

Ceaseless Radiance: No One But Jesus Only

Delivered: September 22, 2024

Scriptures: **Hebrews 1:1-3**, **2 Chronicles 20**, **Matt 17:1-8**

Hebrews 1.1-3 (NKJV & NASB20),

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in the past to the fathers by the prophets,

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world.

3 And He is the brightness (*radiance*) of God's glory and the express image (*exact representation*) of His nature, and He upholds ALL THINGS by the power of His word.

Jesus is not the reflection of the Father, He is the same essence and nature of the Father. "If you've seen Me you've seen the Father." Jesus is exactly what God wants to say about Himself.

Charakteer

I want to point out something important in **v3**,

"He is the radiance of God's glory and the *exact representation* of His nature."

The Greek word that is translated "exact representation" is charakteer.

This is the only time that charakteer is used in Scripture.

This word charakteer is the embossed stamp on a coin, the writing style that is unique to a person. Charakteer is the bodily and psychological structure that you were born with that is completely unique to you. Charakteer is the quality of a snowflake that makes it unlike any other snowflake. Charakteer is something that is innate, it just is and nothing can change or further develop charakteer (the engraving on a coin does not develop over time, it just is)

Hebrews 1:3 is saying that Jesus reveals God to us in a unique and complete way that only God Himself can reveal Himself. Jesus is the fullness of deity in bodily form, as Paul says in Colossians 2:9.

Charakteer is Always Present

Charakteer is constant and always present, even if it's not always seen. Just because the coin is in your pocket doesn't mean it's no longer engraved with the image. Even if charakteer is hidden from sight, it is still there.

Like a star that seems to be hidden in the daytime, it's still in the sky...it's still radiating glory and shining; it's just overshadowed by something brighter.

In the same way, Jesus is always with us, radiating glory and revealing God. He's like the North Star in the sky, unchanging and constant, always there shining brightly and pointing the way home...but sometimes He's overshadowed by something inferior I'm giving more attention to.

Eyes on Inferior Things

When Jesus is my obsession, He's the brightest thing in my solar system.

When I take my eyes off of Jesus and give more attention to something happening around me, He is still there and He still wants to reveal God to my situation, but He's just overshadowed by something I'm giving priority to.

For example; the North Star will always be the brightest star in the sky, but what happens when I give my attention to the airplane flying by? The lights on the wings of that plane become the brightest thing in my universe. But what's brighter, the North Star or a blinking light on a plane? By giving attention to something inferior, I'm tricking myself into thinking it's the brightest thing in the solar system.

I get to determine which star shines brightest in my solar system.

So, let's apply this metaphor to our day-to-day.

I get to determine if;
my problem is shining the brightest or Jesus,
my feelings or Jesus,
my bank account or Jesus,
my doctor's diagnosis or Jesus,
my *(fill in the blank)* or Jesus.

Whatever you look at you empower

I can't look at two things at once; Jesus and my situation. So, when I look at my problem or my feelings or my fears and give more attention to those things than I do Jesus, I am empowering my situation rather than empowering Jesus to reveal God into my situation.

(Galatians 6:8.- "Whoever sows to the flesh reaps destruction from the flesh, and whoever sows to the Spirit reaps eternal life from the Spirit")

Whatever you look at you empower.

2 Chronicles 20 tells the story of King Jehoshaphat. He was king over God's people at a time when the Moabites and the Ammonites and other surrounding nations joined forces to attack God's people. King Jehoshaphat determined to seek the Lord. He proclaimed a fast and gathered everyone to Jerusalem to seek the Lord together. With the nation gathered together, the king stands among the assembly of people and in 2 Chronicles 20.12 he says this (TOMMY READ),

"O Lord our God, will You not judge our enemies? For we *have no power* against this great multitude that is coming against us; *nor do we know what to do*, but our *eyes are on You*."

We have no power.

We don't know what to do.

But our eyes are on you.

His eyes weren't on his enemies assembling together just outside of their border.

His eyes weren't on his military leaders getting counsel from them.

His eyes weren't on his allies, his weapons, his strategies that worked in the past.

His eyes were on YHWH.

Look at the result of God's people fixing their eyes on Him only. (v13-17 - NKJV),

13 Now all of Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord.

14 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah (*He was a Levite of the sons of Asaph, and therefore one of the singers*)...

15 And he said, "Listen, all of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid because of this great multitude, *for the battle is not yours*, but God's.

16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz...

17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and *see the salvation of the Lord...*! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."

Their eyes were on the Lord and the Lord responded by saying tomorrow you will SEE the salvation of the Lord.

