

Always Seeing

Genesis 16:1-13, John 4, Hebrews 4:13-16

Slide 1

Last week we talked about the God Who's always hearing and so, this morning we come to the truth that God's always seeing.

As I was preparing this week's message, it occurred me, of all the "Always" statements I'm going to talk about, this is the one that, just because it's true, doesn't mean it's comforting.

Think about it. How does it make you feel knowing that somebody's always watching you?

In the 80's, when Kennedy William Gordy, you may know him as Rockwell, sang his one-hit wonder, "*I Always Feel Like Somebody's Watching Me*," there wasn't any comfort in it. It was more like an ode to paranoia.

Also, from the 80's was The Police's biggest radio hit, "*Every Single Day, Every Word You Say, Every Game You Play, Every Night You Stay I'll Be Watching You*."

But if you were the one Sting was singing about, would you feel protected or stalked?

God's always seeing. He's always watching. Hebrews 4:13, "*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*"

If that verse was all you knew of God, how would you feel about Him? Would you think that He's like a cosmic cop, just waiting for you to mess up.

Or would you feel a little paranoid, like the little green guy in Monsters Inc. when Roz says, *“I’m always watching, Wazowski. Always watching.”*

AW Tozer said, *“What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”*

This morning, I want to ask you, *“What comes to your mind when you think about God always seeing? Always watching?”*

How you respond to God seeing you reveals a lot about how you see God. So, let’s see what the Bible says about how our God sees everything by looking at the phrase, *“God Sees What We Do.”*

The concept of this truth is all over Scripture. Listen to these Biblical examples and notice all the “seeing” verbs:

Psalm 33:13-15, *“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.”*

Proverbs 5:21, *“For your ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all your paths.”*

Proverbs 15:3, *“The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.”*

2 Chronicles 16:9a, *“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”*

If we’re faithfully serving Him, God sees it. God sees everything, even if no one else does. Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount?

Matthew 6:3-6, *“But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

Also understand that God sees our disobedience and sin, too. Jeremiah 16:17, *“My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.”*

Psalms 90:8, *“You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.”*

Maybe you think, *“God’s got so much to keep track of, surely He’s not paying attention to me fudging the numbers on this expense report.*

Or, you may think, *“He’s not paying attention to my creative accounting on my tax return.”*

Or, maybe we think, *“If I clear my search history on my browser, He won’t know I’ve been on a site I had no business being on.”*

But the truth is, nothing gets past Him. He sees everything. He sees our faithfulness and obedience as well as our unfaithfulness and disobedience.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 4:13, *“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*

How you feel about that truth probably has a lot to do with what you have more of in your life right now... Faithfulness or unfaithfulness? Obedience or disobedience?

But God doesn't just see our behavior, God sees the big picture.

Slide 2

Remember where God's positioned. He's ruling and reigning. He's sitting enthroned over all His creation.

One of the freakiest descriptions of God in the entire Bible is found in Ezekiel 1. Ezekiel had a vision of God seated on His throne. But the throne was on a flat plane, held in place by four living creatures.

Each living creature was standing beside a wheel within a wheel. And verse 18 says, *"Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around."*

This is my interpretation of this verse. The *"rims were high"* means God can see further than we can see.

And, all those wheels with rims covered with eyes, means God sees more than we can see.

The eyes that can go in any direction—front, back, sideways means God can see the past, present, and future. God sees all there is to see.

Because of where God is positioned, He has a different perspective. He sees things we can't.

God sees ALL the pieces at play. He sees what'll bring us harm and He sees what'll bring Him the most glory.

He sees the cause and effect of every choice we make before we make it as well as everyone else's choice walking this earth!

This is why we can say and believe, with confidence, the promise of Romans 8:28, *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

Our seeing is limited, God's is not. This should be one of the main reasons we worship Him.

John Piper said, *"God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, and you may only be aware of three of them."*

Slide 3

God also sees the spiritual realities that we don't. He sees our adversary, the devil, prowling around like a roaring lion seeking to devour us.

He sees the spiritual battle in which we're currently engaged. He sees the whole battlefield of spiritual warfare that we don't.

Recall the words of Paul in Ephesians 6:11-12, *"Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

Are you beginning to understand why we desperately need God so much? He sees what we don't.

Because of this, you may be on the fence about how to feel about this all-seeing God. Does it comfort you, or does it scare you? If you're honest, you already know what a messed-up person you are.

Are there things about you that cause you to think, *“If my boyfriend knew this about me, he would break up with me.”* Or, *“If my kids ever found this out about me, I could never look them in the eye again.”*

None of that, which we try to keep hidden from other people, can be kept hidden from God.

The only thing keeping you from bolting out of the pew and into the parking lot right now is that, if you did, other people would know you have a sin you’re hiding.

Now, I can’t answer for you about how this makes you feel, but I want to suggest how it should make you feel.

In order to do this, I want to tell you about the only person in Scripture who actually gave a name to God.

Anybody want to guess who it was? It wasn’t Abraham, or Moses. It wasn’t King David. It wasn’t a prophet, or a king, or a priest. It wasn’t a Jewish man. In fact, it wasn’t a man at all.

The only person in all of Scripture who gave God a name was a runaway slave girl named Hagar. Her story’s told in Genesis 16.

