

Luke 2:30, "OPEN YOUR EYES." (Midweek Advent II) '20

Oh, Lord, send Your Spirit now to me that He may touch my eyes and make me -- see. AMEN.

In Jesus' Name, dear friends:

A steel worker left the job site on a Friday afternoon. Instead of going home like he usually does, he stayed out the entire weekend, hunting with his buddies and spending his entire paycheck. When he finally came home, he was confronted by his angry wife and was yelled at for over an hour, because of his actions. Finally, his wife stopped fuming and simply asked, "How would you like it if you didn't see *me* for two or three days?" To this, the husband replied, "That would be fine with me." Monday went by and he didn't see his wife. Tuesday and Wednesday came and went with the same results. Finally, on Thursday, the swelling went down just enough to catch a glimpse of her out of the corner of his left eye. Hopefully, when the husband could finally OPEN both of his EYES -- he saw the error of his ways.

Seeing the impact of one's actions is important at any time of the year, but especially at Christmas.

1.) To see that God is watching. Our "OPEN YOUR EYES" begins with the realization that God's eyes have been open all the time. "He who watches over you," the Psalmist says, "will not slumber." (Ps.121:3)

When Eve and Adam had disobeyed in the garden, the Lord God saw through their vain attempts to cover up that fact. And at the time of Noah, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth." (Genesis 6:5) Along with their sinfulness, the Lord also saw the needs of His people; He beheld their plight. "The wages of sin is...death." (Romans 6:23)

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son" right where He could be seen. (Galatians 4:4). "This," St. Paul explained, "has not been done in a corner." (Acts 26:26) It was "done" openly. It was "done" visibly. It was "done" so that God's gracious act could be seen if you knew where to look. And Simeon did. He saw "salvation" lying in Mary's arms. (Luke 2:30)

The Lord still sees and knows our needs. Review your life, say -
- for the last twenty-four hours. Try to list everything that has happened to you during that period. God witnessed every

situation with eyes wide open. That much God knows! That much God cares!

2.) To see Outdoor Decorations. “OPEN YOUR EYES!” The whole world takes on a different “look” at Christmas time, doesn’t it? As the holidays approach, outdoor decorations that were stored away last winter are retrieved once more and put out on view. Lamp posts are decorated with red and blue bows and green garlands, festive wreaths hang on doors, lights abound on houses, in windows and around trees, “Christmas Card Town” reappears and yards burst forth with colorful and well-lit displays.

Look at them all and see them if you will, as reflections of “the glory of the Lord” that once shone on the shepherds there at Bethlehem, heralding the Savior’s birth. (Luke 2:9) God seemed to feel that the “salvation” of the world deserved at least that kind of fanfare. It still does! “OPEN YOUR EYES” and be conscious of all the Christmas decorations you see. And for each, take the time to think -- consciously, “This is here to honor Jesus Christ!” -- even the inflatable Santas.

3.) To see Ornaments. “OPEN YOUR EYES.” Look at the shiny ornaments...each of them...as you take them from their boxes and place them on the tree where they may be seen. That is the purpose of decorating, isn’t it? --- that there may be pleasant things to see.

Many ornaments bring back memories. “OPEN YOUR EYES” to past blessings: “This one was a gift from...” “OPEN YOUR EYES” to other times: “Billy, do you remember making this in second grade?” “OPEN YOUR EYES” to other circumstances: “I bought this ornament on our trip to...”

Be aware that everything which you recall as you unpack is something your God saw, too. Be aware of His presence and His blessing. Let these familiar ornaments assure you of God’s constant care.

Are there some ornaments you may have forgotten? Unpacking those is like discovering something “new.” Look! The Lord has not forgotten you.

4.) To see Candles. “OPEN YOUR EYES” to see the candles. In many homes and churches, the Advent wreath is central to the season. It is a time for flames to flicker.

There’s something about candlelight that makes it more “personal” than electric lights. Candle flames are almost living things, with personalities of their own: warm and glowing and unselfish as it gives itself away.

“Let your light shine,” the Savior said to us. (Matthew 5:16) He certainly did that in His own life and ministry, in ways that were warm and personal, bright and inviting, cheerful and helpful. Jesus Christ is “the Light of the world,” God’s children continue to respond. (John 8:12)

If you are in a room that is totally dark and then you light just one candle...it isn’t totally dark anymore. Let your “little light shine. Let it shine!”

5.) To see the Stars. On a cold, clear December’s night “OPEN YOUR EYES” to see the stars. An American tourist came to Saudi Arabia with an expensive telescope. One night he was seen peering into the heavens. “I can see millions of stars with this one instrument that *man* has made,” he boasted, inwardly marveling at man’s ingenuity to fashion this magnificent telescope, which brought the distant heavens within his range. A thoughtful Saudi said to him, “We Arabs just use our eyes. We can see only a few stars up there in the heavens, but behind those stars we see God.”

“Behind those stars we see God.” This is the faith, we too must hold. Nowadays, the tendency is to forget God and to deify man. Instead “OPEN YOUR EYES” and gaze heavenward. The stars tell us to look and see that God is wise and almighty. The stars tell us to count them and see that God faithfully keeps His promises. The stars sing praises to God and bid us sing along! And let’s not forget that it was “a star” which led the Wise Men to the Christ Child. (Matthew 2:11) It’s incredible how the stars reveal the wonders and workings of God.

Dear friends, “the EYES...have it,” when we (like Simeon) see Jesus as the Provider of our “salvation.”(Luke 2:30) Seeing this “salvation” is what gives us peace -- both in living and in dying. Amen.