

IF LOOKS COULD KILL... YOU'VE SEEN EYES FILLED WITH RAGE. IN MANY CULTURES, THE 'EVIL EYE' IS SUPPOSED TO CAUSE HARM TO THE RECIPIENT. CAN YOU SEE THE EYES OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES, THE SADDUCEES AND PHARISEES, AS THEY PLOT JESUS' DEATH?

THEY'RE BURSTING WITH JEALOUSY AS THEY OBSERVE THE LOVE AND HONOR JESUS RECEIVES FROM PEOPLE ON THE STREET. THEY'RE FILLED WITH WRATH AS THEY WATCH HIM DISREGARD THEIR RULES. THEY'RE CLOUDED WITH HATRED AS THEY HEAR HIM SPEAK *WOE* RIGHT AT THEM AND FORGIVENESS TO ROTTEN NO-GOOD SINNERS. THEIR EYES ARE LACED WITH MURDER AS HE FULFILLS THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE MESSIAH!

I'M GUESSING THAT, YOU TOO, HAVE SHOT THE POISON DART OF HATRED FROM YOUR EYES. THERE'S PLENTY IN THIS WORLD OF SIN TO CREATE ANGER, RESENTMENT, LOATHING AND A DESIRE FOR PAYBACK! YOU'VE LOOKED FORWARD WITH THE HOPE OF VENGEANCE?

YOU'VE BEEN CHASTISED OR DISCIPLINED AND YOUR HEART OF FLESH HAS STRUGGLED WITH PERSONAL PRIDE. THE FIRST REACTION TO ANYTHING PERCEIVED AS AN ATTACK IS THE SENSE THAT IT'S UNFAIR AND DEMEANING. THE JEWISH LEADERS FELT THAT EMBARRASSMENT FROM CHRIST'S PARABLES AND HIS DIRECT *WOE TO YOU* THAT EXPOSED THEIR SINFUL HEARTS AND SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDES.

***WOE TO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES!* JESUS SAYS THIS WITH, NO DOUBT, A RATHER STERN LOOK. THESE WORDS DO NOT HEED DALE CARNEGIE'S ADVICE IN HIS BOOK, 'HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE.' THEY ARE, HOWEVER, WHAT THEY NEED TO HEAR. IT IS A LOVING THING TO TELL FOLKS WHEN THEY'RE HEADED FOR DESTRUCTION, ISN'T IT? GOD'S LAW IS NEVER MEANT IN MALICE; ONLY SO WE RECOGNIZE OUR SIN AND REPENT.**

***WOE TO YOU! YOU DECORATE THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS, SAYING, 'WE WOULDN'T HAVE SHED THEIR BLOOD.'* YOU WITNESS AGAINST YOURSELVES; YOU ARE SONS OF THOSE WHO MURDERED THE PROPHETS. COMPLETE, THEN, WHAT YOUR FATHERS STARTED!**

JESUS WANTS THEM TO RECOGNIZE THEIR HYPOCRISY. HIS SARCASM IS UNDERSTOOD. THEIR PIOUS PRETENSE OF HONORING MURDERED PROPHETS IS OBVIOUSLY PHONY, SINCE THEY WISH TO MURDER HIM. IT'S AS IF HE SAYS: *I KNOW YOUR HEARTS! I SEE THE MURDER IN YOUR EYES! WALK IN THE STEPS OF YOUR FATHERS! KILL ME; IT'S YOUR FAMILY TRADITION!*

MURDEROUS THOUGHTS AND LOOKS ARE AS OLD AS CAIN. HIS JEALOUSY CAUSED MURDEROUS EYES IN HIM. HE EVEN CARRIED OUT THE DEED, KILLING HIS BROTHER ABEL. THE CAUSE OF MURDER IS ALWAYS MAN'S DOING, BUT THE AUTHOR IS THE DEVIL.

JESUS SAYS THAT SATAN IS A LIAR AND MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING. ST. JOHN SAYS THAT THE MURDERER, CAIN, BELONGED TO THE EVIL ONE. IN ADDRESSING THE JEWS WHO WANTED TO KILL HIM, JESUS IDENTIFIES THEM AS CHILDREN OF HELL - YIKES!

WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. ALL THIS RAILING ON CAIN AND THE MURDEROUS JEWS IS NOT GIVEN TO MAKE US FEEL BETTER ABOUT OURSELVES; JOHN WRITES: *EVERYONE WHO HATES HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER, AND NO MURDERER HAS ETERNAL LIFE IN HIM.* A BIT LATER HE WRITES: *IF ANYONE SAYS, 'I LOVE GOD,' AND HATES HIS BROTHER, HE'S A LIAR.*

LOOKS LIKE CAIN AND THE JEWS ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WITH MURDEROUS EYES! EVERY ONE OF US COULD CONFESS: *I CAUSED CHRIST'S GRIEF WITH MY HATRED OF THOSE HE DIED FOR. I CAUSED THE *WOE* IN MY SAVIOR'S SOUL BY NOT HEEDING HIS WARNINGS. I JOINED IN ON MY LORD'S MOCKING WITH MY PROUD WORDS. I CAUSED JESUS' WOUNDS BY MY WICKED HANDS. I CAUSED HIS AGONY WITH MY SELF-RIGHTEOUS JEALOUSY AND ANGER.*

2 **DON'T LIE TO YOURSELF; YOU CAN'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR HATRED AND WEAR A CROSS AROUND YOUR NECK. YOU DO NOT HAVE GOOD CAUSE FOR CASTING AN 'EVIL EYE' ON ANYONE. JESUS TOOK THE DIVINE EYE OF JUDGMENT FOR EVERY SINNER, INCLUDING THOSE WHO OFFEND YOU. REPENT OF YOUR MURDEROUS EYES AND EMBRACE GOD'S AMAZING GRACE.**

THE JEWISH COUNCIL COMPLETED THEIR FATHERS' MURDEROUS HATRED, CONDEMNING JESUS TO DEATH. IF YOU'RE HONEST, YOU HAVE TO SEE YOURSELF RIGHT THERE WITH THEM. EVERY TIME YOU LOOK AT SOMEONE WITH MURDEROUS EYES, YOU SENTENCE, CONVICT AND CONDEMN JESUS TO DEATH. HE DIED IN THE STEAD OF EVERY SINNER.

HOW ASTONISHING THAT THE MESSIAH TAKES THE *WOE* AND CHASTISEMENT EVEN FOR YOUR JUDGMENTAL HEART. HE DIES TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR YOUR INDIFFERENCE ABOUT KILLING HIM! HE IS MURDERED AND YOUR EYES, BLINDED BY RAGE, LOOK ON. NEXT TIME YOUR EYES SHOOT DAGGERS OF HATE, SEE JESUS HANDING YOU A HAMMER AND SPIKE AS HE SPREADS HIS ARMS ON A CROSS. FATHER, *FORGIVE THEM; THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!*

WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US. WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD. OUR DEBT IS PAID. WE ARE LOVED IN SPITE OF US! OH, TO BE BLINDED BY HIS LOVE! OH, THAT HE WOULD REWORK OUR EYES TO SEE A CROSS WHEN WE LOOK AT THOSE WHO ANGER US.

JESUS TEACHES US TO WARN SINNERS OF GOD'S WRATH OVER SIN; NOT TO CONDEMN THEM TO HELL. WE SHARE WITH THE WORLD THE *WOE* JESUS HIMSELF BORE FOR THEM. THE WRATH OF GOD ISN'T A MURDEROUS GLARE; BUT A TEAR-FILLED EYE OF GRIEF.

ONE OF THE GREAT MOMENTS IN CINEMA IS IN MEL GIBSON'S 'THE PASSION OF CHRIST.' JUST AS JESUS DIES, SUSPENDED BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH ON THE CROSS, A TEAR DRAMATICALLY FALLS FROM HEAVEN AND DROPS INTO THE DIRT BENEATH OUR SAVIOR'S FEET.

THAT TEAR FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S EYE IS A VIVID PICTURE OF HOW HE FEELS ABOUT HIS SON DYING. IT OFFERS A WONDERFUL INSIGHT INTO HOW OUR CREATOR'S HEART BREAKS FOR EACH OF US. GOD'S WRATH OVER SIN IS COMPLETELY WASHED AWAY IN THAT TEAR OF PERFECT LOVE. THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE IN CHRIST JESUS.

