

UNSEEN AND ETERNAL

Posted on April 10, 2014 by Emily Taylor



*"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen,
since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

2 Corinthians 4:18

I. Love. This. Verse. I have to be honest, I think the poetic and somehow riddle-like, mysterious nature of this verse is what first captured my attention. It seemed romantic, inspirational, deep... and in all honesty I can't say I was altogether clear as to why. It just stood out on the page to me.

Brandon (the hubs) and I even had it inscribed inside our wedding rings. "Unseen and Eternal." We're deep. (Insert chuckle).

Here's the thing, I've come to realize it's a powerful statement, true to its core, and can serve as both an encouragement and a warning, depending on the focus of our lives, yes? Over the years the truth that powers this verse has been slowly and steadily capturing my heart, demanding my attention whether I feel like it or not, and it's starting to find its way out.

"For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."

Luke 6:45

I believe an eternal perspective changes everything. We all have to make a decision about what we believe about eternity. And about what we believe is eternal. It impacts the way we work, the way we play, the way we parent, protect, apply boundaries, engage with people, the way we love. It alters the way we experience relationships, consider poverty, and perceive wealth. It dictates our goals, our mission in life, our visions for the future and our hopes. It changes our priorities. It guides our way of thinking in EVERYTHING we do. If we believe (I mean really believe) in an eternal home, we stop prioritizing our stuff, even our happiness or comfort, and we start to think about *people*. People are eternal. We start to think about loving well, leaving a legacy, knowing and passing on truth. My Mom used to tell us all the time, "People are more important than things." She was so right. So in line with the nugget of wisdom in the calling of this verse that begs that we consider the unseen and eternal! I find myself using the same phrase with my wild little boys as they melt down over the *audacity* of having to *share*... toddlers have a great way of giving us better perspective on truth don't they?! It seems so clear, so obvious; laughable even – until we stop to consider if that's how God feels about us sometimes too. (Gulp).

You see, **we all use our lives for something.** We make investments into the things we've determined to be priorities. The little (and big) deposits of our time, energy, money and even our hearts evidence what we believe matters – what counts. My family needs to eat, so I go to the grocery store. I would like my kids to be literate, so we talk about the alphabet and read books. I want my husband to know I love him, so I try to learn and apply his love language. We like to dance, so we have regular dance parties in our kitchen/dining room. I want to know who God is and retain truth, so I spend time in the Bible. I know there are poor and there are vulnerable people, so I... well, I'm working on that one. And all of these little investments will testify for or against us at the end of days when we are held accountable for how we spent our lives.

People, dear people – **we are made for big stuff.** Isn't it true that our hearts cry out for significance? For the eternal? And the time and attention it takes to consider what that means is challenged by all the interesting things like Facebook and Pinterest that beg for our tiny slices of "free time." Isn't it true that we really do want to be saved

from all things petty and live a life of true *adventure* instead of just watching it on tv or reading it in books? Don't we all want to take hold of true hope? Not just something that makes us feel a little better in the moment. And how can we possibly hope to live adventurously, significantly, if we have spared ourselves the difficulty of discerning truth?! And oh, truth can be trusted, but it can hurt as it scrapes away at the infections in our hearts that are brought about by flawed fundamentals. When a foundation is weak things crumble around it, but in order to be built back up the right way it must be broken in the right places. I think many of us believe that at the end of our lives we can tip the scales in a favorable direction by "doing our best," being kind to our neighbor, giving to charities, going to church, etc.; but if we are not pulling from an accurate pool of truth, if we aren't pouring a reliable foundation in life; then when we attempt to uncover, define and apply the eternally significant stuff, we are archers shooting at random – and our efforts are futile. Futile, the word itself breaks my heart.

I offer this counterintuitive consideration of what's valuable because we live in a world where we are beckoned by the luxurious, the most fashion-forward, the "it" new thing. Where we wait in line at the grocery store and look at magazines of the beautiful and successful and where money makes the rules. Value, approval and success are determined by an audience we declare has the informed authority in our lives. Who is it for you? Much to my great relief, I have come to a point in my life where I have determined that **the God of the Bible has a very different set of criteria for value, approval and success than that which the culture we live in demands** (whew!). And it's not distant or uninformed (*he wired us to be who we are – and we're made in HIS image!*) What *He* says is true and right is something I want to pay attention to. And the life he offers actually sets us free. That is why we can age with grace, why we can persevere in our pain, why we can have hope amidst chaos; because when we hear him speak, it breathes life.

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

– John 10:10

I want to talk about truth. I want to absorb it, breathe it, know it, live it, share it. I want to be wise. I believe there are realities that we can tangibly grasp. I don't believe we have to surrender to blind faith to profess God is real – there is evidence of him *everywhere*. Full disclosure - my life is marked by ups and downs of wrestling with what is seen vs. what is unseen; what is temporary vs. what is eternal. The peace and

life I grasp today is completely and entirely credited to Jesus. My efforts in life, my "resume" of sorts has nothing to do with it. Thank goodness – because I have made royal messes over the years.

I suggest this: once we figure out what's eternal, what's true and right; we can do a much better job of discerning the stuff that matters from the stuff that doesn't. I believe that discernment changes *everything*. And our lives will reflect it. So that's what this effort is about – discussing the eternal, the unseen, the stuff that matters; uncovering truth and figuring out how to apply it in real ways for real life.