The next day they go out to the battle field worshipping and their enemies began fighting against one another, and God's people were delivered.

As God's people lifted their eyes off of their enemies and looked to the Lord, they saw His salvation released over their situation. God was empowered in that moment to be God over Israel's enemies.

The humility of His people made room for God to be God.

If you belong to the Lord, the battle does not belong to you; it belongs to the Lord.

Your situation doesn't belong to you; it's the Lord's.

Your diagnosis doesn't belong to you; it's the Lord's.

Your bank account doesn't belong to you; it's the Lord's.

Your lost family members and prodigal children...

Your past, your present, your future...if you belong to YHWH, none of those things belong to you, they belong to the Lord.

You've been crucified with Christ, your life is no longer your own, you've been bought at a price.

The moment you give more attention to your situation than you do to the God of your situation is the moment you take ownership of that problem.

But when your eyes are on Him, your enemies become His enemies...and He's undefeated.

The threat against God's testimony in the earth

King Jehoshaphat understood something that we would do well to get ahold of: the threat against God's people was a threat against the testimony of God in the earth. If Jehoshaphat, as a righteous king who sought the Lord, is destroyed by enemy armies, what does that say about Jehoshaphat's God?

So were the Moabites Jehoshaphat's problem or God's problem?

Was Goliath David's problem? Or was Goliath God's problem, and God used David to bring glory to God's name through the problem?

Was the lion Daniel's problem?

Was Pharaoh Moses' problem?

Each of those situations was a direct threat to the testimony of God in the earth. And in each of those situations God found a man who knew to fix His eyes on heaven for deliverance.

The enemy wants to use Goliath to disprove what God says about Himself.

The situation standing in front of you is not a problem for you to figure out, it is actually an assault against the testimony of God in your life.

What was Eve's mistake...were did she go wrong? She engaged the serpent who was taking aim at the testimony of God in creation, "Did God really say?" She got her eyes off of the God and onto something forbidden. The serpent says,

"Don't listen to God, He knows if you eat the fruit your *eyes* will be opened and you'll be like Him."

So she looks at the fruit and sees that is was

“beautiful to the eyes” (Genesis 3:6).

She got her eyes off of the most beautiful thing in the solar system and became infatuated with something inferior. She enthroned her temptation by fixing her eyes on it.

But when we fix our eyes on Jesus, we’re enthroning Him and dethroning the problem, the temptation.

By fixing our eyes on Jesus, we are putting our situation in its proper place...we’re putting our problem where all of God’s enemies belong; underneath His feet.

Enthroned Jesus by fixing your eyes on Him in the midst of your enemies which simultaneously dethrones your problem...and now that big scary problem has become part of the footstool that lifts Jesus higher and higher.

Whatever you look at you enthrone.

Whatever you look at you empower.

Whatever you look at you move towards.

No One But Jesus Only

When Peter, James, and John were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, there were some remarkable things happening around them; they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. They saw Jesus glow like lightning. Peter’s initial response is to build a monument to the encounter...three tabernacles: one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. Peter is out of his mind...he just put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah...the law and the prophets. Jesus completely ignores him.

They become overshadowed by a cloud, and they heard the voice of the Father thunder from within the cloud, “This is My beloved Son.” Peter, James, and John fall on their faces in absolute terror. Jesus comes over to comfort and reassure them that they are ok.

Matthew closes out the story with this statement in Matthew 17:8,

“When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”

That is one of the most helpful and practical verses we could ever meditate on. As amazing as the encounter was for Peter, James, and John, the point was not to build a monument on the mountain commemorating the situation...the point was to see Jesus as the radiance of the Father's glory, the exact representation of the Father's nature. The point was to see Jesus measured against the law and the prophets, measured against the cloud, measured against their fear, and see Him shine as the brightest thing in the universe...and then come off the mountain and enter back into real life WITH JESUS and find Him in the day-to-day rhythm of real life.

Years later, Peter recalled this mountain-top encounter and wrote these words to the church,

18 And we heard (the Father's) voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain, (*"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*)

19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to pay attention to as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

Jesus is the light shining in dark places.

Jesus is the morning star rising in the dawn.

He is the radiance of God and the exact representation of God's nature.

And when our eyes are on Him, He shines His glory into whatever situation He allows us to be in.

Whatever you look at you empower.

Whatever you look at you enthrone.

Whatever you look at you worship.

Whatever you look at you move toward.

Psalm 119:37 - "Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your ways."

Psalm 123.1, "Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens"