

## The Eyes of the Lord (Psalm 34:15)

Rick's exhortation does not directly relate to care but his words are an important reminder that the eyes of the Lord are constantly on us and He is ever present to help us in our caring activities. He knows our needs, our strengths and weaknesses and will help us when we place our confidence in Him.



### 2 Peter 3

#### Greetings!

Life for most of us is full and busy – often it seems that we are unable to get everything done in the day that we want to. If you're like me, often I get to the end of the day and realise that I've spent very little time focused on the things of God – why is that? **What is it that fills our life**, what takes up all our time? How important is it - urgent but not that important in the long term.

I'd like to think about what we are focused on – what is the primary focus of our life. It's easy to give a quick answer, to say something like – seeking first the kingdom of God, or following Jesus Christ, or striving to develop the mind of Christ. But - **do our actions match our words?**

What about today – what did we do this morning to prepare for the memorial meeting? Did we have a look at the daily readings to see if there were some thoughts there that might be picked up in the words of exhortation? **Did we spend some time reflecting on our life over the past week** – what we achieved or didn't achieve – or perhaps looking forward to the week to come? Maybe thinking about attributes that we could develop in our lives – aspects of the fruit of the spirit - patience, humility, meekness – or maybe things that we could do to overcome some of the weaknesses or failures of the past week. Or was it all a rush to get organised and ready to be here in time for the Memorial meeting – especially since it started an hour earlier today?

**In thinking about the direction and focus of my life, I was reminded of the words of David in Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.**

Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous [those with moral courage and spiritual integrity] And His ears are open to their cry. (Amplified Bible.)

**The question for me is** – do I have the moral courage, and spiritual integrity to live my life in such a way that I could be considered righteous – and am I crying out to God for help – or do I try and solve all my problems myself?

In some respects, it raises the question as to how actively God is involved in our lives, and how willing we are for God to be involved in our lives. How willing are we for God to see what is happening in our lives – to see how we are living them?

Come over to Psalm 33:12-15 which has some thoughts for us about God's interest in the affairs of mankind – how he looks upon the inhabitants of the earth Psalm 33:12-15

NIV Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth— he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything

they do.

Also, some really reassuring words in verses 18-19

NIV But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

The question for me is, **IF** the eyes of the LORD are upon me, **IF** it they are upon each one of us, where are our eyes looking – are they looking to God and His son Jesus Christ – or are they mostly looking at the cares and attractions of this life?

The challenge for us is to keep or maintain the awareness that the eyes of the LORD is upon us – that it should affect or influence the way that we live our lives. In Psalm 139:23-24 David says “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”. [Are we prepared like David, to ask God to search our lives – to know what is in our hearts and thoughts?](#)

Let’s make the most of the opportunity we have today to search our hearts and our thoughts to ensure that they align with God and His son Jesus Christ and to think about where our eyes are focused.

In 2 Peter 3:1-2, the Apostle Peter has some words of encouragement for us – words to wake us up, to arouse and encourage us. 2 Peter 3:1-3

NIV Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles.

Peter wants us to remember, to think about what has been spoken of in the past by God’s servants, the prophets and how we can apply their words positively in our lives.

### **Remember...**

This morning, I would like to reflect on 2 women that we’re told in scripture to remember– Lot’s wife and Miriam.

In Luke 17, Jesus was teaching his disciples about the events that would happen in the lead up to the establishment of the kingdom of God. And in verse 32, he gave us some words of warning – 3 words in fact **REMEMBER LOT’S WIFE**. He went on to say, “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it”.

What was it about Lot’s wife that Jesus wanted his disciples and us to remember, to recollect, to think about. Come to Genesis 13, where we have the record of Abram and Lot separating and going their separate ways. There was strife or contention between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot., so Abram proposes a solution Genesis 13:8-9

Lot’s choice Gen 13:10-11

A few chapters over in Genesis 19 we read of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

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**Gen 19:15-16 Lot lingered (the NIV says hesitated)** – to question or hesitate, to be reluctant, to delay, tarry. Question for us – **are there times when we delay or linger, when action is required – do we hesitate or procrastinate?**

Gen 19:17 Lot and his family are told by the angels to “flee for your lives. Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain”. Lot had originally chosen the plain because it was well watered – it was a desirable place to live. Maybe the command not to look back was especially directed at Lot, he was the one who had chosen the plain, he was the one who had lingered or hesitated. To look means to scan, i.e. to look intently at, by implication to regard with pleasure, favour or care. Lot has dedicated years of his life to building a home and life in Sodom, and now he and his family have to escape, they have to flee the coming destruction – get out or die!

