

# Conference for Missionaries-1986 - Part 5

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the necessity of spiritual clarity through correctional lenses that reflect the fear of the Lord, the love of Christ, and the eternal value of souls.*

**Duration:** 36:47

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

**Topics:** "Conference", "Responsibility of Believers", "Spiritual Vision"

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## Description

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of having spiritual '20-20 vision' through seven correctional lenses that help us understand our purpose and responsibilities as Christians. He discusses the fear of the Lord, the love of Christ, the value of a soul, and the command to be ambassadors for Christ, urging believers to live with an awareness of hell and the judgment seat of Christ. MacDonald encourages the audience to reflect on their lives and actions in light of eternity, reminding them that only what is done for Christ will last. He concludes with a prayer for spiritual vision and dedication to God's work.

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## Transcript

Maybe I should say at the outset that I won't be the least bit offended if you men who are wearing coats would like to take them off. And I think the Lord wouldn't mind either. I think he'd rather you be comfortable.

Somebody said to me this morning it was going to be 98, and I've been roasting ever since they said that. And I'd also like to express my thanks once again to the staff and to all of you for the wonderful time here at the conference, days of heaven on earth, and they come to an end all too quickly. Would you turn in your Bibles this morning, please, to 2 Corinthians 5, that I would like to begin reading in verse 10.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men that we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them with glory in appearance and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which

live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I'd like to speak to you this morning on 20-20 vision. Maybe I should have chosen a different text, because you really find 20-20 vision in John 20-20. You know what it says? It says, Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

That's 20-20 vision, isn't it? Actually, in a physical sense, no one has perfect vision. Many of you, I see, are not wearing glasses, so that's fine. Your vision is quite adequate, but they tell me that the curvature of the eyeball is not perfect in anyone, because nothing's perfect in this life, and everybody has a stigmatism to one extent or another.

But most of you are getting by handsomely. I see some in the audience who are wearing glasses, and probably some have lenses that I can't see. But when you don't have perfect sight, sometimes you have to go to the optometrist or the eye doctor, and some of you will know what I'm talking about.

I go there, and he sits me down in a chair, and it's kind of a long, narrow, dark room, and he puts kind of a gadget in front of my eyes. He closes this eye altogether, and here's a hole in this eye, and he says to me, Now, Mr. McDonald, what do you see on the chart? And I say, what chart is that, doctor? And he says, my, this is really a serious case. We've got to do something about that.

So, he starts flipping lenses into that machine, whatever it is. I wish I knew the name of it. And he says, now what do you see? Well, all I can think of is a verse that says, I see men as trees walking, or trees as men walk.

It's all very vague and obscure to me. So, he keeps flipping lenses in, and you know, pretty soon, everything's clear. Everything is clear, and I can read the lines on the chart.

He does it with both eyes. So, that's my 2020 vision. Wonderful, isn't it? I would like to suggest to you, in the passage of Scripture we read today, that there are seven correctional lenses that God has for us to give us 2020 spiritual vision.

Seven correctional lenses. And the first one is in verses 11 through 13, where Paul says, Now, actually, I'm going to take those words out of context, and in doing so, I'm going to explain it to you, what I'm doing. In the context, when Paul says, Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, he's not speaking about the fact of hell.

That's what I'm going to use it for. The fact of hell. What Paul is saying in verses 11 through 13 is that, Knowing the fear, having a reverential awe of God, he persuades men as to the integrity of his ministry.

That's what he's really talking about, the integrity of his ministry. There was no hocus-pocus about his ministry. Everything was above board.

He was a man of character, ministering the word of God in power. Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, we persuade men that we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. Notice, for we commend not ourselves unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them with glory in appearance and not in heart, and so forth.

He's talking about his own ministry there. But, I'd like to use this passage, Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, as a correctional lens that you and I should have in our spiritual glasses. That is, the fact of hell.

And, let me say this, that when we come to that expression, Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, I oftentimes think that, nowadays, when we talk about the fear of the Lord, we explain it away. We say, well, it doesn't mean fear. You know, it means reverence, and it means awe, and all of that, and by the time we get through, there isn't enough left in the verse to make soup for a sick grasshopper.

