

Ponderings from Pastor Paul

I started this year planning to talk around the theme of 20-20 vision in each of my newsletter articles. Obviously, life has interrupted that plan and the immediate crises became the priority. However, I think it might be time to revitalize this plan and acknowledge that life events often disrupt our focus and corrupt our vision.

Sometimes life events are the result of forces well beyond our control. Floods. Pandemics. Racial and political unrest. We were so focused before and we could see where we were going. Now, we struggle to see tomorrow, much less six months or a year from now. And you can completely forget about those five-year or ten-year plans. We can hardly see beyond our nose.

It's like someone has taken our glasses and thrown mud at them. Our vision becomes blurred and we cannot see clearly, but at least we can wash the mud off. Other times, it seems like someone has taken a hard object and put scratches and gouges in our glasses. No matter how much we try to remove the obstacle to our vision, we will forever see life through that scar.

However, sometimes the blurred vision is a result of our own fingerprints. We have gotten in the mud and distorted our own vision. We have used sandpaper rather than a clean cloth to remove the stains, creating permanent scars of our own making.

If we have any hope of seeing clearly again, the only solution is a new lens. God is the only one who can make that happen. He has given us new vision through the power of the Holy Spirit. He allows us to see the death and resurrection of Jesus and the future given to us through them. A vision for a future well beyond our noses. A vision of a future beyond all time.

And because of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross, God no longer sees us through that same scratched and filthy lens. He sees us clearly through the holiness of Christ. Made clean. Mud and sin removed. Declared saints. Adopted sons and daughters.

We can't do anything to keep the world from its mudslinging or rock throwing. We can ask God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to empower us to avoid intentionally blurring our own vision. To help us stop playing in the mud or

cleaning with abrasives. We can turn to God and his word and his love and his promises, rather than the lies and filth the world tempts us with.

I pray we will all trust in God and his vision for us, knowing that he sees with eyes focused on eternity. May we also seek to have that focus.

God loves you and so do I!

Pastor Paul