

Living by Human Sight or Spiritual Light

by Peter Masters

We must learn to walk by faith, not by sight, and trust in God's Word to guide us in our decisions and actions.

Duration: 32:38

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, John 20:29, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 11:1

Topics: "Faith And Sight", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the contrast between living solely by human sight, focusing on material and temporary things, and living by faith in God's Word, which reveals eternal truths and spiritual realities. It highlights the limitations of human sight in understanding spiritual matters, salvation, and the need for God's guidance. The speaker urges listeners to embrace faith in God's plan for salvation through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the transformation and blessings that come from walking by faith.

Transcript

And our subject is living by human sight or by spiritual light for we walk by faith not by sight and the last verse of the previous chapter while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal. Now if someone is not a Christian believer however clever, however accomplished, however advanced in various skills, however shrewd if a person is not a Christian believer he walks according to the Bible by sight not by sight, human sight and that is all. So I don't mean this to be in the least bit offensive but if you are the cleverest, the smartest person in the world and you may be immensely clever and skilled nevertheless as a non-Christian if not a believer in Christ you are said to be walking entirely by human sight.

You focus on that which is visible, you focus on material things, things which you can touch and feel, temporary things, transient things, that's your life. You're confined to a material world only and material things. You walk by sight, that is your philosophy, that is your approach and that's a severe limitation and a great tragedy and a shame.

Whereas a Christian walks by faith as well as by human sight. Of course he looks where he's going, of course he is bound to judge things by human judgment as well but he has a hold on something else. He walks by faith and that's an enormous difference.

He takes account of spiritual information, he takes account of spiritual things, eternal things and he sees life in this heavenly spiritual context. Walking by faith he doesn't make up this spiritual heavenly context,

he doesn't make up this heavenly context, he gets it from God's Word, God's published Word of Truth. Sight is so limited.

Faith believes God's explanation for life and the world, God's plan, what God has done for human beings and his eternal plan of salvation for them. There's so many ways we can illustrate this. All the difference between say flying an aeroplane by sight or by instruments.

I don't suppose there are many planes left that are flown by sight but of course that used to be the way and if it was cloudy or night with fierce winds blowing or foggy, of course the aeroplane couldn't take off. It couldn't be done by sight. Sight is so limited it cannot see through so many situations and instruments had to come in and had to take over, instruments of great sophistication.

Of course they did but if you're living life in an entirely material way, walking by sight not by faith, you're actually very limited in what you can see, where you can go, what you can understand, how you look at life. If I can stay with a rather unpleasant military analogy, it's the same with bombs. They used to be dropped by sight.

Now of course there are smart bombs, makes a world of difference. Artillery, the same. Years ago, fifty years ago plus when I was a national serviceman, why artillerymen did everything by sight.

There was no sophistication to aim those shells, there had to be spotters, lookouts, people who would see where the shell landed, where it went off, giving directions by radio back to the gunners, telling them to raise the barrel a little higher or drop it a little lower. It all had to be done by sight and of course there was great inaccuracy and that had to be made up for by sheer weight of fire, of barrage. But now there are very sophisticated instruments.

Well, is your life system sophisticated or crudely simple? Do you walk by sight or by faith? It makes a tremendous difference. If I can stay with this, true in my national service, infantry units were often issued with an intriguing weapon which was made by vicars, the aircraft people, and it was called the vicar's vigilant and it was a rocket propelled shell and it was meant to take out tanks, armour, pillboxes, things like that. It apparently started life radio control but that was a minor disaster because in those far off days that could easily be jammed and goodness knows where it would go.

It may even do a complete about turn and head back where it came from. And so they made this vicar's vigilant rocket propelled shell with a coil of wire on it, believe it or not, and it worked. And this was a coil of fine, very strong copper wire which unravelled as the shell went through the air and so by impulses sent down by the wire it could be controlled in that way and it could hit a target four, five, six hundred yards away and explode it.

But there was a drawback. At the end of the day it was still by sight because somebody sat at the end of the wire with a little box and a joystick and had to steer it onto the target and I've seen demonstrations of it. It went so fast you hardly had time to waggle the joystick to get it on target.

