

109 - How Do I Look?

From 1852 to 1953, a French prison operated on an island off the coast of French Guiana in South America. It was called [Devil's Island](#). As harsh as its conditions were, the Guys in solitary confinement on Devil's Island had it the worst. Locked up in tiny, dark cells, fed little more than weak broth and stale bread and never allowed outside, the men were occasionally summoned to poke their heads out through a slot on the door of their cells that was opened for periodic inspection. During one of these inspections, a man who had been in solitary a very long time, craned his neck around to ask the man, whose head poked out of the cell beside him, *"How do I look?"* The new man to solitary confinement craned his neck around to look at his questioner. He turned back after a glance. He couldn't bring himself to tell the man how he really looked, so he replied simply, *"Great. You look great."* Many years later, after a second and much longer stint in solitary confinement, the same man who had once been new to the experience, poked his head out of his cell to ask the same question of the man beside him. The new man replied simply, *"Great. You look great."*

A mentor of mine said something to me over 30 years ago that I've never forgotten. He said, "I don't mind being wrong; I just mind not knowing."

I want to invite you to ask the question of the Father and of the Lord, Jesus Christ, *"How do I look?"* I would even invite you, as the Lord leads, to seek out a brother if you're a guy, or sister if you're a woman – someone you trust implicitly – and ask him or her, after coming together into the presence of the Lord, *"How do I look?"* I thank God for what Barbara has had to say to me during the last four years. I didn't like all of it, but her accountability was for what God gave her that I couldn't see. She couldn't afford to care whether I liked it. Together we have had accountability to say to people what God showed us about them...about their lives, their relationships, and we couldn't afford to care whether they liked us or even whether we ever saw them again...and some didn't like us and we *haven't* ever seen again.

Here's the point: We are His body; that is, the Body of Christ. If we poke our heads out of the slot of what at times might feel our solitary confinement cells, for inspection, and look around at one another, *"How do we look?"* When Jesus strides through what sometimes might feel like the very small confines of our grinding, daily lives, *"How do we look?"* Yes, I know He sees us as perfect and complete in Him. The Father see us holy and flawless, but He knows and so do we that we are far from that now.

Tonight is a sort of spiritual physical exam, if you like, perhaps to better prepare us for what the Apostle Paul called, ***"that Day"***; that is, the ***"day of the Lord."***

Would'nt you agree that it would be better to know if and where you're wrong in some area of your life than to be wrong and not know?

I had the experience, as I so often do when I'm preparing for our studies, that I'm reading the scriptures you and I have poured over week after week for over two years, and feeling like I'm reading them for the first time.

So let's look at some of the declarations that make up the plumb line for us as the Body of Christ.

In **(*Mathew 10: 26, 40-42*)**, Jesus said:

...nothing is covered, which shall not be revealed, and hidden which shall not be known.

...

40 "He who is receiving you is receiving Me, and he who is receiving Me is receiving Him Who commissions Me.

41 He who is receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet shall be obtaining a prophet's wages. And he who is receiving a just man in the name of a just man shall be obtaining a just man's wages.

42 And whoever should be giving one of these little ones only a cool cup to drink, in the name of a disciple, verily, I am saying to you, by no means should he be losing his wages."

(1 Corinthians 13)

2 For at present we are observing by means of a mirror, in an enigma, yet then, face to face. At present I know out of an instalment, yet then I shall recognize according as I am recognized also.

This is a fearful text to me. The image is one that frankly strikes fear in me, of standing before the Lord as if totally naked and utterly exposed, suddenly knowing about myself what He already knows and seeing in myself what He already sees in me, things I may even now keep hidden from myself. That song by MercyMe, “I Can Only Imagine,” comes to mind; especially the line that says, “*Will I be able to stand at all?*” I tell you truly, I have a hunch that whatever we have not taken care of before “the day of the Lord Jesus,” will be taken care of then, and you and I will see and know every last detail of it. It may only last a microsecond, but it brings me back to the original question “*How do I look?*” I believe we are going about the process of determining now how we will look then, when we stand at the dais of Christ.

