And people, I've been in Hong Kong for 38 years now. And people say, I suppose it's your home. And I say, no.

Who choose there? Not me. It's dirty, polluted and crowded. I love the people, but it's not a good place.

Yesterday when the sun was shining, Norfolk looked a bit more like it, but no, Hong Kong, not my home. Hong Kong was not my destination. I really am a pilgrim.

I just stopped off there for 30 something years, but it's not my destination. I've always got another one. And that's really where my home is.

But a strange, strange, strange thing happened. When I was doing all this part-time stuff, a missionary took me to the walled city. And in the natural, it's a terrible, terrible place.

There were about 100,000 people in about six or seven acres. And that's probably smaller than this showground for 100,000 people to live in. And when I was first there, there was no electricity.

One toilet, which had no water, it was standing. And just open gutters where everybody else emptied their pots. So you had to be careful walking through the streets because sometimes things came out of the window.

And anyway, the sewers were so open that when it rained, they would overflow. And there were more rats than people. So you had to be very careful.

That was just physically awful. Of course, in other ways, much more awful. Because I soon saw that there were little girls who were sold.

One of them, I can remember, I watched. And she was visited on average once every 30 minutes. She was a forced prostitute.

And she had a guard, but she wouldn't need one after a year. She would have had nowhere to run to if she was still alive. And I saw the old ladies who looked after the young girls.

And you wouldn't be angry with them, would you? For they were the young girls themselves, you see. And they would need someone to live off in their old age. They had needle marks on the back of their hands, the old ones.

And I saw the old men drug pushers. The old men who guarded the gambling dens and the kids. And that was what I saw in the natural.

But a strange thing. After the second time I was there, I came out with my heart singing. And I didn't understand what it was to begin with.

Just no idea. And, you know, it's like when it's your birthday or somebody said how beautiful you are. You sort of go, hmm, hmm.

You know, you can go, hmm, for the whole day. And I was going, hmm, for the whole day. And I thought, well, nobody said I look beautiful and it's not my birthday.

What's this? And every time I went in Wall City, it was like that. It was like, I love to be there. And people say, you know, how brave and how dramatic.

Well, that's rubbish. No, no, I liked it. And, you know, I couldn't understand.

Other people used to appear in Hong Kong and say, Jackie, I'm praying about my future. And I thought, why would you need to? Haven't you seen the Wall City? Don't you want to spend your life here? You know, I thought everybody did. Because I saw another city.

I always saw another city. Where aliens and strangers on earth, people who say such things show that they're looking for a country of their own. If they'd been thinking of the country they'd left, they would have had opportunity to return.

Instead, they were longing for a better country. A heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God.

For he has prepared a city for them. And I saw the other city. I saw the other city.

I saw, it's a bit like it describes in Zachariah. A city with streets. Where children could play and all men could sit.

I saw the kids who were abandoned, and many were locked up all day because their parents had to go out to work, locked in one room. I saw them in families. I saw those old prostitutes holding up their heads.

And I saw the little girls who'd been sold. Having a proper childhood in safety. With good men.

I saw the lame jumping. And the blind seeing. Everywhere I, I walked down the street, and I thought, what would he do if he were here? Now, it happened that way around, you see, because I had tried the other way around.

I tried the booklet, you know. But the booklet didn't work because they couldn't read. I tried the questions, like, would you like to come to a meeting? Well, that's a silly thing to say.

If you're watching a brothel, why would you want to go to a Christian meeting? I asked some people, do you know Jesus? And they said, I can't read. Of course you can't be a Christian if you can't read. Or, I have no shoes.

What they meant was they wore flip-flops. And they knew that Christians didn't go to church in flip-flops. Did not.

Or, I don't have Sunday off. Of course you can't be a Christian if you don't have Sunday off. And some of them said, well, I smoke.

Or, I gamble. And I realized when I saw these people, they knew nothing at all about Jesus. All they knew was about Christians.

Carried a big book. Had Sundays off. Had shoes.

And didn't smoke. And I thought, that's pathetic. They've never met him.

And that was when I started to look at the scripture and I thought, what would he do? And I saw him. Jesus goes up to a blind man. And he spits in his eye.

And he sees. And Jesus goes to a high-class dinner party. And this prostitute has the gall to gate-crash.

And publicly wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. Why? Why? How could she dare to do that? She saw something. And I thought, God, I'm spending my life trying to get people to meetings.

And by the way, if you don't yet know Jesus and you've come, well done. You know, we woo them with... Never mind. Anyway, I thought, when Jesus was on earth, all the right people ran after him.

The poor and the hungry. I thought, they've seen something. How would they know? How would she know? How would she know? Do you think it was? That on the way to the dinner party, she looked at him, do you think? And somehow understood.

He knows me. And he still loves me. For he said, she loves much, for she has been forgiven much.

She seemed to know that. While she was washing his feet. Not after.

It's why she washed his feet. How could she know? And I thought, God, I'd really like to do it like Jesus. You know, instead of organizing events and asking people to meetings, I'd like to walk down the streets and have people see Jesus.

I'd like to lay my hands on the sick and see them healed. I'd like to see those who are demonized freed. Dear Jesus, would you teach me to do it like you did? And I've shared a little bit over the last few days.

Some of the stories of how this happened. But you see, I always saw another city. And this morning I shared about one young man called Winson.

And how he was sent to guard me. I started a youth club in the wall city. And when the power of God fell upon him, how he came to know Jesus.

He spoke in tongues and he prayed himself off opium. And I thought, great. I always thought it would be like this.

I mean, why believe in God if you're not expecting him to do this stuff? I mean, don't, by the way. I mean, go completely off God. It would be better to go completely off him than not to expect signs and wonders.

