

Looking with the Eyes of God

The last few weeks have, I hope, at least started us thinking about ourselves; not in a navel-gazing, new age sort of way, but as an honest appraisal of who we really are; not who we might think we are, or who we are to others, but who we are to God - because He matters most! We so often seem to think that we are created for ourselves, or even for each other, when in fact we are created for God; not just to serve Him but to live for Him. We are answerable to Him! When we look at ourselves we should at least try (and, I know, it is impossible) to look at ourselves through His eyes; to see ourselves as His creation, and with the potential to be perfect!

Do Not be afraid

It is said that the command "Don't be afraid" occurs 365 times in the Bible! Now, that is not actually true, but it does occur a lot - the most common commandment. God understands us!

We fear. We live in fear. we often act out of fear, or fail to act because of fear. We fear pain and suffering; we fear death. We fear the unknown. Fear can take us over; it can shut us down. For most of us, fear only overwhelms occasionally; it often just sits there nagging in the background. We, maybe, do have a lot to fear; but what we have been looking at is fear about *ourselves*: fear of failure; fear of not being good enough; fear not being capable. We look at ourselves through our own eyes - and we often fail to see the real thing!

I believe that it is true that when we speak we do not hear our voices with our ears; we hear ourselves through our jaws. Many people are quite shocked when they first hear a recording of their own voice; they find it hard to believe that it is themselves! The same is true of seeing ourselves on video, seeing ourselves as others see us; there is something very 'other' - and often very disconcerting - about what we see. We have all sorts of ideas about how we sound and how we look which might not be quite true and accurate.

The same is often true of our gifts and abilities, of the things that we are able to do. Often, we fail to see the things that we are really good at (and we also fail to see the things that we are not good at but think that we are!), and we need others to tell us. We can often spot the gifts in others that they miss in themselves.

Think about people you know. Think of the gifts, the abilities, that you see in them, but they don't see.

It is because of this that we understand the church *testing* or *discerning* gifts. I might think that I would be a great person to welcome people to church; but that needs to be looked at, and discerned, by the church body. In the same way, if the church discerns a gift in a person then that person might have to accept that they have a talent even if they don't feel it - or don't want it!

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27. Discuss this passage. What does it mean for your life as a part of the Church?

But how then do we cope with our feelings of inadequacy, of unworthiness? The best way is to try to see ourselves as God sees us: people He has created; people He knows intimately; people He knows better than we do; and people to whom He can give strength and ability. If we rely on ourselves, we are likely to fail. What God says is “Rely on me.” What seems difficult or even impossible to us is possible to God - because all things are possible for God!

Have a look at the following. Look at the the Bible references and talk about them from your own experience.

| YOU SAY | GOD SAYS | BIBLE |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| I can't figure it out. | I will direct your steps | <i>Purpose 3:5 – six</i> |
| I'm too tired. | I will give you rest. | <i>Matthew 11:28 – 30</i> |
| It's impossible. | All things are possible. | <i>Luke 18:27</i> |
| Nobody loves me. | I love you. | <i>John 3:16</i> |
| I can't forgive myself. | I forgive you. | <i>Romans 8:1</i> |
| It's not worth it. | It will be worth it. | <i>Romans 8:28</i> |
| I'm not smart enough. | I will give you wisdom. | <i>1 Corinthians 1:30</i> |
| I'm not able. | I am able. | <i>2 Corinthians 9:8</i> |
| I can't go on. | My grace is sufficient. | <i>2 Corinthians 12:9</i> |
| I can't do it. | You can do all things. | <i>Philippians 4:13</i> |
| I can't manage. | I will supply all your needs. | <i>Philippians 4:19</i> |
| I can't do it. | You can do things. | <i>Philippians 4:13</i> |
| I am afraid. | I have not given you fear. | <i>Two Timothy 1:7</i> |
| I feel alone. | I will never leave you. | <i>Hebrews 13:5</i> |