

Eyes Toward The Lord.

Text: Psalm 25:15-16, 1-2

1) God's Eyes Are Always upon Us

Suggested Hymns:

2) Our Eyes Must Always Be upon the Lord, Our God

53, 265, 392, 294, 588

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Psalm 25:15–16 & 1-2, ¹⁵ *My eyes are ever toward the LORD, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net.* ¹⁶ *Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted.*

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

These words of our text are the words of the Introit for this Sunday of the Christian church year. The Latin name is *oculi* which means eye, *My eyes are ever toward the LORD.* They are highly appropriate for this season, because it is the solemn season of Lent, and because they are addressed, as we read in verse 5 of this psalm, to the *“God of my salvation.”*

David was a man of fervent prayer, as the psalms testify. He prayed on various occasions and under varying circumstances, some favourable and some unfavourable, however, always to the living, eternal, almighty, loving God of our salvation.

Lent is a season of repentance and meditation during which we consider annually the suffering and death of our beloved Lord Jesus. We hear again how our salvation was accomplished by our one and only Redeemer and Mediator.

Lent is a special time when our eyes are directed away from earthly distractions and interests and toward the Saviour of mankind hanging on the accursed tree of Calvary.

David, in his troubles and worries, directs his eyes constantly on his Saviour and God, and this we wish to do as we make the topic of our consideration today: *Eyes Toward the Lord*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. **God's Eyes Are Always upon Us**

Reminders that God Constantly Sees Us

We see rather unique portraits occasionally that are painted with eyes that seem to follow us and be directly upon us, no matter in which position or from which angle we observe the picture. This could be a vivid reminder that our God and Lord constantly has us in His eyes.

Again the all-seeing eye, so often portrayed in Christian symbolism, is the symbol of the all-knowing, all-seeing God of whom the sacred writer penned these words in Psalm 139:7-10, *⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.*

And in verses 1-4 we read, *¹ O LORD, You have searched me and known me. ² You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. ³ You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.* Certainly God's eyes, His omniscience, are upon us at all times.

What Does God See?

God's eyes are ever upon us and sees our sinfulness. What else could the Lord see in us who are sinful and corrupt by nature, together with all human beings who ever lived, live now, or ever shall live? We are no exception to the rule that God so plainly sets forth in His Word. Our hearts are sinful and inclined to evil from our youth.

You will recall the judgement of God after the Flood, when He made His covenant with Noah, when He declared that there would never again come a general flood to destroy all flesh, when He said, *"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."*¹

The total depravity of man is not only a Biblical doctrine and fact, but a truth that is demonstrated daily, and it includes us too. The Law of God reveals our sins. These are not mere sayings, but are experiences in our daily lives, if we are but honest and upright in acknowledging them. We confess in one of our Christian hymns, *“Lord, to Thee I make confession, I have sinned and gone astray. I have multiplied transgression, chosen for myself my way. Led by Thee to see my errors, Lord, I tremble at Thy terrors.”*²

Indeed, this knowledge makes us shrink back in alarm. Let us remember that when we confess our sins, this is not done in mere generalisations, or by deploring the sins of the world, or of our country and people, or among our relatives and acquaintances, but we are thinking, and should think, of the specific sins that we have committed; such as, anger and hatred in our hearts, envy and slander against others, impure thoughts and desires, pet sins and sins done deliberately and willingly.

Let us remember that we have also neglected to do good to our neighbour, and the opportunities are many, as we all realise amid the sufferings of humanity. God sees all and knows all. We sin daily in thoughts, words, deeds, and neglect, so that we must confess with the great apostle, *“The good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”*³ Again we hear him complain: *“Who will deliver me from the body of this death?”*⁴

No Rote Confession Either

We are accustomed to reciting the words of the *Confession of Sins* in the liturgy Sunday after Sunday, but do we really feel and realise what we are saying and doing?

Gods' eyes are ever upon us also and especially at such a time, and His ears hear our words; He knows our thoughts afar off, whether we are attentive or just rambling along. That is a sobering thought indeed.