Barbara has said something to me many times when we have been sent into a land on account God’s purpose there, or on account of the call of God on someone life – She’s been saying it often again, as we prepare to leave this land for Dallas: “*I just want to know that I did everything I could; that I did everything God gave me was supposed to do.*”

Before the Lord brings us face to face with Him in that day, let’s do all we can to know that we will be able to say what the Apostle wrote to Timothy before he died:

(2 Timothy 4:7-8)

7 I have contended the ideal contest. I have finished my career. I have kept the faith.

8 Furthermore, there is reserved for me the wreath of righteousness, which the Lord, the just Judge, will be paying to me in that day; yet not to me only, but also to all who love His advent.

I have total confidence in the second part of these two verses: ***“there is reserved for me the wreath of righteousness, which the Lord, the just Judge, will be paying to me in that day; yet not to me only, but also to all who love His advent.”*** There is no way that the grace of God will fall short for anyone whom He has designated beforehand, whom He has called also and therefore justified, and whom He will yet glorify ([see Romans 8:30](#)). It’s the first part that I want to know: ***“I have contended the ideal contest. I have finished my career. I have kept the faith.”***

Ask yourself, “How do I look,” when standing up to the plumb line of [Ephesians 5](#):

1 Become, then, **imitators of God**, as beloved children, and be walking in love, according as Christ also loves you, and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor.

“How do I look”? Try this on:

[\(Ephesians 1:3-22\)](#)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ,

Not that we did or could do anything to earn this, mind you...clearly not! God just does it because He wants to. It delights Him to do for us what we could not possibly do for ourselves. It is ***“the delight of His will!”*** as we’ll read in verse 5; but first...

4 according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we **to be** holy and flawless in His sight,

One day, the Father just decided to put you into the most favored spot, just below Yehsua Himself. He knew every failing, every fault, every misstep you and I would take while we breathed as humans; nevertheless, before Genesis 1:1, before anything we know about came into being, He chose us to be located IN the Christ – the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Only Begotten Son. Notice: ***“We TO BE holy and flawless in His sight.”*** We aren’t that now, clearly, but we’re going to be in that day, and The Father already made every provision for it to become a reality in us, and knowing God in the small way that I can today, I believe that we already look that way to Him.

I'm suggesting tonight that we take a look at any area that needs work BEFORE we stand before Him! *"God, give me no choices but to bow the knee."* I can't count the number of times I've heard Barbara talk about that mantra she's carried for 20 plus years.

Let me also say, here, that I am speaking to myself tonight, perhaps more than to anyone else. I am probably the one who needs to hear this the most and, more importantly, I am probably the one who needs to DO this spiritual physical exam the most! I can't explain it, but as often happens, I feel a sense of urgency about this, and as uncomfortable as it is for me and as it may be for you, I'm putting myself in an exam room before the Lord, and I'm inviting you to do the same, because, as Barbara says, "you can take Him hard or you can take Him easy, but you're going to take Him." I agree with her that I'd rather take Him easy.

5 in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him
through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will,
6 for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved:
7 in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the
forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace,
8 which He lavishes on us; in all wisdom and prudence
9 making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight,
which He purposed in Him) (TQ: What is "the secret of His will?")
10 to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up
[the] all in the Christ -- both that in the heavens and that on the earth --
11 in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand
according to the purpose of the One Who is operating [the] all in
accord with the counsel of His will,
12 that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in
the Christ.
13 In Whom you also -- on hearing the word of truth, the evangel of
your salvation -- in Whom on believing also, you are sealed with the
holy spirit of [the] promise (TQ: What is "the promise?")
14 (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the
deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of His glory!

