

**Sermon Title:** What Are YOU Looking At? – May 13, 2012 (Scripture is from ESV)

**Location:** New Philadelphia Church Seaside (new church plant in Busan, South Korea)

**Introduction (Who I Am)**

Good afternoon everyone. My name is John-Michael Becker and I am one of the preaching pastors of New Philadelphia Church. My story is that I was born in Northern Virginia just outside DC and studied engineering at Virginia Tech. After graduating and working for a short time, at the end of 2005 I was led by God to come to Korea to live and serve in an orphanage in Seoul. I lived in the home for three years before getting my own apartment just outside the home. Last year I married my beautiful wife Sky and we are living together in Seoul. I still serve full time as an English volunteer at the orphanage while directing an orphanage ministry called Jerusalem Ministry. I am by trade, a missionary.

I have been attending New Philadelphia church since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. In 2010 I led a small team of ten to plant a church in another part of Seoul. We started in a bar, that was a lot dirtier and smellier than this one. We now have our own church building and the church there is continuing to grow.

I am not on staff with New Philadelphia Church, but serve as a lay pastor. A lay pastor is a member of the congregation who also serves as a pastor without salary. My wife Sky and I are also the healing and deliverance pastors of the church. If you were to serve at an orphanage like I do your eyes would quickly be opened to different strongholds in the kids' minds that causes them to act in negative ways, such as insecure or rebellious. And then if you were to take a good look at some of the people around you at your workplace or even in your family, you will probably notice similar struggles such as addictions to lust, alcohol, drugs, or struggles with fear, anger, or bitterness. A lot of these struggles have an emotional or physical root, and the enemy, the devil, has taken advantage of the sins or trauma to set up a stronghold in the person. So for what was once just a temptation, now there is an addiction. Whereas temptations to look at porn or feelings of bitterness or fear would just come now and then, now they have taken up home within your mind. Now the voices don't seem to be from the outside anymore, but rather from the inside.

New Philadelphia Church has 11 core leaders including Pastors Caleb and Mina. Out of the 11 core leaders two of them had severe eating disorders, a few of them had drug addictions and sexual addictions, one of them \*cough, Caleb\* was imprisoned and then deported from America, another had an abortion, another was kidnapped for a short time and raped, and a number of them had bad family issues. Those are your core leaders. And don't get me started in sharing about the backgrounds of the Seaside church plant team. They may look all sweet and nice, but there are some intense stories in their past. Each and every one of them have had a healing and deliverance session. And each and every one of them is walking in joy, in love, and in victory. Some were in deep depression, some were heavily addicted to sex, some orphaned or sick and near death, but now look at them. That is the power of the love of God! Wow!!!

So how does healing and deliverance work? Our requirements for the healing and deliverance ministry is that whoever desires the ministry must be attending the church and be a part of the family. Without people around you who love you and you are accountable to, you are wide open to the attacks of the enemy. Jesus said that if you cast a demon out of a man then the demon will go and get seven more demons stronger than himself and go back to

make the condition of the man far worse. And we have seen this time and time again for those who are alone and not accountable to anyone. Accountability is a must!

Then, as the person is growing with the Lord and has conviction of their sins and struggles, they are ready for healing and deliverance. This involves confessing and repenting of different sins that create strongholds in the body. Sins such as unforgiveness, lust, or other things. During the healing and deliverance the leader will lead them in renouncing false identities. The word renounce means to forsake. For example, “I renounce I am dirty and I am unworthy of love and I declare that I am made pure by the blood of Jesus,” or “I renounce that I am a failure and good for nothing, and I declare that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” And the prayers of the leaders of our church are powerful.

**James 5:16 – Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.**

The Bible says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The Bible also says that there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9). I have done so many sessions for so many people and I have heard it all: homosexuality, rape, incest, abortions, sexual abuse, physical abuse, adultery, and on and on. I can tell you that there is nothing new under the sun. There are no sins that are going to shock God or shock me. The Bible says that we were ALL lost. And the Bible says that God demonstrated His own love for us in this, while we were still sinners Jesus Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). God, who knows all things, who knew your entire life before you were born (Psalm 139), chose to send His Son to die for us before we could do anything to earn it. It is by grace that we are saved, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If you desire freedom from anything from your past or even your present, I want to encourage you to give your life to the Lord. God created you and formed you. He loves you. He loves you so much that He sent His Son Jesus over 2,000 years ago to die on the Cross for you. Jesus took the punishment that we deserve for our sins so that we could be freed from the grip of sin and live in His grace. Give your life to the Lord and commit to the church, God’s family. Just by doing that so many lies will be broken off you and you will experience a freshness to life. And as you learn to walk with the Lord, the leaders here will lead you in healing and deliverance. And those things in your life that you thought would always weigh you down or that you would have to hide until your death, you will be able to confess and turn away from. And through the prayers, counsel, and love of the leaders here, you will experience freedom like never before. And maybe you too will become like one of these crazy happy Seaside team members. =)

Okay, I do have a message to give today that I believe you all will enjoy. Before I start, let me say a quick prayer for us.