Our hearts ought to be motivated as the heart of David was when he describes his feelings to us in Psalm 32:3-5, *³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.*

God's Eyes Are upon Us Also in Our Troubles

The eyes of God, eyes which can be so threatening and alarming and accusing to us poor sinners, can nevertheless be comforting and assuring when His mercy and love shines through those eyes upon the perplexed person in trouble.

The fact that God is omniscient and that His eyes are ever upon us does not indicate or presuppose that the child of God never needs to suffer and have reverses in this world.

Often people feel that certainly a Christian ought to be spared entirely by a loving God, and they cannot fathom why Christians must suffer or meet with many untoward circumstances in their pious lives. However, the opposite is the case, as the Lord has assured us.⁵

He has our entire lives in His hands, and according to His good and gracious will many things happen to us which we shall not care for, yes, which we sometimes resent, but which are in the interest of our soul's salvation.

God keeps the ultimate goal constantly in mind, and to Him our future is like an open book. Whatever therefore serves the purpose of bringing us closer to God and heaven pleases God, and He permits it to be His agent in leading toward that coveted goal.

David As An Example

David is a good illustration in point, for he certainly had many reverses and disappointments in his life, and he suffered much in the cause of righteousness. He had many enemies, who did their utmost to persecute him and to make his life uncertain and miserable at times.

King Saul hated David and tried over and over again to put an end to David's life. Absalom rebelled against his father, caused him to flee for his life, and brought shame and disgrace upon his head.

Still through it all God's eyes were always upon David, His servant, and He preserved and rescued David, and again restored him to his honourable position in Israel. In considering his experiences, David could sing songs of praise and thanksgiving to God, and we can do likewise.

The Christian believer who attends worship on Sunday morning with cares and griefs in his heart, sings those wonderful words of Hymn 588 and meditates

on those grand and is highly comforted and prepared for any battles that he must face in the coming week. *O blest the house, whate'er befall, Where Jesus Christ is all in all.*

Therefore David, in the affliction which was bothering him when he wrote this psalm, prays to the Lord, ¹⁶ *Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted.*

David wants the merciful eyes of God, the eyes of compassion and sympathy, to rest upon him in his misery. Then he will be comforted and strengthened for the trials of life that lay ahead of him. God will pluck his feet out of the net, as he calls it in our text. The gracious, forgiving, long-suffering God and heavenly Father will also sustain and rescue us.

2. Our Eyes Must Always Be upon the Lord, Our God

We Look to God for Forgiveness

This is what the opening verse of our psalm tells us, *To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.* ² *O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed. ... Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.*⁶ This statement shows our utter dependence upon our God and Lord.

The Christian has long since learned that of himself he is entirely helpless. This is true not merely of our coming to faith in Christ Jesus, as we confess in the explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, but we are just as conscious of the fact that our whole Christian life is dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

Jesus told His followers in that day, and He tells us in John 15:5, *without Me you can do nothing.* So the first thing we seek of our God is that our eyes turn to Him for the forgiveness of our sins.

The tax collectors and sinners of Jesus' day who sought Him out, and with whom He was willing to associate, looked to Him for relief for their evil consciences, for forgiveness and comfort. They found it in Him in that day.

We look for the same to God today. In faith and repentance we pray with David, ⁷ *Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions ...* ¹¹ *For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.*⁷

Forgiveness Is Found Through Christ Alone

With confidence and hope we turn our eyes to the Lord, for we have the assurance that there is forgiveness in Him, namely, in Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. The enemies of Christ once expressed a great truth when they said that God alone can forgive sins.⁸ Exactly so, and God does this for Jesus' sake.

Our Introit for today is highly appropriate for this very reason; it fits into the Lenten season. During these weeks in practically all churches everywhere we are considering the great Passion of our Lord Jesus. Whether a congregation conducts midweek Lenten services or Lenten devotions, the central theme is the Lord's suffering and death for the sins of the entire world.

Let us turn our eyes then to the loving Son of God, who sacrificed Himself and had the entire guilt of the world placed upon Him as the scapegoat for the millions of human beings of all history. Let us turn our eyes to that central cross on Calvary's brow and see with the eyes of faith Jesus Christ who became a curse for us and suffered unspeakable agony for your sins and mine.