Hagar was the Egyptian-born slave of Abraham’s wife Sarah. God had promised Abram and Sarah they would have a child, but it had been ten years, and still no baby.

So, Abram and Sarah got tired of waiting on God. Sarah said to Abram, *“Here. Take my slave girl and sleep with her, and since she’s my property, any children she has will be mine.”*

Abram said, *“Okay.”* Then, using Hagar as a sexual surrogate, with no love, no affection, no tenderness, he gets her pregnant.

Now, I'm putting this in harsh terms because I want you to feel what Hagar felt. She's a foreigner. She's a slave. She's property. She's been objectified.

On top of all this, her pregnancy made Sarah, her master, jealous, so Sarah began to treat her harshly causing Hagar to run away.

Think about it. Hagar's a runaway, pregnant slave. She's tired. She's alone. She has absolutely nothing and no one.

Then, when she had finally made her way to a spring in the desert, Genesis 16:7 tells us, "*The angel of the LORD*" found her there.

Most biblical scholars say that when the Old Testament uses the definite article "THE," i.e. "*The angel of the Lord*," as opposed to "*AN angel of the Lord*," it's referring to a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Himself.

If that's true, then it's Jesus Who tells Hagar go back home and submit to Abram and Sarah. "*The angel of the Lord*" promised that if she would be obedient, she would have a son. Listen to her response.

Genesis 16:13, "*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.'*"

Again, this outcast, objectified, foreign, marginalized slave woman is the only person in the entire Bible who names God, and she calls Him "*the God Who Sees Me.*"

About three thousand years later, Jesus would meet another woman at another well. Turn to John 4.

Like Hagar, the Samaritan woman is an outcast and a foreigner. She came to draw water from the well at the hottest part of the day, which makes no sense.

Most women would come to the well in the early evening, when it's cooler, so they can visit with one another, catch up on the latest gossip, and maybe swap stories about the latest cute thing their kids did. This was before Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok.

But the woman knows she isn't welcome in those circles. We find out later she's had five husbands, and she isn't married to the man with whom she's currently living.

I always assumed that this implied she was an immoral woman. But the Bible never says that. One commentator I read this week suggested that she might have been barren.

In a society that valued women primarily because they could have lots of babies, a woman who couldn't have any could be divorced by her husband. So perhaps this had happened to the Samaritan woman.

Maybe she wasn't necessarily immoral, but just infertile, unproductive. Maybe husbands one through five just considered her useless. So, she came to the well, alone, hoping to be left alone. But "*the God Who Sees,*" saw her.

John 4 records the longest conversation in the Bible between Jesus and an individual. Jesus asks her for a drink and then offers her living water.

Jesus gently confronts her with the truth of her situation: "*The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.*"

Jesus answers her theological questions, and then, Jesus tells her something He doesn't tell anyone else in His earthly ministry. He tells her that He is the Messiah.

Then, just like Hagar three thousand years before, the Samaritan woman goes home.

John 4:28-29, *"Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"*

He told me everything I ever did. He saw me. He really saw me, and He loved me anyway. I believe this is the desire of every heart: to be known, and yet still be loved.

Loving someone without knowing them is superficial. Knowing someone and not loving them is judgmental. But knowing someone and loving them—that's Jesus. How does it make you feel that God sees you?

Slide 4

Conclusion

As I said at the beginning of the message, if all we knew about God was Hebrews 4:13, it would be terrifying.

Hebrews 4:13, *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."*

So, aren't you glad we have Hebrews 4:14-16? *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he*

did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Jesus is able to see us completely, yet still love us unconditionally, because He understands us fully.

In his book, *Gentle and Lowly*, Dane Ortlund explains what it means for Jesus to sympathize with our weaknesses.

He says, "Jesus is not Zeus. He was a sinless man, not a sinless Superman. He had pimples at thirteen. He never would have appeared on the cover of Men's Health. He came as a normal man to normal men. He knows what it's like to be thirsty, hungry, despised, rejected, scorned, shamed, embarrassed, abandoned, misunderstood, falsely accused, suffocated, tortured, and killed. He knows what it's like to be lonely. His friends abandoned him when he needed them most; had he lived today, every last Twitter follower and Facebook friend would have un-friended him when he turned thirty-three. He who will never un-friend us."

We need to know that God sees us right now. In the midst of our hurt and pain, God sees us. In our struggle and hardship, God sees us.

In our confusion and tears, God sees us. In our secret sin, God sees us. In our addiction, God sees us. In our broken relationships, God sees us.

When God looks down on us, He only sees two categories of people: those who're in Christ and those who're not in Christ.

Those who are in Christ have acknowledged their sin. They know they can't hide from the God Who Sees.

But they trusted that Jesus who, according to Hebrews, was tempted just like us in every way, yet didn't sin, took our place when He died on the cross.

We have a High Priest Who's able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Why? Because three days after Jesus died, Jesus rose again.

When we place our faith and trust in Jesus, God no longer sees us and our sin, but instead sees His Son.

Colossians 3:3-4, "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

You can't appear with Him in glory if your life isn't hidden with Christ in God.

So, what does God see when He sees you? Does he see Christ due to you trusting in His sacrificial and substitutionary death on your behalf or does he see someone following their own rule and reign?

I know this – God sees and what He sees is always certain. And if you do know Him, know with confidence that He is still seeing you... everything you do... and still caring for you like only He can.