**\*Prayer\***

### **Steve Jobs’ Wisdom**

Did you know... that when Steve Job's gave presentations for new Apple products studies have shown that he made sure there were consistent times of applause and of laughter throughout his presentation. Studies of the sound from the presentations actually show a near perfect rhythm of applause and laughter during his talks. Smart, right? He wanted to make sure they were continually engaged. But studies have shown that during the presentations that twice as often as garnering laughter and applause Steve Jobs would literally marvel at the

product during the presentation. He would gaze at the products like the iPad and iPhone as if they were the greatest things he had ever seen. Many people who have studied his presentations believe that because he, this well revered man, marveled at the products, that the masses of people were also led to marvel at the product. They became what they saw. Just as they witnessed Steve Jobs marveling at the product, so too they found themselves marveling at the product. **They became what they saw.**

The title of today's message for those of you who are taking notes is: **“What are YOU looking at?”** Go ahead and look at your neighbor and ask them, **“What are YOU looking at?”**

Please go ahead and open your Bibles to Genesis 30:31-39. I'm going to read for us part of a strange story where Jacob is working for his cousin Laban as a shepherd. They are negotiating Jacob's wages.

Genesis 30:31-36 – Laban said, “What shall I give you?” Jacob said, “You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen.” Laban said, “Good! Let it be as you have said.” But that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in charge of his sons. And he set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock.

Quick pause, to sum up what just happened: Jacob tells Laban he will take care of all the solid covered goats and sheep. And whatever offspring they have that are speckled or spotted will be for Jacob to keep. If any of you paid attention in Biology class, you would know that the odds are not in Jacobs favor. Two solid colored animals do not usually have speckled or spotted offspring. But let's read on, verses 37-39...

Genesis 30:37-39: Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white sticks. He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the sticks and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.

How bizarre. Jacob puts all these streaked and spotted sticks in front of the animals where they mated. And so the sheep and goats had striped, speckled and spotted offspring. I'll be honest in saying there is no natural explanation for why this happened. Bible scholars can't figure it out. Their offspring simply became what they saw. **They became what they saw.**

The truth is, we aren't able to simply reproduce what we want to reproduce. We reproduce what we see. What we see becomes us and it becomes what we reproduce.

Think about babies. Babies mimic what they see. When parents try to communicate with their babies, they don't speak in super difficult English for long monologues. Their baby's mind isn't developed enough to handle all that. Instead, parents speak in “baby talk.” “Dada.

Dada.” “Can you say, ‘Mama?’ ‘Mama?’” But soon, what are the babies saying? “Dada. Dada. Mama. Mama.”

And how about smiles? My wife Sky has cousins who recently had a baby. We visited the baby a few months after she was born and we were surprised by how straight faced the baby was. Her cousins, who are very straight-faced themselves and don’t smile or act goofy much at all, told us, “개 안 웃어” or “She doesn’t smile.” So for the next thirty minutes I held the little baby and acted like a fool in front of her. I spoke in a goofy voice with a huge animated grin saying, “Can you smile?” Can you smile? Heeheehee, heeheehee.” The baby’s lips began to twitch and she began to try to respond back. Sky’s cousins were surprised, but I also think they thought I was a bit strange. Sadly, months later when Sky’s mom visited to see the baby again, she still wasn’t smiling. The baby hadn’t seen smiles, so how was she supposed to smile? Her parents are straight-faced and serious and that’s what the baby sees. The baby is becoming what she sees.

As I told you all before, I am a missionary. All the money I live off of is from financial supporters. And one of my greatest financial supporters is a very successful woman in America. She grew up in a small town in the Midwest where no one ever thought of attending university, let alone a woman. But she grew in her faith in God and broke out of that culture and she ended up attending college. And as she has walked with God, she has become more and more successful and has even become a top engineer in her field, traveling the world to give lectures and training. She is brilliant! But she is the only person from her small town to have attended college and to be so successful. In that town everyone just farms or works other manual jobs just like their parents did and their grandparents did, including her siblings. So while she has been able to use her intelligence to do great things, her fellow family members remained set in their simpler jobs. Everyone around her simply became what they had grown up seeing.

### **You become what you see.**

Just recently former star football player Terrell Owens was on TV in America for the Dr. Phil show. Terrell Owens’ parents split when he was very young and he was raised by his grandmother and his mother. He became one of the greatest NFL players and earned up to 100 million dollars when he played. But now he is older and because of poor decisions he lost almost all of his money. On the Dr. Phil show he had to face three of the four mothers of his children. He isn’t with any of the women anymore and does not pay them child support. He rarely stops by to see the children and has little presence in any of their lives. Sadly, Terrell Owens had become just like his father. The actions he saw of his father growing up, leaving and being completely absent without any responsibility for Terrell, so has he acted towards his own kids. And you all know that Terrell Owens is not the only man who grew up without a father to in turn not care for his own children. Kids are becoming what they’re seeing.

### **What Are YOU Looking At?**

So my question to you all today is, “**What are you looking at?**” What have you been looking at? I imagine many of you could relate somewhat to Terrell Owens. You started life with a disadvantage because the parents you were watching weren’t good examples. The life that they demonstrated to you made it seem that there would always be loneliness or dissatisfaction or anger or poverty. For some of you, you grew up not learning how to smile like the baby of Sky’s cousins, because your family was so difficult.