I believe in the fear of the Lord. I think we ought to fear displeasing Him, don't you? I don't want to know the chastening hand of God in my life. It's really something to fear.

So, don't explain away the fear of the Lord. Live with it before you. But, Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, the fact of hell, I would like to suggest to you today that every one of us should have a correctional lens in our spiritual glasses in which we see the burning fires of hell.

Ever stop to think about hell? You know, it's really a doctrine in the Bible that I wouldn't believe if I didn't find it in the Bible, because I don't want to believe it. But, I have to believe it, because the word of God says so. It says, The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.

It says, Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And, I want to tell you something today. If there's no hell, there's no heaven, because the same Lord Jesus who spoke about heaven spoke even more about hell.

And, we should think about that, and we should think about loved ones, and neighbors, and friends who are outside of Christ, and who are bound for hell. Eternity in hell. It's really a tremendously sobering thought.

I often think, what would happen if the church of Jesus Christ really grasped the truth of hell? I wonder if there's some letter that some of us here should write this afternoon. I wonder if there's some phone call that we should make. I wonder if there's someone to whom we should send some Christian literature, something explaining the way of salvation, because of this tremendous fact, the fact of hell.

An eternity of conscious suffering. You say, is it literal fire in hell? I do not become occupied with those technicalities. I believe it's terrible.

Just to think of a place where there's no love. Isn't that awesome? No compassion, no friendship, no fellowship. None of the things that we value so much in life, the positive virtues, were not to be found in hell.

Not one of them. Some years ago, at Emmaus Bible School, the Lord was working in a wonderful way among the young people, some of the young fellows there. Some of those fellows are on the mission fields of the world today, and they were gripped with the fact of hell.

And one of them said to me one day, Mr. MacDonald, the story of the rich man in hell, I said, yes. He said, that happened, let's say, Jesus said that a couple of thousand years ago, I said, yes. He said, would you say that man is still in hell? Well, I said, Larry, if you're going to believe the Bible, you better say that.

He said, isn't it time we started getting serious about it? And it is, too. But, I suggest that every one of us should have in our spiritual frames that corrective lens in which we see the fires of hell, and are reminded daily that this is the doom of those outside of Christ. Somebody asked yesterday, is it right to use fear as a motivation in the gospel? The answer is yes, it's very right.

If God won't have to draw people by love, he will drive them by fear, and it's a valid fear, too. A valid fear, and we should never forget it. The second correctional lens is in verses 14 and 15, the love of Christ.

The love of Christ. It's a lovely verse. It says, The love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then we're all dead, and that he die for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them that rose again.

The love of Christ. That doesn't mean our love for Christ. Our love for Christ wouldn't constrain a mosquito.

It's Christ's love for us. That's the great constraining power, isn't it? A couple of years ago, I visited David Livingston's home. It's turned into a museum in Scotland, and they have a tremendous memorial to David Livingston, and on this side of a great plaque it says, The love of Christ constrains me, Paul, and on this side it says, The love of Christ compels me, David Livingston.

That's what took him out to darkest Africa with the gospel of redeeming grace. The love of Christ. Dear friends, there's no motive in all the world as strong as a motive of love, and the love of Christ should be the strongest.

We should be willing to do for Jesus what we're not willing to do for the almighty dollar. Isn't that right? We should. We should be willing to do for the Lord Jesus what we're not willing to do for, think of who he is, the Lord of life and glory.

Think of what he did. He came down to this planet, this infinitesimal planet, and died for a race of rebels. Oh, who am I that for my sake my Lord should take frail flesh and die? What did he do at the cross? He bought me.

I must never forget that. He bought me at the cross of Calvary. Now, I no longer belong to myself.

If he bought me and I take my life and use it the way I want to use it, I'm a thief, because I'm taking something that doesn't belong to me. I like that word, constraint. It means moves you along, and that's what the love of Christ does.

It moves you along in life, keeps you motivated to pour out your life for him. What does it say? It says, if one died for all, then we're all dead. Why did he die for us? Because we were alive and kicking on planet earth? No, he died for us because we were dead in trespasses and sins.

We were helpless, we were hopeless, we were useless, we were worthless, and he didn't die for us so that we would go on living our little petty lives the way we want to live them, did he? No, he didn't. He died for us so that henceforth we would live for him. What a travesty to see people saved by the grace of God, saved through faith in the Lord Jesus, and just going out and living the way they want to live.

