

# Open The Eyes Of My Heart

By Paul Baloché

Words in the printed bulletin

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

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: <sup>11</sup>“For I know the plans I have :  
: for you,” declares the LORD, :  
: “plans to prosper you and not :  
: to harm you, plans to give you :  
: hope and a future. <sup>12</sup> Then you :  
: will call upon me and come and :  
: pray to me, and I will listen to :  
: you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and :  
: find me when you seek me :  
: with all your heart.” :  
: —Jeremiah 29:11-13 :  
: .....  
: .....

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## What Are You Leaning Into?

This Sunday we are reflecting our praise, our confession, our joy in Jesus Christ through the prism of the two-year theme we used back in September 2008-2010: *Pressing On to Know the Lord*. What is the central thing in this theme? I would say it's

*leaning into God with determination, out of a thirst to know him and his purposes in Christ better than I do now, and out of a sober awareness of how easily I go off the track—as Israel did—and elevate my priorities over his, maybe not as much by an outright defiance as by a slow creep of my heart away from God as my supreme good.*

If that's near the mark, then what are some concrete things you can do to "lean into" the Lord of glory?

\*A good place to start would be to memorize Hosea 6:1-3 and/or Philippians 3:10-14, its New Testament counterpart. What passion the Apostle Paul had to move toward Christ! Learn from him.

\*Spend a little time each week, for a month or so, meditating on the repentance part of Hosea 6 (read also Hosea 5:13-14; 14:1-3), and use Psalm 19:12 as a plea ("**Who can discern his errors?**"), asking God to show you what you need to see about yourself. And use this statement by novelist, Joseph Conrad, in his book, *The Heart of Darkness*:

*It is my belief that no man ever understands quite his own artful dodges to escape from the grim shadow of self-knowledge.*

How are you "dodging" those things about yourself—artfully!—that you know Christ wants to heal and change? Are you just coasting because your passion for the Lord has cooled? Or maybe because you are majorly disappointed by painful losses in your life, or by hard things? (If you truly want to know what you are skillfully dodging, then ask a few people close to you who love you, but who also know you.) And use this—by an author whose name I've forgotten: *Remarkably often we do not see things because we are not prepared to find them.*

Spend some time considering what it might be that you can't see about yourself or your life right now because you are not prepared to find it.

Ask God to show you these things—and then stick around for his answer. (Don't hold out for an audible voice, but if you are serious about wanting to know, you can expect to be able to discern the Lord speaking to you.)

\* Choose, by a decision of faith, to see everything in your life as something that can help you know the Lord better, and offer that up to God as a prayer that he would use it in your life to that end: pain and loss, public worship and private, beauty, blessings and pleasures, your health or your sickness, being alive when you wake up in the morning, studying the Word of God, working in an honorable vocation, caring for your children or your friends, and on and on.

And remember, God is the one at work in you to draw you toward himself, as he reassures us in Hosea 14:4-8 (look it up); and his power is perfected in you in *your weakness*—not in your strength. That means you can lean into him.

—Ron Lutjens

## Celebrating Jesus Christ: Pressing On to Know the Lord

And the commissioning of Joseph Bianco and Billy Cervený to internships

### Let us know—let us press on to know the Lord!

So spoke the prophet Hosea in ancient Israel

To his brother and sister believers;

So we speak to one another—

We who live on this side of the incarnation of the Lord,  
On this side of the cross, on this side of the empty tomb,  
On this side of the ascension of that same Lord  
To the seat of David's Throne in heaven.

We bank on the promises of God;

We hold him to his word

That he will come to us when we return to him,

When we return with all our stubbornness;

He will come, and he will heal us;

He will come and he will rain on us his Spirit,

To soften the hard ground of our heart;

He will revive and restore us, that we might live before him,  
And be signs everywhere of the Kingdom of Love and Truth.

Alleluia!



### Today's Scripture Readings

Old Testament Reading: Hosea 5:13-6:4

New Testament Lesson: Philippians 3:4b-14

## Christianity in Ephesus, Christianity in St. Louis Series

### —Today's Sermon—

"The New Humanity in Christ and the '180 Syndrome':  
Decentralizing the Self"

Ephesians 4:20-24, 28

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching