

The Eyes of Christ

by Tom Macartney

Christ sees us with the eyes of holy love, evaluating our true worth and measuring everything by the standard of His Father's will, and He desires to purify and consecrate the church, making it a place where God is at home and where people can find Him.

Scripture: Matthew 17:2, Mark 11:15, John 2:13, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Revelation 1:14

Topics: "Divine Love", "Holiness"

Description

Tom Macartney preaches about the future encounter with the Lord, emphasizing the different reactions people will have based on their relationship with Him. He delves into the imagery of God's holiness and love portrayed as fire in the Bible, highlighting the all-encompassing nature of divine love that seeks to purify and destroy all evil. Macartney challenges Christians to reflect on the state of their lives, the church, and society in light of Christ's discerning eyes and the need for cleansing and consecration to align with God's will.

Transcript

One day we shall all see the Lord face to face. For those who have lived without Him this will be a day of overwhelming tragedy; for the half-hearted, lukewarm Christian, a day of profound regret and loss; but for those who have yielded fully to the claims of divine love, a day of unspeakable joy and fulfillment.

We Christians badly need to see the Lord Jesus as He now is. We tend to stop short of His ascension to the throne of majesty. When Peter, James and John were given a preview of Christ in His glory at His transfiguration, "His face shone like the sun." When Paul met Him on the Damascus road he was blinded by the light of His glory. When John saw Him in the Revelation, "His face was like the sun shining in full strength ... His eyes were like a flame of fire." As the face is the most expressive part of a person, so the eyes are of the face. Let us consider what this means.

In the Bible the Lord is often likened to fire. In Exodus we see Him appearing to Moses in the burning bush, and later read that, "The appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire." In Isaiah we meet the question, "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire, with everlasting burnings?" In the Revelation we find the Holy Spirit likened to, "Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne."

Now it is not only God's holiness that is portrayed in this way but His love. Divine love is holy love. The nature of God is one. He is not sometimes loving and sometimes righteous. He is always both in all He

does.

The love of God is the greatest creative power in the universe. Everything has sprung out of the eternal love within the Trinity, and supremely, God's plan for man. This love is both wonderful and terrible because it is bound to destroy everything that would spoil or stand in the way of its purpose, that is evil and contrary to its nature. It is holy love. This is why God is spoken of as a devouring fire, a jealous God. These words express the depth of His love and His indignation with all that would mar His wonderful plan. His love is not sentimental. It is both strong and tender with those oppressed by evil and ruthless with evil itself in all its guises.

To understand this better we must turn to the Lord Jesus, for He is always the clearest exposition of God's character. His eyes, aflame with holy love, are quick to pierce the mask of hypocrisy, quick to see the outstretched hand of need.

Nowhere is this more clearly seen than on the two occasions when He cleansed the temple, first when He came to Jerusalem at the beginning of His public ministry and again on the day after His triumphal entry just before the cross. That He should cleanse it twice is surely significant. It sums up all He came to do.

Now what was it that was going on in the temple? And what should have been going on, and was not? Why such fiery indignation? And what has this compelling incident to say to us today? Let us consider it carefully.

Within the vast temple area, which could hold about 200,000 people, was the outer court of the Gentiles. Here the market was situated; there should have been none in the temple. It belonged to the family of the High-Priest, who drew a fat income from it. Here the people could buy their animals and doves for sacrifice. Nearby was the exchange with the money-changers, who also made a handsome profit, for only Jewish coins might be used in the temple and exact half-shekels were needed for the annual tribute. Further, the temple was being used as a thoroughfare, for its many gates provided convenient short-cuts across the city.

The temple was therefore being desecrated not only by big-business, love of money and self-interest, but also by the many who took the easy way of compromise by using the market for their sacrifices--note, they too were cast out by the Lord--and those who used religion as a convenient short-cut. But it is only when we realise what was missing in the temple that we shall really understand the consuming power of His zeal; "Zeal for thy house shall consume me."

The Lord Jesus called the temple, My Father's house. It should have been a place where GOD was at home and where people could find Him, but God was in reality now absent, although the routine and ritual continued. True, the faithful few walked with God amid the ruins, but Vanity Fair had invaded the sanctuary and made it a house of trade, a den of robbers.

It should have been a place of heart-warming, illuminating instruction in the knowledge of the living God. Instead, much of the teaching given there was burdensome, confusing and calculated to drive men away from God in despair. This is why Christ taught in the temple, and why He said, "Come to me ... learn from me ...my burden is light."

It should have been a house of prayer for all the nations, where all men might discover and enjoy God, a gathering place in a shattered world. Instead, it was a divided house, a tragic contradiction and a bitter

disappointment to many a pilgrim visitor.

It should have been a place where real need was met by a real God. We read, "And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them". But usually the pathetic crowds would come with their needs and problems, and go away from what claimed to be the house of GOD, just the same, disillusioned.

It should have been a place where a wonderful God was worshipped, "But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant". Not only had these leaders failed to glorify God and meet the people's need, they would clearly stop at nothing to maintain the status quo and safeguard their own position. They had taken over God's house.

So the Lord came as a refining fire to His temple in fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy, but what is the abiding message, the meaning for us today?

We may, of course, think of mankind, for man was made to be the dwelling place of God and the temple of humanity has been defiled by sin. The devil has ever been out to degrade and destroy men and women just because they were made in God's image. And there is no mistaking what lies behind the moral landslide we are witnessing in this permissive age of anarchy. How much that is going on, which the majority have already been conditioned to accept, is an affront to human dignity. With powerful visual aids to help him now, the devil is set to make man lower than the animals, man who was created to become higher than the angels.

We may think of the individual Christian's life for, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?" What do the eyes of Christ see in the temples of our lives? How do we measure up to God's will?

But we must go beyond the personal to the fellowship of the believing church, the temple of God, to find the most searching implications. Is it not here that the Lord has His greatest controversy with us? There seems to be a conspiracy of silence today about the state of the church, or at least a tacit agreement to consider it in a merely academic way. We may talk and preach about almost anything else, but about God's will for His church we must be silent. It raises too many awkward questions and few are prepared to give ground or do anything about it. The majority seem to accept that nothing can or even ought to be done. Expediency rules the day. So it was with the temple of old. Provided a Jew accepted the existing situation--the dominion of man in the temple of God--he might worship God privately as he liked. But touch the existing regime and your life was in jeopardy. The cleansing of the temple was probably the greatest single factor in bringing Christ to His cross. It cost Him everything to cleanse the Father's house. It always does. And yet, it was the cross that made possible the cleansing and consecration of the true temple, the church. Men might try to destroy the temple of his body, but God not only raised His Son from the dead but, in Him, the temple of true believers. God is never defeated, and no one ever suffers in vain that God may have His rightful place. The cleansing of our individual lives and the fellowship of the church will mean the cross for us also.

But what are the issues we should be facing in the light of this incident? Are they not obvious? Is it not true that man with his ideas and methods has taken over the house of God? Christ now has little or no say in the running of His church. We run His church and affairs for Him, with a prayer, of course, for His blessing on our efforts. Is this not serious? Then, consider how often money is at the bottom of some church

problem, perhaps keeping things going along certain lines, and how many are making money out of the work of God. Consider again how much easy religion there is around, designed to entertain people, to make them happy but not holy. Consider how much church activity is a short-cut to self-fulfilment, and how Christ is being exploited.

Then, how far is the church today in any real sense the Father's house, where God is at home, or, a house of prayer? Why, the prayer meeting is often the worst attended meeting. How far is it a place where the heart-warming, living Word of God is transforming lives? Is there not a dearth of such ministry today? How often do we see the hand of God stretched forth to save? Is not the high infant mortality rate among those who profess conversion a cause for concern? How far is the church now a place where people of every nation and type find the harmony which this world vainly seeks? Why, our divisions and dissensions are a scandal. And where, oh where, is that all-important sense of wonder and spirit of worship in our meetings?

How can we be so blind and unconcerned when the eyes of Christ are upon us? How can we be so complacent when He is being robbed of His rightful place, when so many of His members are impoverished and paralysed, when man's foolish wisdom, masquerading as sanctified common sense, is the order of the day, when there is so much lip-service and self-service and so little heart-service, so little genuine preoccupation with the Lord and His interests?

Christ walks among us today as He did of old with eyes of holy love, like a flame of fire, evaluating the true worth of everything going on, measuring everything by the standard of His Father's will.

May He enable us to see things as He does and share something of His concern, but above all to humble ourselves and allow Him to cleanse His temple and fill it with the glory of His presence.

Bible references: Matt 1:28-30; 17:2; 21:12-17; Mark 11:11; 15-18; John 2:13-22; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20; Eph. 2: 19-22; 1 Tim. 6:10; Heb. 1:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:16; Rev. 1:14, 16; 4:5; Exod. 3:2-5; 24:17; Deut. 4:24; 2 Chron. 7:1-3; Is. 33:14; Mal. 3:1-3

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tom-macartney/the-eyes-of-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net