Even now, what are you looking at in the present? If you look around in the natural, it's hard to see beyond the basic English teaching jobs all with similar salaries and seemingly little hope to get much better. Or you're looking at Korean jobs where people are working until midnight everyday and have chosen their job over spending time with their family. And either you have surrendered to that culture and become like them, or there is frustration or even despair of even thinking of having to live like that. Just look at the children of this nation. They see their parents working nonstop, and what do the kids do? They study nonstop. And the stress and suicide rates that had grown among the adults has now overtaken the younger generation. They are rapidly becoming what they are seeing.

Even when we try and run from what we see, if we try to find our answer or our deliverance in the natural, **what we have seen is almost always going to catch up on us.** A close friend of mine got married to a lovely girl and seemed to have a great marriage. But when things got tougher for them later on, the girl quickly lost faith in the relationship and pursued someone else while petitioning for divorce. Her explanation was that it was bound to happen anyway, because her mom had done the same and so had her grandmother. While she was hopeful early on in their marriage, she couldn't escape that nagging fear of what she had seen in her mom growing up. And finally she gave into it and repeated the behavior. She became what she had seen.

What a depressing message, right? I'm sorry, but it's REALITY. For every success story of a fatherless child who made it out of the slums and is living both successfully and with integrity, I'll show you MILLIONS of children whose lives have become worse than their parents were. Just stop by the orphanage I serve at. Or you can meet a bunch of the kids who have graduated from the orphanages, swearing just like I'm sure Terrell Owens and so many other kids without parents swore that they would do better for their own kids, and you'll see that they too have fostered broken families. There are even kids in the orphanages whose parents had been raised in the same orphanage, and had later left them just as their own parents left them.

If we get a reality check, we can see that the world and all it offers doesn't truly bring healing and life. The self-help section in the bookstore is huge because so many people are searching for ways to turn their lives around. **But if the self-help section were truly effective, then it should be getting smaller rather than bigger.** Instead there are more and more books and exercises and teachings about overcoming our struggles and becoming better people. And while the books may help us some on the surface, they don't change the DNA or the heart. We truly need to be born again to escape.

### **Born Again**

Born again. So many people love the movies where people can go back in time to change their lives or change their past. Many people think at some point in their life, "If only I could just go back to that point in my life and change what I did, or change the way I responded." So many people wish they could have another chance or change what they've become. Jesus Himself spoke of this in John 3:3...

**John 3:3 – Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."**

What is the kingdom of God? Light, love, health, grace, peace, deliverance, and joy. But Jesus says, “You can’t see those things unless you are born again.” What on earth does that mean?

**2Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

Why do you think the Seaside church plant team members are all so happy? How can a guy who was once in prison because of drugs and then kicked out of America be so happy? When Caleb first came to Korea he had to drink a lot of alcohol every night in order to go to sleep, he couldn’t stop smoking, and he had little hope for his life. Now look at this guy. He is the leader of a church plant! He is married to a beautiful wife! And he can go to a bar and enjoy a drink without being overcome by addiction.

Two words: “Born again.” When Caleb accepted Jesus into his life he turned from his former life and gave it to the Lord. Jesus paid the price for all of Caleb’s sins and for the consequences of Caleb’s sins by dying on the Cross for him. And so Caleb was able to give all his troubles to the Lord. And as Caleb began to focus on the Lord and the things of the Spirit, his life began to change dramatically. He continued to become what he was seeing, but now he was seeing purity, love, peace, and joy rather than the hopelessness of the physical world around him.

### **The Image of God**

The Bible says that we were made in the image of God. In the first chapter of the entire Bible, Genesis 1:27, it reads...

**Genesis 1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

Human beings are made in the image of God. No other created thing carries such an identity. There are no lions that are trying to model themselves after a specific lion. There are no monkeys that try and model themselves after a specific monkey. There are no animals that have idols or gods that they worship. But humans are always reflecting the image of someone or something. We are always beholding something and in turn reflecting its image. It is in our nature. It is in the nature of each and every one of us.

We were made to behold the image of God. We were made to live in His image. We were made to live in love, in joy, in light, and in beauty. We were made to know our Creator and to know who we are truly meant to be. We are called to no longer fix our eyes on this world that is decaying around us or on our present struggles or difficult past, but to look to God and what He has ahead of us. Everything apart from God is decaying and has an end. Material things, unhealthy emotions, even our own bodies... all eventually lead to an end. Apart from God everything leads to death. But God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1Peter 2:9)! It’s only in Him that we are able to find true life and life to the full (John 10:10).

Church, we become what we see. And so I want to ask you all one more time, “What are you looking at?” What are you fixing your life upon? Is it something that will only decay in time? Is it something negative and hurtful? Or is it something eternal and filled with life?



\*Pray and Invite Praise Team Up... declare a shift from unhealthy things (unforgiveness, depression, addiction, etc.) into life\*

\*Ask for response for those who want to begin to look to God to stand up. Tell them if they want to be born again to talk with a church leader after the service\*