

VISION 2017

“Behold”

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18

Clearwater Bay Church

September 10, 2017

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Today we start an exciting time in the life of our church as we talk about who we want to be and the direction we want to go.

How are we to structure ourselves and our ministry?

What should we focus on?

What are the things we should hold each other accountable to?

If you had to narrow down the things that we should focus on, what would they be?

Well, today I want to lay out for you a vision of who we want to be.

Today we **won't** get to the specifics of strategy or details. We will in the coming weeks.

But today, we want to start off with laying some tracks for us to run on; 3 tracks eventually.

3 things that we can structure our lives on, the life of our church and our ministries.

Today we will handle the first and most important one and next week and the week after, the other two.

We don't have to look very hard in the Bible to find these three things.

Jesus told us what the greatest commandments are. He said the Law and the Prophets could be summed up in these commandments.

What are they?

- Love God with all of your heart, soul mind and strength.
This is the greatest commandment.
- Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Who is your neighbor? Everyone.
- And a new commandment he gave us, "Love one another, just as I have loved you."

Pretty simple:

Love God

Love one another

Love your neighbor.

Or you could say it like this:

Worship- a vertical dimension-
Fellowship- a horizontal dimension-
Make Disciples- an outward moving dimension.

But we are going to communicate it like this:

Behold

Belong

Be Sent

Today....we want to talk about the most important thing
in the universe.

More important than world peace.
More important than having a good job.
More important than raising your kids right.
More important than marrying the right person.
More important than anything.

Beholding God!

Beholding his glory.
Seeing him rightly.
Beholding his wonder, his majesty, his power and his
beauty.

Beholding GOD.

Turn in your Bible to Isaiah chapter 40. Let's take a look
at God. What is he like?

Verse 9 says, **Behold your God!**

v.12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his
hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed

the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon {with all of its trees} would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?

21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 **Lift up your eyes on high and see:** who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

That is our God.

Behold his glory!

Behold his majesty.

Lift up your eyes on high and SEE!

Seek to know him.

Let it be your aim to say like the Psalmist in

Psalm 27:4

“One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

or in **Psalm 63**

“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. 4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, 6 when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;”

BEHOLD YOUR GOD.

Now, WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Why do we need to Behold God?

Because he is worthy of our beholding.

Because in beholding him is satisfaction of the soul.

Because in beholding him is joy. Unspeakable JOY!

Because we become like what we BEHOLD.

WE BECOME LIKE WHAT WE BEHOLD.

Let's look at our text in **2 Corinthians 3:16-18**.

16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 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.

We become like what we BEHOLD!

Let me try to explain this text in a simple way.

We are all blind before we turn to Christ.

We don't see Christ as glorious.

He means nothing to us.

Our hearts and minds are hardened by our sinful nature.

We gaze into a mirror and the mirror is the gospel.

When the Spirit of God shines in our hearts (chapter 4:6) and enables us to turn to Christ...the veil is gone.

He gives us a new heart.

We can see now.

We can behold his glory now.

We look into the mirror of the gospel and we see the face of Jesus Christ in the mirror.

And we say “WOW!

He is wonderful.

He is glorious.

He is a treasure.

And the more we stare the more we are transformed into HIS image.

We start to look more and more like him the more we gaze, the more we stare, the more we BEHOLD.

This is why we must BEHOLD him.

Nothing is more satisfying.

No one is more wonderful.

Because...**we become like what we BEHOLD.**

A little boy lived in a village where there was a mountain with a rock formation which they called The Great Stone Face. The people had a legend that someday someone would come to the village who would look like the Great Stone Face. He would do wonderful things for the village and be a means of great blessing. That story really captivated the young boy. During his life he would gaze at the Great Stone Face at every opportunity that he had, and he would dream of the time someone looking like the Great Stone Face would come to the village. Years passed and as time went by, he became a young man, then an old man. He was walking down the street one day when someone looked up and saw him coming and shouted, “He has come! The one who looks like the Great Stone Face is here.” This man had looked at the Great Stone Face for so long that now he bore its image.

What do we need to do?

How do we need to apply this?

Individually— we need to Behold God daily in his word. We read the Bible to see him and savor him. We pray to him and meet with him...to know him.

Family— we want our kids to see God, Behold God... we want to cultivate an environment in our homes where our family is Beholding God....and that means NOT beholding other things.

Church— we want every ministry and our worship times to have one main goal over all others: to see God, to worship God, to know God...to BEHOLD God.

***What do we want people to say about our church?**

***What do we want our testimony to be in this city?**

That we are a cool church?

That we are a modern church?

That we are a church that does missions?

That we are a friendly church?

We want to be a church that knows God, that Beholds him.

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 are you BEHOLDING?

We become like what we BEHOLD.