FROM THE CROSS, JESUS LOOKS ON THE MASS OF HUMANITY AND RASPS, FATHER, *FORGIVE THEM; THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.* WE SEE THAT MERCY ALREADY IN HIS WARNINGS. WE SEE IT IN HIS HEALING AND COMPASSION; IN HIS WORD OF FORGIVENESS AND HIS CALL FOR LOVE. WE SEE IT DURING HIS TRIAL BEFORE THE MURDEROUS CAIAPHAS.

HE IS SILENT AS A LAMB BEFORE HIS SHEARER. HE SAYS NOTHING TO DEFEND HIMSELF BECAUSE HE'S THERE FOR US AND STANDS GUILTY OF OUR SIN, GUILTY OF CAIAPHAS' SIN. JESUS MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO FREE HIMSELF BECAUSE HE MUST BE THE FINAL SACRIFICE FOR SIN. THE INNOCENT SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.

YET, NOTE THAT WHEN ASKED IF HE IS THE CHRIST, GOD'S SON; HE CLEARLY TESTIFIES THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH, PROMISED BY THE PROPHETS – THE VERY SON OF GOD! HE KNOWS THAT HE SPEAKS HIS OWN DEATH SENTENCE IN THIS.

HE ALSO LETS THEM KNOW THAT THEY WILL SEE HIM COMING IN GLORY ON THE CLOUDS. HE'LL SUCCEED IN HIS WORK OF SALVATION IN SPITE OF THEIR MURDEROUS NEAR-SIGHTED SPITE. HE'LL USE THEIR PATHETIC JUDGMENT FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE WORLD. HE'LL RISE FROM THE DEAD AS SCRIPTURE SAYS, AND HE'LL RETURN AS THE TRUE JUDGE – *WOE!*

I IMAGINE THAT GIVES YOU GOOD REASON NOT TO BE JUDGING AND CONDEMNING AND HATING EVEN THE WORST OF HUMANITY. THE LAST THING YOU WOULD WANT TO DO IS TO GET IN THE WAY OF GOD'S INCREDIBLE GRACE OR HIS ETERNAL JUDGMENT.

3 **SPEAK THE TRUTH; SPEAK IT IN LOVE OR LEARN FROM JESUS TO KEEP SILENT. ORIGINAL SIN HAS SO FOULED YOU THAT IT PRODUCES LIES OF HATE AS WELL AS LIES OF IGNORANCE. JESUS SAYS THAT IS MURDER. YOUR SIN IS SO DEEP THAT YOU CANNOT RECOGNIZE THE DEPRAVITY OF WHAT YOU THINK, SAY, OR DO.**

HERE'S THE ONLY ANTIDOTE: GOD'S WORD CAUSES YOUR MURDEROUS EYES TO LOOK IN HORROR ON WHAT YOU'VE DONE - NAILING THE INNOCENT SON OF GOD TO THE TREE WITH YOUR SINS. THEN, THAT SAME WORD OF GOD ANNOUNCES THE JOYFUL NEWS...NOT ONLY ARE YOU FORGIVEN OF THE SIN YOU CONFESS; HIS BLOOD CLEANS YOU OF ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

YOU ARE RECONCILED WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS. YOU ARE NOT AN ENEMY EVEN WHEN YOU ACT LIKE ONE. GOD MAKES PEACE WITH YOU AND HE IS INFINITELY RELIABLE IN HIS JUDGMENT. HE DECLARES YOU RIGHTEOUS. HE CALLS YOU HIS SON AS TRULY AS JESUS IS HIS SON. HE REFUSES TO SEE YOUR SIN. YOU ARE SAVED FOR ETERNAL GLORY.

SO, REJOICE IN CHRIST; HE HAS TURNED YOUR MURDEROUS EYES AWAY FROM SIN, GUILT, AND DESPAIR. HE LIFTS YOUR CHIN SO YOU CAN LOOK FULL INTO HIS LOVING EYES! IT'S THE SAME STORY FOR YOU EVERY LENTEN SERVICE; KEEP YOUR EYES UPON JESUS.

AMEN.