

SERMON STARTERS

DIVINE SURVEILLANCE**Psalm 33:13, 14**

“From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth.”

An All-Seeing Eye is watching you! No, it is not the traffic camera on the corner to catch red light runners or the camera inside the bank to watch for would-be robbers. Electronic surveillance is increasingly used to keep tabs on law breakers. Surveillance of humans by humans is a rather new tool, the product of technology. But the practice is not new. God has been the Eye-In-The-Sky from the beginning and without electronics! Psalm 33 states that *“... The Lord... sees all mankind.... watches all who live on the earth.”*

Among God's attributes are his omnipresence and his omniscience. He is "omnipresent," that is, He is present everywhere. He is "omniscient," that is, He is wisdom personified, consequently, He not only sees all but knows all as well. He is the Creator of all and therefore, the Observer of all. No one can escape His watchful eye.

This truth for the wicked is bothersome; for His worshipers it is a blessing. To those who are His obedient children, this truth is comforting; to all others this truth is convicting. We, His children, should be comforted by the knowledge that:

Divine Surveillance Guards Us.

“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.” (Psalm 33:18-20)

He watches over us to protect us. His watchful care and attention is well documented throughout Holy Scripture and in the lives and testimonies of believers the world over every day. What God said to Abraham, *“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward”* (Gen. 15:1), is the protection and promise that all of His children enjoy.

The guardianship of God is nowhere more pronounced than in that favorite of all Psalms, the 23rd: *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”* (v. 4)

Divine Surveillance Governs Us.

God is the Governor of the material universe and mankind universally. *“For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.”* (Psalm 22:28) This is called God's providence. All things are governed by God's providence and not by luck, fortune, fate, astronomy, etc.

David recognized God's providential dealings with him and said, *“O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand*

my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.” (Psalm 139:1-3)

“He exercises an omniscient control over all things, and makes all things subservient to the designs of His plan of the universe, which, so far as His people are concerned, is the plan of salvation. Without Him nothing comes to pass; but through Him everything takes place.” (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the O.T.)

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1) What shepherd does not govern his sheep?

Divine Surveillance Guides Us.

The psalmist was certain of Divine Surveillance when he said, *“You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” (Psalm 73:24)*

The Scriptural teaching that God guides is abundant but none more appreciated than – yes, you guessed it! – Psalm 23. *“He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.” (vs.2, 3)*

In view of this wonderful truth of Divine Surveillance, gladly and gratefully we sing:

*“Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.”*

Divine Surveillance Goads us.

“...you shall listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all his commandments which I command you this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD your God.” (Deut. 13:18) *“Your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” (Isa. 30:21)*

The awareness that God sees us should motivate the sensitive soul to “be about our Father’s business.” And what is that?

- We have an assignment to fulfill: *“You shall be witnesses unto me....” (Acts 1:8);*
- We have an appointment to keep: *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment.” (Heb. 9:27)*
- We have an account to give: *“Every one of you shall give account of himself unto God.” (Rom. 14:12)*

Divine Surveillance Gladdens us.

“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” (Psalm 139:15-17)

The psalmist delighted in the knowledge that, before he was born, when he was yet unformed in his mother's womb, God's "eyes saw my unformed body." The God who took note of him as a sperm in the womb, would surely keep His eyes upon him after he was born. This, he said, was "precious to me."

No one is insignificant in the eyes of God. He Who sees the sparrow fall, counts the hairs of our heads, knows when we sit and when we stand (Ps. 139) must value us. "Such knowledge is too wonderful to me." (Ps. 139:6)

Divine Surveillance Graces us.

"She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me..." (Gen. 16:13)

When Hagar ran away from Abraham's home because of Sarah's mistreatment of her, she was promised a son: "...you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery." (Gen. 16:11)

We then read, "She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." (Gen. 16:13)

In Exodus 2:25 we read, "God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them." And Deuteronomy 26:7, 8 - "The LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So the LORD brought us out of Egypt..."

God sees us in our misery and sends His mercy; sees our grief and gives His grace. What a comfort it should be to us that in a most wicked time upon the earth "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." (Gen. 6:8) He sees and He cares for "His heart is touched with my grief."

*"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord;
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt."*

An anti-big government protester was interviewed on television and he said, "I don't want someone looking over my shoulder all the time!" Big government, in the context in which he was speaking, means human surveillance of humans. However, we have a Big God looking over our shoulders 24/7 and, if we know Him as our Heavenly Father, that truth is the source of consolation, not consternation!

Knowing that "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers...." (1 Peter 3:12) our prayer should be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23, 24)

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