Not to expect him to intervene in a sick and hurting world. Expect. He wants to do this so much.

Expect. And so when I saw this guy get off drugs miraculously, I was very thrilled but not surprised. After all, the moment I believed in Jesus, he was going to be God or not.

So not half. But I didn't understand what was going to happen next. So as I said this morning, I said, God bless you.

My son, be fed, be clothed, be warmed. Stay with the nice guys, you know. And of course, he didn't know any nice guys except me.

And he was a, he was a tribe leader. And we had no believers at this point. And so later on, I took him into my home.

And that's when all the troubles began. Because I, I found that when he believed in Jesus, all his friends queued up and said, well, if Jesus has changed him, I'll believe in Jesus. And I'll come and live in your house too.

And it's because they always went together. And when I said that this morning, and when I said tonight, see if you can catch what I mean. Because they do go together.

I'll believe in Jesus and I'll live in your house. They do go together. They do go together.

It isn't, I'll come to your meeting. That's not at all the same as I'll come and live in your house. And most of the poor and the sick and the delinquent and the limping need a house.

However, that house works out to live in. They need a family on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday. Not a cell group once a week.

They're coming into a family, not an organization, a body. And so all the troubles came because all his friends queued up. And then I learned.

It isn't. They come to Christ. And then because I'm an evangelist, I move on.

Let someone else disciple him and find the next. Not at all. How can you abandon those who are born? You can't.

So I trapped myself. And instead of being an evangelist in the streets, became a very reluctant and not very good house mother. I don't think I was cut out to be.

I love it when I get Valentine's cards from our brothers. I hate it when I get Mother's Day cards. I just don't think of myself like that.

You see, I didn't think of myself as a mother in the Lord at all. You know, I don't know what I am, but I really did not enjoy staying in the house looking after all these guys. I wanted to be out in the street

preaching, but I hadn't got anyone else.

This is why, by the way, I'm completely unsympathetic to people who talk about this is my ministry. Until you're ready to do everything on every single occasion, you don't deserve something called by ministry. They're not useful.

People who are specialists before you're willing to do everything. And of course, it's not my ministry being a house mother. But if I, if I'd let people to the Lord, who else was going to look after them? So my house got full up.

Oh, so many difficulties. This is just to encourage you, you guys, you know, because if you, if you, if you win these kind of people to the Lord. They don't grow up in a day.

Your children need 18 years with two parents. And these people need as long as they need. Which may be long.

And they don't need us to be disappointed because they're not next year's youth leader. By the way, don't do that to them. They need security and safety, not prominence.

And at one time I'd got four men in my house and three of them ran away. And then sometime later, two came back and then two more. And then I made the mistake of thinking that one might be a leader.

Then they all ran away. You know, this, this goes on for years. It goes on for years.

This is just to encourage you because when you start taking these people in and you praying them off drugs and you see miracles and you see them turn back, you'll think. Oh, it wasn't like that for Jackie. Well, it's like that for everyone.

We're telling you the truth now. Just so you know, you can keep going because you see something else. You see, if Jesus died for me before I said, thank you, of course I can keep going.

And if he still loves me when I mess up, I can still love them when they mess up. Why would we be angry with them for not changing at the pace that we think they should? We can still hope. Hope is a great word.

Hopes is something that God gives. And he says, I pray that the eyes of your heart may be open. May may have light in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.

And we need our eyes open. There's always hope. God hasn't finished with anyone.

Why should we? And I can't quite tell you where it happened. But for a number of years, it was like that. We won them.

We saw them go and we laughed as much as we cried or we cried as much as we laughed. It's always like that. We just don't have a normal Christian life, you know, or maybe we have the normal Christian life.

And then one day some stayed. And a few more and a few more. And then a whole lot of what I call rich people came in because they saw what God had done in the poor and they were jealous.

For we have got so much that most people haven't. We understand his grace most than more than most because we need it. We understand his forgiveness more than most because we've received it.

We understand his power more than most because we're so weak. We understand his heart. Because we feel it every day.

We're so rich in these things. And we're rich because we have to live it. It's not because we've read it in a book because many of us can't read.

And then one day it was different. One day it was different. Some stayed.

Some more stayed. The rich came in. We worshipped together.

The sitting room got too big. The government gave us some tin huts to live in. We put a roof over the tin huts.

It wasn't done like this except it did leak. In the summer we had umbrellas inside to keep the glare off. And in the winter umbrellas inside to keep the rain off.

But suddenly we'd grown and grown and grown. And suddenly we became the largest what other people call church in Hong Kong. And all these pastors came.

They used to come in secret by the way. They wore proper clothes in the morning. And in the afternoon they dressed down.

That was our meeting. And they came to us in disguise. And then they came and they said, Jackie, how did you get this? And I said, how did you get all these people? And I said, well, I don't really know.

I'm not a church planter. I know people use that word. I just can't find it's biblical.

But they just sort of grew. And nobody liked the way they'd grown. But they wanted our kids.

They wanted our people. And what happened to the city some years on? This city began to be a place, this walled city. Our meetings weren't, our big meetings were in somewhere else.

But in walled city was when the addicts used to come. They used to come for something called an addicts meeting. And there was a little lady that I used to pass down the streets.

Her name was Alfreda. And she used to pull me by my sleeve. And she'd say, please, please, can I live in your house? And I thought, well, no.

Because my house, which was now growing quite big, was full of men. And that's not where you put a 60-year-old prostitute who's still practicing. She had to still practice.

She sat on a step in the walled city. And she poked a stick into the sewer to make it run. Because it got clogged up, either with sewage or rats.

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