

Pastor's Page for February 2016

Dear Saints,

God said to Isaiah: *“Go and tell this people: ‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed”* (Isaiah 6:9-10).

Every time God's Word is proclaimed it changes all of those within its hearing. No one ever remains unaffected by God's Word. To those who hear it positively, there is growth in grace. To those who reject it or are indifferent to it, calluses are added to their souls and calcium to their hearts. The eye becomes dimmer and dimmer, the ear heavier and heavier, and the mystery of the kingdom more and more obscure. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Proverbs 20:12 declares: *“Hearing and seeing are gifts from The Lord.”* At first glance, the meaning is obvious. We have two eyes and two ears The Lord desires us to use to experience all the wonder of His Creation. To understand things will encourage us and others, bringing glory to His Name. Our eyes and ears are the gateways to our minds, so the more we use them for good rather than evil, we can avoid paths which lead nowhere but heartache.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:18-19 – *“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe.”* We have eyes that see

beyond the physical realm - the eyes of our hearts see into the emotional and spiritual depths, enhanced with the Holy Spirit. Paul prays for Christ to expand the hearts and minds of all believers to grasp eternal hope, riches beyond measure; and His almighty power working in us. He said it another way in 3:18 – *“to grasp how wide, long, high and deep God's love is for us.”* If we could get our minds around this - perhaps nothing could stop us!

If we use our eyes and ears - spiritual, emotional and physical ones - to look into the truth of a matter, how much more meaningful would life be? What hurts could be comforted and joy could be found beyond what we know now? This Lent, our Midweek series invites us to open our eyes, ears, hearts, hands and lives to know The Lord more fully, and helps others realize how wonderful authentic Christian living is.

*“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”*(Isaiah 30:21) *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow Me.”* (John 10:27)

Learning to listen to the Lord does and will take time. Spiritual listening involves your heart, your mind, your spiritual ears and and your spiritual eyes.

*“Open our eyes Lord,  
We want to see Jesus,  
To reach out and touch Him,  
And say that we love Him.  
Open our ears Lord,  
And help us to listen,  
Open our eyes Lord,  
We want to see Jesus.*

*Soften my heart, Lord,  
Melt me & mold me,  
Make me a vessel to pour out your Spirit.  
To bring joy and gladness  
To those have sorrow.  
Open our eyes, Lord,  
We want to see Jesus."*

Lent begins Ash Wednesday,  
February 10th, with our 7 p.m. Service  
and its Imposition of Ashes. The season  
continues for six weeks, and the Soup  
Suppers begin on February 17th at 6 p.m.  
We thank our Council & committees for  
hosting each week. Our theme is: "Open  
My Life, Lord!"

Our Council had a fruitful retreat  
in January in planning this year's  
ministries, and we are excited to share  
with you in the upcoming months. I  
thank Cindee & John Schoeps for sharing  
her childhood toy train for our display  
case this past month: "Get on Board,  
Little Children ... This Train is Bound for  
Glory!" We thank Jan Kennedy's son,  
Joel, and his crew for faithfully plowing  
& salting our parking lot each time it  
snows as a gift to the All Saints.

Speaking of using our eyes & ears  
& hearts ... what would you call someone  
who doesn't? A mannequin ... a non-  
living body ... perhaps looks good on the  
outside, but not a whole lot to offer  
within. Obviously we want more "bodies  
in church" and "people in the pews."  
Rumor has it that mannequins have  
appeared in our sanctuary ... perhaps  
filling the spot where you and other  
people should be! Come and see for  
yourself ... and build up the Body of  
Christ in our worship, fellowship and  
witness ...

Lenten blessings, Pastor Nathan