**Genesis 19:26 Lot’s wife turned to look back** – to look back with a prolonged and intense gaze, a longing for a world, a way of life that she had come to love – it wasn’t just a quick glance. Clinging to the past, **she was unwilling to turn completely away**. In Ezekiel 16, we’re told what the key things were that Lot’s wife would have been looking back to “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread (or gluttony), and abundance, of idleness was in her and in her daughters”. (Ezekiel 16:49)

Fulness, satiated. They were full, they didn’t need anything else – weren’t looking beyond their current circumstances Abundance of idleness – security – false or genuine – abundance, prosperity.

**How prepared are we to walk away from everything that we, things that mean a lot to us?** I love bike riding, Ken likes his hunting, Robert – his surfing, William his guitar & music. Can we walk away from these things without looking back, without longing for what we are leaving behind, things that we have invested a lot of time and effort into?

Lot’s wife displayed what we might call **EARTHLY VISION** – which dominated her life, she looked back, back to life in Sodom and died. The alternative is **SPIRITUAL VISION** - focusing on things above, rather than on the earth. The Psalmist in Psalm 123, declares where his eyes are focused –

Psalm 123:1-2 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

So let’s make sure that our focus is on heavenly and not earthly things, that our eyes wait upon the Yahweh our God at all times.

**Miriam** is the other woman that we’re told to remember. In Deuteronomy 24:9, Moses says “Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.” Numbers 12:1-2 let’s turn to it - records the time that Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses – because of his wife. Usually in these situations, there are deeper reasons for issues and contention.

Numbers 12:1-2 Has the LORD only spoken through Moses, hasn’t he also spoken through us? **We see traits such as jealousy, pride, ego and an inflated sense of self-worth and importance coming**

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to the fore and challenging the position of Moses. How could a situation like this arise amongst the leaders of Israel? It was similar to what we see occurring in political parties, where allegiances change, and leaders are overthrown.

Numbers 12:5-8 God speaks to Miriam & Aaron – His words are direct and firm.

Numbers 12:9-10 In some respects, Miriam and Aaron were fortunate that they did not die, but Miriam is afflicted with leprosy.

**What can we learn from this event? Miriam and Aaron shifted their focus from heavenly to earthly things.** They allowed human reasoning – or serpent thinking to intrude and dominate – from their perspective they were justified in challenging the authority of Moses, but God intervened. **We need to make sure that we keep our eyes, our focus on things above, to focus on things eternal.** The thinking of the world can easily infiltrate our minds – we saw that with Lot's wife, we can think about how Eve was led astray by the serpent's reasoning in the garden of Eden. It sounded so good at the time, but was so wrong. So let us reflect carefully on our motives, knowing that God's eyes are upon us at all times, to make sure that we are always accountable. Come over to Hebrews 4:12-13 where there are some words of guidance and advice for us Hebrews 4:12-13 Read quote from NIV

NLT For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

So, how do we use these thoughts of the eyes of the LORD being upon the righteous to help us prepare for remembering our Lord Jesus Christ in the emblems of the bread and wine? How do we elevate our minds, our thinking from the cares of this life to things eternal?

The Apostle Paul in writing to the Colossians says **"Set your affection"** or your mind **"on things above, not on things on the earth"**. Colossians 3:2. Let's make sure that our minds are focused on spiritual things so that there is no room for the earthly cares of this life to intrude and distract us.

There is the well-known quote from Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God".

We're encouraged to look at, to consider attentively, the life of Jesus Christ, to reflect on what sustained him, what carried him through the challenging trials of his life – so let us look forward to the joy that is set before us.

Let us choose not to look at the difficulties of life which can depress – like the time when Peter walked on the water, but then saw the wind and the waves,

Let us remember Christ's words when he said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God". Luke 9:62

Let us not look back longingly like Lot's wife, or the Children of Israel in the wilderness. "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic:" Numbers 11:5.

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Rather, let us be like Stephen in Acts 7:55 who looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

Remember the words that Hanani the seer spoke to King Asa in 2 Chron 16:9 – read from NIV “**For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth, to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.**”

As we come to the emblems now, let us examine ourselves, let us consider where our eyes are centred – are they focused on things above – on spiritual things - on the hope and joy set before us– or are we looking back longingly at the cares and attractions of the world around us?

And, as we go forward into a new week, may we always remember that the eyes of the LORD are upon us, and may our eyes be looking to Him and our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Rick Galbraith