That isn't why he died. He died so that henceforth we would live for him who died for us. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small? Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Do you get it? Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. O Christ, thy bleeding hands and feet, thy sacrifice for me, each wound, each tear demands my life, a sacrifice for thee. Dear friends, are we constrained to this? Do I have that corrective lens in my glasses today in which I see a cross, and on that cross the Lord of life and glory dying for me? Dear friends, if I see that day by day, it's going to change the whole tenor of my life.

Help me on the road to 2020 vision. Correctional lens number three, the value and eternity of a soul. Verse 16.

This says that we should have a correctional lens in our glasses to help us look on people. Before we were saved, we would look on people, and we'd see that lady going down the street and say, What a ridiculous hairdo! That's the dumbest hairdo I think I ever saw. But, we don't say that anymore.

We don't look at people as people in the flesh. We say, hmm, a precious soul for whom Christ died makes a difference, doesn't it? Makes a real difference. A precious soul for whom Christ died.

Think of the value of a soul. Think of the most decrepit, ungainly, unlovely person that you've ever met in the world. Maybe you want to go down the skid row.

Maybe that's the place to find this person. Wallowing around in filth, drunk, throwing up all over the place. And just remember, soul is worth more than all the wealth in the world.

If you could take all the diamonds in the world, and make a mountain out of them, and all the gold and silver and platinum, and make a mountain out of that, and add to it all the stocks and bonds and securities, and all the real estate titles in the world, and every other form of wealth in the world, you get that great mountain, and it is a great mountain, and I want to tell you, that person down skid row is worth more than all. The Lord Jesus put a price on that person at the cross of Calvary, and said, he's worth my dying for. Well, if you and I want to be honest, we'd have to say the price was too high, wouldn't it? We don't deserve that he should have died for us, that he should have paid that price for us, but he did it.

It's just the same, the value of a soul. When I want to see the value of a soul, I look to Calvary and see the Lord dying, and he would have died for any one sinner, as well as for a race of sinners. And then I think of the eternity of a soul.

I think that that person is going to live eternally. He's never going to cease to exist, either in conscious punishment or conscious bliss. And I think, oh, the great thing in life is to be used of God to do a work in that person's life.

And it is, too. I think it's wonderful to be used of God to help people physically. I think that's wonderful.

There are so many professions today that are dedicated to that great. But I think it's wonderful to be the means in God's hands to see a soul saved from sin, and one day transformed into the image of Christ. The value and eternity of a soul.

F. W. H. Myers said it well. He said, Only like souls I see the folk thereunder, Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings, Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder, Sadly contented with a show of things. Then, with a rush, the intolerable craving Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call, Oh, to save these, to perish for their saving, Die for their life, be offered for them all.

That's the spirit. The value and eternity of a soul. Oh, to save these, to perish for their saving, Die for their life, be offered for them all.

I think we should have a corrective lens in our classes, which we're constantly reminded of the value and eternity of souls around us, so to change the whole complexion of our lives, change our vision for the future. The fourth correctional lens is in verse 17. It says, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Some versions say there is a new creation. Good either way. Good either way.

You don't have to choose. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away.

Behold, all things have become new. I call this corrective lens the purpose of our creation. The purpose of our creation.

And that means that I want to look out on this and say, Why am I here? Why was I ever born? And why was I saved? Why did God save me? Did he save me so that I'd become an expert in atomic tiddlywinks? There must have been something higher than that. Must have been something higher than that. And I think about that, and I think, only one life.

And how quickly it's going by. Most of it's gone. It will soon be past.

And only what's done for Christ will last. Here it is, and I'm going to give it up. How am I going to give it up? I'm sure many of you have read the story of the missionary in China.

Standard Oil was looking years ago, looking for a man to represent them in China. And they contacted this missionary. He was really an unusual man.

And they offered him a very neat salary if he would represent Standard Oil in China. And he didn't bite for the offer. And so they raised, every man has a price, and they raised the price, and he still didn't bite.