Our eyes are always upon Jesus who was God's own complete Sacrifice and who cried out, "*It is finished!*" on that Good Friday. God accepts the offering of His Son and declares Himself reconciled with the world, and man is justified in the sight of God.

How can we turn our eyes away from that Saviour, except it be for shame and repentance that we also helped to cause that tragedy, which, however, became a blessed event for us?

Our Eyes Must Be on God in Every Temptation

The Christian is subject to constant and persistent temptations on the part of his own sinful flesh and blood, or from the enticing pleasures of this corrupt world and from the Tempter himself, who is God's mimic and has a bagful of tricks with which to confuse and dupe the Christian.

As Peter soon succumbed because he was very self-sufficient and confident, so shall we fall if we rely on our own powers and character. David asks that God turn to Him; in other words, he is looking to God in his trials and temptations, for there alone he finds security and assurance of assistance and help in all troubles.

With our eyes on God we, too, can rejoice with St. Paul in our tribulations, and we can proclaim the truth that was so comforting to him, that if God is for us, who can be against us?⁹ With the help of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and with the nearness of God in His divine Word, we can be victorious over all temptations that come to us.

We read in 1 Corinthians 10:13, *God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

Our Eyes Must Be on God in Our Trials

God tempers the adversities to the abilities which He has given the individual Christian to resist and weather the storms of life that assail him. He makes a way to escape. Christians are cross-bearers.

The well-known example of Job is familiar to all of us. This man of God had many reverses and adversities that happened in rapid succession to him and his beloved ones. Job lost all of his possessions, he lost his dear ones, he was afflicted with irritating sores in his own body, he had so-called friends as miserable comforters, and he received no encouragement from his wife.

Through it all, however, his faith shone brightly, and he never wavered from his trust in his Redeemer and Lord. His eyes were always on the Lord in his darkest days. Job expressed his belief and ours in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting when he and we shall see God.

In his darkest hour he could call out, ²⁵ *For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;* ²⁶ *And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,* ²⁷ *Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*¹⁰

Riveting our eyes ever on the Lord will help us through as it did for him, and we shall be able to say with Paul in Romans 8:18, ¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

We Must Keep Our Eyes Ever on the Lord for Strength in Life

Furthermore, keeping our eyes on God and our Saviour will help us to live a useful, Christian life of service to God and our fellow men. Our daily life makes

certain demands on us, and the humdrum of life and routine matters often get monotonous and irritating even to the child of God.

Sometimes we even get so discouraged that we forget our real purpose in this world. With our eyes turned to God we will find purpose and worth in life. We shall realise that God placed us here for a very special purpose and exactly at this time when things are rather topsyturvy.

Our daily tasks, humble as they may be, whether in the home or at the bench or in the office or in our professional life, will become glorified opportunities to do good, and we shall make use of these shining moments to glorify God, and serve His purposes.

A person's eyes are the windows of his soul. We often look to the eyes of another to give us a clue to the personality or character of the other person whom we may meet in daily life. The eyes often tell what the individual with whom we are dealing is thinking of. We like to see the steady eye, and are distrustful of the shifty eye.

Now as God's eyes are unwaveringly upon us, so may we fix our eyes on Him, looking to our divine source of comfort and strength and encouragement.

Your Saviour looks at you and says, "***Who do you say that I, the Son of Man am?***" With Peter let us look directly into the Saviour's eyes and say, "We know and believe that ***You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.***"¹¹

Here on earth clouds may arise to dim our sight, and we see in a mirror, dimly, but in glory hereafter we shall see our Saviour and Lord face to face,¹² and our eyes shall see Him forever. May God grant us that glory for Jesus' sake.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,¹³

Fear not, He is with thee, O be not dismayed;
For He is thy God, and will still give thee aid:
He'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by His righteous, omnipotent hand. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Genesis 8:21

² Hymn 315

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- ³ Romans 7:19
 - ⁴ Romans 7:24
 - ⁵ John 15:20
 - ⁶ Psalm 25:3
 - ⁷ Psalm 25:7, 11
 - ⁸ Mark 2:7
 - ⁹ Romans 8:31
 - ¹⁰ Job 19:25-27,
 - ¹¹ Matthew 16:15-16
 - ¹² 1 Corinthians 13:12
 - ¹³ Hymn 392