

Sermon series: Church Vision 2023

Sermon title: **Beholding God**

Scripture: Jeremiah 9:23-24

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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Well, for the next 3 weeks I want to encourage us all in the church vision of CBIBC.

Our church vision is quite simple:

**Behold. Belong. Be Sent.**

We want to be people who truly **Behold God**, **Belong** to one another in the local church deeply and we want to **Be Sent** to those around us and to the uttermost parts of the earth with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Now I realize that it might be a bit strange for me to charge you with the church vision in my last weeks here.

Pastor Nate will surely come to CBIBC with his own vision and you should follow his lead.

But I believe with all my heart that every church's vision should include the 3 aspects of Behold. Belong. Be Sent. I think Nate would agree.

Call it what you will.

*"Love God, Love one another, Love your neighbor."*

That's straight Scripture.

*"Grow. Serve. Go."*

There are many ways to say it.

### **Here's one HK church's vision:**

*to reach out to English speakers in Hong Kong by living and speaking the Gospel of Jesus Christ, trusting God to transform lives, deepen our faith and use us to impact Hong Kong and beyond.*

### **Another says this:**

*Our vision is simple - we want to grow big people.*

*Through God's presence, His Scriptures, and relationships with one another, we seek to help each person deepen their walk with God (**Behold**) and become more like Jesus.*

*Like the early church, we desire to build each other up in love, using our gifts to serve God and one another, (**Belong**) so that we would reflect Christ more fully in the spheres of influence He has placed us in. (**Be Sent**)*

I like that.

So really,... churches all over the world seek to:

*vertically*- Behold God.

*horizontally*- Belong.

*outwardly*- Be Sent.

**Let's pray** and ask the Lord to encourage us in this today.

I want to ask 3 questions today, as it pertains to the first point of our Church Vision- **BEHOLDing God/** Knowing God.

- I. What are we seeking to Behold?**
- II. How do we Behold?**
- III. What does Beholding do for us?**

Now every time I have preached on the church vision, I have used some different texts because the Bible is full of these things.

**I. What are we seeking to Behold?**

Today I want to look first and foremost at **Jeremiah 9:23-24**, so if you'll turn in your Bibles there we will begin by reading.

23 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 **BUT** let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."

Wow.

Here in this verse we have life laid out for us in this world.

3 things that we as humans pursue on our quest for happiness in life. You don't have to look very far to see this pursuit. It's right there in your own heart.

## **Wisdom**

23 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,

I got good grades/ high marks

I have a Ph.D

I published this article in this journal.

I went to this school and got this degree.

I am a person who people look to for advice.

People want to know what I have to say.

They value my opinion.

So and so, this famous person commented on my post on Twitter.

The world boasts in these things. *"Look at me"* we all say. Look at my wisdom and intelligence.

## **Might**

[let not the mighty man boast in his might](#)

We see this easily in sports.  
He runs faster than anyone.  
Jumps higher than anyone.  
He is the GOAT. Greatest of all time.  
We boast in our physical strength.  
We can beat up anyone in MMA.  
I can lead a company.  
I can grow a church.  
I have influenced many to do this or that.  
I am a strong person.  
Look at history.  
We regard those who conquered kingdoms.

The world boasts in these things. *"Look at me"* we all say. Look at my strength and might.

## **Riches**

[let not the mighty man boast in his riches](#)

I live in this place.  
Our kids go to this nice expensive school.  
I can afford these things.  
I drive this car.  
We can travel to these places and you bet we post/  
boast about it.  
We live in a wealthy place and many boast in their  
riches.

The world boasts in these things. *"Look at me"* we all  
say. Look at my wealth and luxury.

That's what many seek after. That's the quest of their  
lives.

But God gives us a greater quest, greater pursuit, a  
greater boast.

**Let's stop and ask 2 questions right now:**

1. What is the greatest pursuit in life?
2. What are you pursuing?

23 Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in  
his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might,  
let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 **BUT** let him  
who boasts boast in this, that he understands and  
knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast

love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”

24 **BUT** let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD

This is why the first and most important aspect of our church vision and life mission is to Behold God.

To Behold God is to understand and know God.

**The greatest quest of our lives is to know God.**

Oh, how the world and the flesh war against us to keep us from this pursuit.

As creatures we want to know our Creator, to understand and know him but it's a fight.

It's a fight not to give ourselves to a *me-focused* existence.

My wisdom!

My might!

My riches!

And not give ourselves to MY GOD!

**III. How do we Behold?**

**2 Corinthians 3: 18** And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding** the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

What does it mean in this passage when it says, 'Beholding the glory of the Lord' ?

This word '*Beholding*' is used only here.

It means, '*to see in a mirror or glass*'.

But we don't want to stare at ourselves in the mirror. We want to stare at Christ in the mirror.

What is the mirror?

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:4** says, "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from SEEING the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

In fact the mirror is more than the gospel. It's the whole scriptures because as Jesus said in **John 5:39**..."It is they (the Scriptures) that bear witness about me."



## How do we BEHOLD God? How do we understand and Know God?

We BEHOLD by staring at his glory in the Bible.

If we are to understand and know the LORD God who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness... then we have to marinate in his word.

### III. WHAT does Beholding do for us?

**18** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Transformation happens.

Transformed here means 'transfigured'; metamorphosis.

"Transformed by the renewing of your mind"

**Romans 12:2**

'From one degree of glory to another'.

We continue to BEHOLD.

The Spirit continues to transform.

## **WHAT does Beholding do for us?**

We become like what we behold.

When we Behold Christ, we become more like Christ.

## **APPLICATION**

This is the quest of our lives church;

To understand and know God that he is the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.

Only here in our Creator will we find true glory and true joy and happiness.

## **Psalm 16:11**

You make known to me the path of life. In your presence is fullness of joy, at your right hand are pleasures forever more.

## **Do you desire to understand and know God?**

I am not asking you if you are a Christian.

I am asking you if you want to BEHOLD Christ and see his glory?

Now, most of us know this is how we should live.

Most, if not all, would say, *"Yes, I know that I will be changed and sanctified as I behold God in the word."* So, why don't we BEHOLD daily, regularly on our own or with others.

## **Obstacles:**

1. **A Veil-** Maybe Christ isn't glorious to you and you have no desire for Christ; you don't want to BEHOLD God because you have never *'turned to the Lord'* for the veil to be removed. You should call out to Jesus Christ to save you. Ask for mercy. Turn to him. Believe in him. Ask God to remove the veil and let you see Christ.
2. **Thorns-** **Mark 4:18-19** says that *'the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things...CHOKES the word* out of your life. You can't BEHOLD because you are choking....or we could say you are BEHOLD something else and enjoying it's glory and so Christ looks not so glorious to you.

You know that the Lord calls us to repentance. Today is the day to repent of chasing wisdom, might and riches. Turn around and Behold God. Chase him. Know him. This is the greatest quest of your life.