And they raised the price a third time in salary, and he wasn't interested. And finally they said to him, rather in disgust, what's the matter? Isn't the price enough? He said, yes, the salary is enough, but the job is too small. So that makes me think of William Kelly, a great Greek scholar years ago in England, and his son, he had tutored his son.

His son went off to the university, and he was really an expert in Greek. And when he went there, the professor said to him, where did you learn Greek? And he said, my uncle, William Kelly. So when they had a vacancy there in the Greek department in the university, they got a little committee together, and they went and visited William Kelly.

They wanted him to accept a chair there in the university, teaching Greek. And William Kelly seemed so casual and so unconcerned about it all. And finally one of them said to him, what's the matter, Mr. Kelly? Don't you want to make a name for yourself in the world? And he said, which world, gentlemen? That's it? Yes, he did want to make a name for himself in the world.

Just which world? The value, the purpose of our creation. Why am I here? When I get to the end of the journey and look back, what will make me feel satisfied? I've often told the story about that lady out in Minnesota. She had a nice house there in the middle of the prairies, and one day she looked out on the horizon and there was a prairie fire.

And it started moving toward her. The wind was coming toward her house. And she was alarmed, but then the wind changed and started blowing away.

And so she was no more alarmed. But then the wind changed again, and it came closer, and she realized she had to get out. And she had a lot of prized possessions in that house, and she went into the bedroom and she grabbed some of her most prized possessions.

And then she remembered that she had a lot of silverware in the dining room, so she went into the dining room. She had to drop some of the things that she got in the bedroom and grab some of the things she got in. Well, then she remembered about those expensive vases in the living room.

And she went from room to room, dropping things and picking up other things. And according to the story, when the fire came laughing at her house and she finally had to get out, she had in one hand a well-worn ham bone and in the other a bucket of sour milk. Now, that may be only a story.

It's okay. But I want to tell you, it's possible to go through life and get to the end and have in one hand a well-worn ham bone and in the other a bucket of sour milk. You can make the spiritual application, I'm sure.

Why am I here? Am I really fulfilling God's purpose in my life? Correctional lens number five, the plain command of Christ, verses 18 and 19. And all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. What does that mean? It means he says, go, go with the message of reconciliation.

Go and tell sinful men that their sins have created distance between them and God, but there's a way in which they can be reconciled to God through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work on Calvary's cross. The plain command of Christ. Have this correctional lens in your glasses.

Jesus commanded, love your neighbor as yourself. I tell you, I have a Bible, but there are people all over the world who don't have a Bible. If I love them as myself, I'm going to do something about that.

Think of the Christian literature. There's no country in the world that has as many books, concordances, dictionaries, reference books on the Bible. No country has it like the United States.

Love your neighbor as yourself. I have the gospel. I know the way of salvation.

People in over half the world have never heard of man's only hope. Over 7,000 people die daily of starvation, but over half the world has never heard of man's only hope. Jesus said, go! And I believe that someday I'm going to stand before him, and he's going to say to me, what did you do with the Great

Commission? Do you believe that? It was there, Matthew 28.

What did you do about the Great Commission? Correctional lens number six, the responsibility of those who have the answer. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's head, be reconciled to God.

I want to tell you, dear friends, it's a serious thing to have the answer, and to hoard it. Glenn told us an incident in his life this week, and it awakened unpleasant memories in my life. When I first went into the Navy, I was in an air transport squadron.

It was a very small group, stationed first in Kansas City. One night, I went into the officer's mess hall, and there was just one fellow there. He was a pilot.

His name was Max Knudsen from Minnesota. Max had his supper. He had already ordered his steak, and he was sitting there eating and reading his paper.

And I sat down, and I ordered my supper and had my paper, too. And I got a very distinct impression from the Lord. Speak to Max about his soul.

And I said, Lord, he's eating his supper, and he wouldn't appreciate being spoken to. My supper came. I began to eat it and read the paper.

At the same time, I had a very distinct impression from the Lord. I don't know if you get these impressions, but I do. I don't hear audible voices, but the burden of the Lord is on me, and I know it when the Lord's burden is on me.

I said, speak to Max about his soul. I said, Lord, he's reading the paper. It's hardly the right time to speak to him.

I finished my supper. Max finished his supper. He went out.