And of course these fellows who were trained on doing this missed far more than they hit and it was a very expensive way of doing things because it depended upon sight. But what an illustration. The limitations of sight.

Nowadays these things are vastly more sophisticated but as an illustration for us you may be walking by sight. All your judgements, all your policy for life, they don't take account of eternity, of spiritual things, of

the complex nature of your being and personality, of your soul. You're just going by sight.

Why? Again I don't mean to insult anybody but I was in this state and condition we all have been and we're living just like children doing things by sight. What I want, what I like, what I'd like to have. Or like animals responding to things I can see and smell and touch and that's all I know.

That's all the equipment I have for going through life and into eternity. Well as the apostle and these are tremendous words, we walk by faith not by sight. Now faith is an information system and a guidance system.

Faith believes what God has said about life, about the origin of life, about human nature, about human estrangement from God, how we've become alienated from him through the fall of the human race through disobedience to God. How God has a plan to save us and to rescue us so that we may be individually reconciled with him and restored to favour and blessed. How he has sent a saviour to make an atonement to suffer and to die for sinners so that all who trust in him can have new life and can walk with him and know him and have him eternally.

Faith believes what God has said about a whole range of things and goes by God's word. The difference between faith and sight. Faith takes account of what God says in this word about mankind, about human nature, about our sinfulness, about our spiritual ignorance and separation from him, about the way we can be saved and changed and brought back to God.

It explains the problem. It shows what Christ had to do to save us from sin. How he had to bear the punishment due to our sins eternally and did so on Calvary's cross.

It talks about conversion and how to find God and what it is to walk in communion with him and know him. Oh, let me give an example or two from this very chapter. Chapter 5, verse 1, the apostle says, For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle, that means this tent, this bodily tent, were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

It tells us how we can tap into God's plan and know him and have heaven and eternity. It tells us all about the soul. If you walk by sight and not by faith and you don't understand anything from God's word and you dismiss it and you don't pay any heed to it, so everything you do and all your decisions are simply by human sight.

Well, you do as you want, you go by your desires and your urges, you do the best you can by what you can see and your life guidance system is no higher than that. It's basic, it's primitive. Sight, with human sight you cannot see God.

He is spiritual and eternal. With human sight only you cannot know about him, what he thinks about you, what his plans are, what he will do with you, how it is possible for him to save you. You cannot tell these things by human sight.

You need the word of God. You need to learn them from God himself, what he has spoken in to our world. Why, if you go by sight you know nothing of human nature.

I'm a reasonably good person, you think to yourself. You don't see your sin because human beings are pretty proud creatures. We don't see ourselves as God sees us.

We don't realize what danger we're in, danger of God's judgment and eternal punishment. We don't understand any of this. Things that determine our eternal future because we're going by what we can see in the world and we have no spiritual information.

We see only external things, not the deep things, not the spiritual things, not the eternal things. We look around our world, what impresses us is reputation, fame, money, goods, material things, entertainment, recreation, food, drink, drugs, all kinds of things, sensual objects. The lust of the flesh says God's word.

The lust of the eyes and the pride of life and that's all we see and that's the guidance system that we go by. Sight is so fallible. You cannot tell when you go to war in Iraq what the outcome will be.

You cannot tell how long it will last and it's still going on. You cannot foresee all the possible twists and turns. Human sight is limited enough even for earthly things, let alone heavenly things.

Afghanistan, no one had any idea how long it would all take, what the complications would be. Human sight is limited even for the here and now. You cannot see eternal things and the need of your soul and understand those things.

Of course you can't. I remember, though this is a trivial matter, it was in 1968, a man who was a very eminent man and I admire him to this day, though he's long dead, and also an extremely eminent doctor made a remark to me about another man and he said, that man his health sadly has broken and his work is finished and he will soon pass from the scene. Well the eminent person and admirable person who made this remark, well he was quite an old man but he's been long, long dead, but the person of whom he spoke is still going strong.

Human sight was so fallible and even experts get things wrong so often. It's been said you can easily get your birth certificate but you can't get your death certificate, not yet at any rate, not if you're sitting here. There's nobody who's got a record of when you're going to die and what you're going to die of and how and in what circumstances.

