Pastor Richard Allen Farmer

Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Road

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

770.469.9069

The Sermon on the Mount, Part 23

**My Good Eye**

Text: Matthew 6:22-23

Throughout this sermon, Jesus has been presenting contrasts to His hearers. He puts before them, pairs and dares them to choose the more noble, the more righteousness, the most effective, the most God-honoring of the pair. For instance, 5:33-37 there are two ways of going at promises and oaths. In 5:38-42 there are two approaches to revenge. In 6:1-4 there are two ways of giving alms or performing a charitable deed. In 6:16-18 there are two ways of fasting seen: fasting as a visible discipline in which the fasting person looks hungry and the discreet style in which one washes one's face. In 6:19-21 Jesus presents two approaches to managing treasure. Now here, in our text, we have Jesus addressing two kinds of seeing or two kinds of eyes.

First, a **concept:** The eye as lamp. Often, in the Bible, the eye is a metaphor for the mind or worldview. That is, we live and think "in the light" or "in the dark".

Secondly, **a contrast:** apparently, there is a *good* (Greek= *haplous= sincere, without guile*) eye and a *bad* (evil) eye (Deuteronomy 15:9; Proverbs 28:22). Evil (Greek=*poneros=wicked, worthless, guilty, be sick)* means the opposite of good. Note, also, the contrast between light and darkness. This passage, along with the one preceding it (v. 19-21) and the one following it (v.24), speaks of materialism and the danger of allowing it to order our lives. The preceding passage warns us to watch where we lay up treasure. Here, in verses 22-23, we're warned to watch our eyes. We can have a good (generous) eye or a bad(stingy)eye.

There is an ever-present temptation to compartmentalize the Christian faith, we think we can live in the light on certain days of the week or in certain matters and allow the darkness to permeate the others. However, Jesus says that if our eyes are bad, the whole body (being) is bad!!

That is, **out*look* determines out*come*.**

Beloved, what shall we do?

1. Let us foster a spirit of generosity in all things.Proverbs 11:25:

*The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.*

**Illus*.***

*I recently read the story of an unhappy king. He was so discontented that he called in some wise men of his kingdom and asked what he should do. The wise men advised the king to find a happy man and take his shirt and wear it for several days. The wise men traveled through the kingdom and eventually found a truly happy man. They intended to ask him for his shirt. The only problem was that the truly happy man had no shirt!*

I warn us all about the opposite of the spirit of generosity.

1. Let us avoid the tightwad syndrome

**Illus.**

My wife and I enjoy watch the occasional series on The Learning Channel called Extreme Cheapskates. These are profiles of people who take saving money to outrageous lengths. One episode featured a woman who, in order to save electricity, cooked her lasagna in the dishwasher while the dishes were being washed. She reasoned that the water was scalding hot and that the lasagna was covered. There was no danger of getting the lasagna touched by the dirty plates. Another episode featured a man who would take his wife out for ice cream. He stood at the counter asking for sample after sample of varied flavors, then announced, "I'm full" and didn't buy any ice cream. I think he still bought some for his wife but the man filled up on samples.

Are we, possibly, extreme cheapskates in the living out of our faith? Are our eyes full of darkness(lack of generosity) rather than light? We can choose to live in light, choose to live in darkness. The Gentiles were described in Ephesians 4:18 this way:

*Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.....*

The position we take affects our whole lives. That's the point of verse 23.

**Illus**

*For the last ten years of her life, my maternal grandmother was blind, due to macular degeneration. Her eyes were no longer good. They did* *not let in light. Her world was full of darkness. She felt her way along the walls as she moved through that house in which she had lived for 61 years.* *She didn't have one good eye.*

*That was a physical condition about which she could do nothing.*

Now let's switch to the spiritual.

I long for us all to be people of the good eye, welcoming the light and eschewing the darkness.

Amen