



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 2342

Proverbs 15:3 "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good."

Our verse today reminds me of the song children sing in Bible class, "Be careful little eyes what you see, for the Father up above is looking down in love, so be careful little eyes what you see." The Father up above is looking. His eyes, our verse says, are in every place. He sees the good as well as the bad. Let's think about this for a moment:

As parents, there are certain things we do not want our children to see. It's not the wrong stuff in movies, because none of us ought to be seeing wrong stuff, but even the nightly news shows crime, violence and evil in the world. We want to protect our children from images that may scare them. God sees it all.

First, God sees things that breaks His heart. He sees sin and blasphemy. He sees people misusing His name and taking advantage of others. He sees violence. He sees His commands being ignored and broken. He sees people living like animals and living as if He never existed. Made in His image is what we are, but many don't show that, nor appreciate that.

These wrongs certainly angers God. How we never realize how patient He is with humanity. In an instance, He could wipe out all of us and be done with us. But He doesn't. Each day is a gift. Each day is a demonstration of His continual love, grace and hope for humanity to follow Him. His name is cursed. His word is mocked. His church is made fun of. His way considered narrow, bigoted and out of touch. And, another day passes and more of this continues.

There will be a day in which the Lord will have enough. His patience will reach it's end. He will send Jesus and that will end all things. Then the truth will be known. Then folks will fall to their knees. But then, it will be too late. I don't think we can understand the patience of God. Even today, God is giving some of us yet another opportunity to change our ways and to follow Him.

Second, God sees things that pleases Him. God witnesses kindness. God hears praise in worship. He sees people going out of their way. He sees believers making right choices. He witnesses moms and dads really doing their best to walk in His ways and bring their children up godly. He sees cups of cold water given to others. He sees tears of joy and happiness. He sees preachers pouring their hearts out in their sermons. He sees shepherds laying awake at night, praying to Him about some members. He sees Bible class teachers who put so many hours into making their lessons come alive for the children. He sees folks keeping the church building picked up and clean. He sees those who stop by the hospital to cheer someone up. He sees the earnest conversations that folks have to try to bring one to the Lord. God sees

(OVER).

Now, a couple of things trickle out of this. God sees things that I do not. How easy it is for me to assume that no one is doing anything. We can get that Elijah syndrome where we think we are the only one doing anything. But unknown to us are many things going on all around us. We didn't know about the cards that were sent. We didn't hear the prayers going upward. We didn't know about the food taken or the visits made. And, we don't need to know. And, when we are doing these things, we certainly do not need to blow our own trumpet and tell others. Don't let the left hand know what the right hand is doing. Remember that.

Third, we can get discouraged because of all the evil and feel like we are on our own. We can feel helpless and that often leads to being hopeless. Imagine ancient Israel in Egypt. Slaves. Oppressed. Not in the position to break free. Not able to change their circumstances. Yet, God who sees all, heard their cry. Imagine Judah in Babylon, or those early Christians in Rome. Helpless. All seems hopeless. Yet, God who sees all is also the God who can do all. He can bring down powerful empires. History shows that. He can liberate His people. They have been rescued from prisons, fiery furnaces and lions dens. His cause is never defeated. His way is never overpowered. The kingdom cannot be shaken. In our discouragement, we must pray. We must trust God. We must realize that He is able to accomplish His will. He really doesn't need us to help Him.

Fourth, it is a twisted thought to conclude that God only sees wrong or God only sees good. He sees both. Those that believe God only sees wrong, imagines God with a frown upon His face and His divine radar gun always pointed at us. Scared, we shuffle into church buildings on Sunday, not because we love Him, but because we don't want to go to Hell. This thinking concludes that nothing we do is ever enough. God is never pleased. He is never happy with us. Yet, in the parable of the talents we find the master saying two times, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The master was pleased. Paul said, "we make it our ambition to please Him." **(2 Cor. 5:9 NASB)** How can that be, if he is never pleased?

But the other side of this thought is just as dangerous. For others, God only sees good. He closes His eyes to wrongs. Because of that, it is taught that God is too loving to punish any of us. God's grace covers all things and we really don't have to fuss over the details because in the end it really doesn't matter. Just love God and He'll love you back. This twisted image of God allows people to manufacture a worship that resembles rock concerts, ball games and is driven by fun, feelings and food and very little Scriptures. All's good, they declare, because God is love. The only thing that matters, we are told, is that one loves God.

Yet, God sees the evil and the good. God saw the offering of Cain and that wasn't good. God saw the offering of Aaron's two sons and that wasn't good. God saw the changes that Jeroboam made to worship. God saw the golden calf that Aaron made. All good? All done in love? Details do not matter? Really? Best look at those stories a bit closer. It does matter. Love is demonstrated through trust and obedience and not feelings and certainly not in ignoring His word. To love God is to do what He wants and what He authorizes.

Finally, God sees all. Because He sees our sins, He has provided salvation through Jesus. Because He sees goodness, He opens the doors for opportunities. There is no hiding things from God. He sees it. He sees it all. There is no need to brag to God. He sees it. He sees it all. Because of this, we ought to be quick to apologize to God and to beg for His mercy. Because of this, we ought also to understand that God is counting upon us to be His hands, feet, and eyes. We are His instruments. He sees how hard we are trying. He sees how we either do things or could have done things and we just didn't.

And, yet, the God who sees all, still loves you. He still wants to give you a second chance. He still wants you to spend forever with Him in Heaven. He sees. He knows. And, He hasn't given up on you! We tend to think that if someone really knew us, they probably wouldn't like us. God knows you. He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows and He still longs for you to be with Him.

And, that is amazing!

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)