Human sight cannot see the future. It doesn't know how life will unfold. You can't really tell the political changes.

What's going to happen in this country? I'm not making any political remarks but what's going to happen? What sort of government will we have? Four years time, five years time, what twists and turns are going to take place? Anybody's guess. You can't tell the future with human sight. You don't know whether you'll be made redundant.

You don't know whether this country will be plunged into war. Anything is possible. You can't see the pitfalls in your own life.

If you're going by human sight you don't know when you marry, how your husband will turn out or how your wife will turn out. Human sight cannot see these things, even less can it see the devil, the enemy of souls and his temptations and how he'll make fun of you and play games with you and trip you up in so many ways and how he'll pollute your life and bring you into all kinds of sin gradually and then trap you. You don't know what kind of person you're going to be, whether you'll harden, what will happen to you, what you'll be into and what Satan will seek to do to bring you further and further away from love for the living God.

Human sight cannot see spiritual things. It cannot see the soul, doesn't believe it exists, doesn't understand these things. What have you got friends? Human sight? Or do you have faith in what God has said about all these issues and about life and about salvation? Sight, human sight, a thousand and one different possible opinions and these days everybody's right.

The ancient Assyrians and in fact most of the ancient world thought that the only way of achievement was conquest and the only way to gain merit was by violence. Things have changed now sometimes to the other extreme. It's peace at any price even if justice isn't satisfied often these days and a very fragile foundation is laid for some new order.

Thousand and one different opinions result from human sight. I mentioned this before but to an octogenarian I am happily, I like their point of view, I am a youngster, little more than a kid. To all the teenagers here this evening I am ancient.

Human sight comes to wildly different conclusions and in line with our various prejudices and so on. The eye and human opinion is so fallible. It needs the education of the Bible.

It needs a standard to go by in life and we change our view sometimes by the hour. People can either be pessimistic or optimistic about something all dependent on whether they're hungry or whether they've been fed or whether it's the morning or whether it's the evening. Our views and our opinions swing about whether we're anxious about something or whether we're relaxed.

Things change constantly and according to our temperament. Faith, what is faith? Some people foolishly say faith is like suspending your reason and believing incredible things. Well, how way up that is.

Faith is very simply believing God's version of events, God's view on life, God's statements about the world, its creation, its fall, the need of the human soul, what he has done about it, how he has provided a saviour. Faith isn't suspending your reason. Faith is believing what God has said and proving it.

You believe the word of God and how God accounts for the creation of man and what God says about human personality and this conscience that we have and this realization of right and wrong combined with our inability to do that which is right. Why the explanations of the word of God hold water and they fit the case and the more you read the word of God and understand its explanation of life, the more it's confirmed to you. As being the true and real sane explanation for all things.

Faith believes this and proves it to be true. Once you have faith, what you see with your eyes only confirms what God has said. So do you go by sight or you go by faith? You go by faith in God's word.

You read of the wonderful, the marvellous message of what God has done about the human plight, are not knowing him, are being cut off from him. It explains to us as I've mentioned how Christ came into the world to suffer and to die because God is so holy and perfect and just. He cannot, cannot, cannot let us off our sins.

That would be to compromise his holy nature and to pollute his moral universe. Sin must be purged and punished. Therefore how can God forgive us? Only by coming himself in the person of the second person of the Trinity Jesus Christ coming into this world and going to Calvary's cross and some, that invisible thing taking place even as he suffered and hung nailed to a cross.

God the Father put upon him all the punishment due to us if we believe in him for our sin and he purged it away. He took the indescribable, intolerable weight of punishment on behalf of billions of people so that we could be pronounced clean and forgiven and blessed with all the blessings of God. Human sight will never see it.

It is God who discloses it in his word. God who describes it and faith runs to it with eagerness and readiness. This is an amazing message it says.

Faith says I embrace it. I receive it. I make this saviour mine.

I fall at his feet. I repent of my sin. I ask him to save me.

He is the only one who can take away my sin and my punishment for me and I trust him and depend upon him. That's the difference between walking by human sight and walking by faith. When I come to Christ and I say Lord forgive me I yield my life to thee.

I will be under thy rule and thy command. I will live for thy glory. Oh the extent to which he changes me and blesses me and makes himself known to me.

Now I walk by faith but I've proved it. He's changed me. I've changed me.

He has blessed me. He hears and answers my prayers. Helps me.

He is my saviour and my Lord and will keep me all the way to the end of life's journey. The Christian life is a life full of evidence, full of proof, full of wonders. It started by an act of faith trusting what God has said and it issues in an ocean of personal proof and verification and certainty what it is to walk by faith rather than exclusively by sight.

The soul is seen. You understand yourself when you have faith in God's word. I am yes flesh and blood but I'm also a living soul, an undying soul and I have the power of reason.

I'm a special creation by God with reason and creativity and a conscience and now I should love him and come to him and have his forgiveness and know him and walk with him and prove him. What a fool I would be to spend my life walking only by human sight. Oh dear friends, it's almost as if you live in a town and you work in another town and it's miles away.

You have to go there every day, uphill and down dale. The pathway is rough and every day of your working life, bar weekends, you get up early in the morning and you toil to this neighbouring town but distant town. Yes and all the time you never knew there was a railway and it would have whisked you there in minutes and it would take another route and show you beautiful views and give you great experiences and you could have taken the train but you didn't know about that.

You were ignorant about that and you toiled and you laboured. That's the difference between walking by sight and by faith in God's word and walking with him and being saved and blessed by him. However clever you may be dear friend and you may well be, however able to walk by human sight is the most sadly, tragically, foolish way to spend your life with no map, no idea of the way of salvation, no explanation for the world, no knowledge of eternal things, the day of judgement, the need for forgiveness, heaven and hell, taking numerous painful wrong turns throughout life's journey with no help from God, no answers to prayer and suffering many an injury and much exhaustion along the route.

What a tragic thing it is to live by human sight alone, friends by faith. Believe God, explore his word, learn the way of salvation, learn about Christ, learn about his amazing love, learn about what he did when he came to earth, demonstrating his divine power, healing thousands upon thousands of people, demonstrating the way in which he saves souls, learn about his death on Calvary, his love for needy sinners, the price he paid to purchase souls from condemnation and eternal judgement, learn about Christ, learn to be saved, learn the way by repenting of your sin, seeing your need, asking his forgiveness, pleading for the great change to take place in your life. Come to him, learn about a new life, a life of prayer, wonderful experiences, a new outlook, new joys and happiness, walking with God and his plan for your entire life.

Oh friends, live by faith, not by sight, that's the word of the Apostle Paul, we walk by faith, not by sight, while we look not at the things which are seen exclusively, but at the things which are not seen, spiritual things, for the things which are seen are temporal, earthly, temporary, transient, one day to disappear, but the things which are not seen, salvation of the soul and new life, these things are eternal. When you come to Christ, you come to God, you come to the Saviour, the only Saviour, you walk with him and very soon you're looking back on the years of your life with such love and gratitude to him, he's your Saviour. You've learned to say, why there was a Welsh born hymn writer in the 19th century, Anna Waring, she wrote, wherever he, Christ, she based these words on her reading of the 23rd Psalm, this particular verse, wherever he may guide me, no want can turn me back, my shepherd is beside me and nothing can I lack, his wisdom ever waketh, his sight is never dim, he knows the way he taketh and I will walk with him.

And that's what you do throughout life's journey, you know him, you've found him, he blesses you, he's near to you, you're assured of your salvation, he is yours and you are his and he will take you all the way home through every difficulty, every trial, you'll serve him, you'll witness to him, you'll love him and you'll prove him day by day, wonderfully. You need to repent of your sin, you need to believe in Jesus Christ, you need to give him your life and hand it entirely to him and then you walk by faith in him and his word, you have an information system, you have guidance from him, his hand is on your life and no longer are you at the mercy, the miserable, ignorant mercy of human sight alone, you must come to him. Let's pray together.

O God our gracious heavenly father, help us all we pray, show us the shallowness and the futility of life by human wisdom alone. O Lord give us also that higher source of information, speak to our souls, bless us from the solid unchanging information of thy word from the gospel of salvation and lead us to Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world, the shepherd of human souls, we ask it in his name for his sake. Amen.

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