

A Special Note from Bill Cleveland, Sojourners Group Leader

Hello Sojourners!

Pastor Andy's sermon last Sunday featured keeping our eyes wide open so we don't miss what God is doing. Another thing that our eyes can be open to is seeing people as God sees them, as precious creatures made in His image. In Matthew 9: 35, 36 we see Jesus moving among the people.

"And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

When we see others with eyes of compassion, and not eyes of condemnation we are seeing them as Jesus did. Attached is an article that expands that idea.

Hope to "see" you in church online Sunday!

- Bill

Seeing Through the Eyes of Jesus

By John Burke

The scripture makes it abundantly clear: "God saved you by his grace...[Why? Because] We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#)) Paul makes it clear that it was a gift from God, not something you did for yourself. God did this because He still sees that work of art He created us to be.

So why do we struggle to treat people like the immensely valuable, one-of-a-kind masterpiece God created with his own hand? As I study the life and interactions of Jesus with very sin-stained, muddied people, it becomes evident that Jesus could see something worth dying for in all people he encountered. Jesus could see past the mud of sin to the masterpiece God wanted to restore.

What do you see most when you encounter sin-stained people? What do you see when you look in the mirror? Do you see the *mud*? Or do you see the *masterpiece* God wants to restore? What you focus on determines who you become and the impact you have on people around you! That's the heart of the book I just finished, [Mud and the Masterpiece: Seeing Yourself and Others through the Eyes of Jesus](#).

The Pharisees primarily focused on the mud of sin that covered the lives of the irreligious. They prided themselves in mud-avoidance. They fixated on mud. They tried to clean the mud off others with their own dirt—it didn't work then and it doesn't work now!

Jesus was different. Jesus demonstrated a spiritual vision that he wants to impart to us—to see the masterpiece he sees in us, and to renovate us to become people whose hearts reflect what God sees, even in the muddiest, sin-stained life. Jesus saw God's masterpiece, waiting to be revealed by his grace, and as a result, many people actually became what he envisioned. What do you envision, even for the muddiest human you encounter?

Source: John Burke is the lead pastor at Gateway Church in Austin, Texas