He and a co-pilot took a cargo flight west that night. They landed in Winslow, Arizona, and they took off, and the plane disappeared. And I thought, how can a plane disappear in the United States? With all our search and rescue facilities, a plane disappeared.

They searched for a week. They couldn't find it. They searched for two weeks, three weeks, four weeks, a month.

Two months, three months, couldn't find the plane. The spring thaw came, and the Boy Scouts were climbing a mountain outside of Winslow. It's called San Francisco Peak.

They saw the tail structure of a plane sticking out of a snowdrift. They sent down, and the search party came up. It was a plane.

Max's body and his co-pilot's body in there. It hit me very hard. But what really hit me hard was one day I was walking by the hangar back in Kansas City, and they had spread out a tarpaulin over the deck of the hangar there, and they had Max's suitcase, his bag, and the co-pilot's bag, and they were inventorying their effects to send them to their parents.

It was very visible. And I want to tell you, I ran to my room, and I wept. I wept hissing, hot tears.

I want to tell you, it's a terrible thing to have the answer and to hoard it. To have the answer and not to share it, especially when you get clear directions from the Lord to do it. I often think of those words of the Lord Jesus, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

There are some things that the unfaithful can do just as well as we can do. Don't make that the main purpose in your life. Be indefensible for Jesus.

Isn't that it? Love your neighbor as yourself. The sixth, I must hurry. That's the sixth.

The responsibility of those who have the answer. The seventh is the judgment seat of Christ. Back in verse 10, that's where we started.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad. And so, I think we should have that correctional lens in our glasses, to which we see a judgment seat, and the Lord Jesus is sitting upon it, and we're going to stand in front of it someday. Praise God, our sins won't be brought out then.

They've been covered by the blood of Christ, but our lives and our service will be brought out by then. Gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, stubble. Deeds of merit, as we thought them, he will show us were but sin.

Little acts we had forgotten, he will show us were for sin. What will be important then? What will be important at the judgment seat of Christ? Furs? Clothes? Cars? Bone china? Silver? Hobby? Sports? Speedboat? Those things won't count. Only what's done for Christ will last.

How important to have that correctional lens in our glasses. Let us go over them once again. The fact of hell, number one.

The love of Christ, the constraining love of Christ. Thou hast bled and died for me, henceforth I will live for thee. The value and eternity of a soul.

Dear friends, let's go into soul. Let's go into soul. The purpose of our creation.

Why am I here? Am I really living out the purpose of my original creation and of my new creation as well? The plain command of Christ. So, forsake all. Love your neighbor as yourself.

The responsibility of those who have the answer. Verse 20. Finally, the judgment seat of Christ.

Only one thing will really count in that day. That is to hear him say, Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

When the Brooklyn Bridge was being built, the architect was seriously injured and spent most of the time in the hospital. But on the day that it was going to be dedicated, he was well enough for them to put him on a stretcher and take him out and put him there where he could see the bridge. And as he lay there and saw the completed structure, he said, It's exactly according to plan.

Someday the Lord's going to roll out the blueprint that he had for my life, and I'm going to stand there. Wouldn't it be wonderful if he could say, It's exactly according to plan. That is success in life.

May the Lord help us to have these correctional lenses in our glasses so that we will have 20-20 vision spiritually, even if our physical vision isn't exactly what it should be. Shall we pray? Father, we just thank you for your precious word and thank you that you give us the privilege of grappling with the great issues of life, and they are great issues, too. It's so easy to go through life chasing bubbles, chasing butterflies, and caught up in a world of trivia while above us burns the vision of the Christ upon the cross.

Lord, give us good spiritual vision, we pray. Help us to look on the crowd as our Savior did till our eyes with tears grow dim. Help us view with pity the wandering sheep and love them for love of Him.

Go with us as we part today. We pray for our safety in our travel. We think of our brother Dittman again today and just pray for your healing touch upon his body.

And we do ask you for the girls' camp that will be going on here. Oh, Lord, how wonderful to think of girls coming to know the Savior and pouring out their lives in dedicated service for Him. We pray for the unsaved who will come, and also for those who are already believers.

Be very near to the counselors, to all of those in charge, Lord, that they might look back and see that God was really here working in power during this camp. Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

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