Now I'm going to change the voice in this next section, because this so captures how Barbara and I hold you in our hearts and in prayer before the Lord. I believe

it is also a great plumb line for how Bear with this, because it is one very long sentence that Paul wrote for us:

15 Therefore, [we; that is, Barbara and I] also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints,
16 do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in [our] prayers
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of [the] glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him,

Father, I pray that right now, that you give everyone listening to this a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization – the recognition, the precise and correct knowledge – of the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, by whatever faculties we have as humans, now filled with Your own spirit...the spirit of truth: I pray that the “in part” that we know may expand to overcome us and overtake us with Your glory. I come asking in the name of Him Who died for us that we might live in Him and in You, AMEN.

18 the eyes of your heart having been enlightened

You and I aren’t waiting to have the eyes of our hearts enlightened – illuminated, made visible to our minds – it’s already been done! That we may not have tapped into it yet fully, OK, but we don’t have to live in darkness! And, for what it’s worth, I believe that the time and more importantly the focused attention we give to the word of God will determine whether the rheostat is set. Man, I hope you’ll join me in the desire to have that switch turned up all the way. Let’s get as much light into every area that you and I need to see and may not want to look at. Let’s just agree to give God permission to turn His searchlight on every corner of our deepest recesses, because what Jesus said is surely coming:

[\(Mathew 10: 26\):](#)

...nothing is covered, which shall not be revealed, and hidden which shall not be known.

Father, uncover it now, I pray, in Your love and mercy, uncover everything You find and help us deal with it righteously before ***“the day of the Lord Jesus.”***

So that, **Ephesians 1:18** continues...

, for you {for each of us} to perceive [to grasp, to gain knowledge about just exactly] what is the expectation [the sure and certain hope] of His calling, and what [exactly are] the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, [we're talking about Christ's allotment – His inheritance – here. However magnificent the allotment was in the Promised Land for the seed of Abraham, the allotment of the Christ – the lamb slain before the foundation of the eons – is even beyond Paul's description when he was taken into the third heaven.]

19 and what the *transcendent* greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength,
20 which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials,
21 up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending:

22 and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all.

WOW! Talk about a long sentence. Let's look at all that again

Brothers and sisters, we haven't begun to know what God will yet do in and through the Body of Christ! Remember, 1 Corinthians 2:9

according as it is written, That which the eye did not perceive, and the ear did not hear, and to which the heart of man did not ascend -- whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him.

10 Yet to us God reveals them through His spirit, for the spirit is searching all, even the depths of God.

1 Corinthians 13:

1 If I should be speaking in the languages of men and of the messengers, yet should have no love, I have become resounding copper or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I should have prophecy and should be perceiving all secrets and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so as to transport

mountains, yet have no love, I am nothing.

3 And if ever I should be morselling out all my possessions, and if I should be giving up my body, that I should be boasting, yet may have no love, in nothing do I benefit.

4 Love is patient, is kind. Love is not jealous. Love is not bragging, is not puffed up,

5 is not indecent, is not self-seeking, is not incensed, is not taking account of evil,

6 is not rejoicing in injustice, yet is rejoicing together with the truth,

7 is forgoing all, is believing all, is expecting all, is enduring all.

8 Love is never lapsing: yet, whether prophecies, they will be discarded, or languages, they will cease, or knowledge, it will be discarded.

9 For out of an instalment are we knowing, and out of an instalment are we prophesying.

10 Now whenever maturity may be coming, that which is out of an instalment shall be discarded.

11 When I was a minor, I spoke as a minor, I was disposed as a minor, I took account of things as a minor. Yet when I have become a man, I have discarded that which is a minor's.

12 For at present we are observing by means of a mirror, in an enigma, yet then, face to face. At present I know out of an instalment, yet then I shall recognize according as I am recognized also.

13 Yet now are remaining faith, expectation, love -- these three. Yet the greatest of these is love.

Chapter 14

1 Be pursuing love.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you: the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

