

Christians, You Are Being Watched!.

Text: Luke 14:1

1) Background

Suggested Hymns:

2) Watched by your enemies

525, 345, 344, 396

3) Watched by your Saviour

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 Luke 14:1, ***Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely.*** (NKJV)

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

Dear friends in Christ,

The Pharisees watched Jesus very closely. Their sharp eyes were fastened on Christ that day when He was a guest in the house of a Pharisee. And Jesus watched them, and what He saw was not to their credit. Our theme for today is, ***Christians, You are Being Watched!*** May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Background To Our Text.

In Luke 13:22–30 Jesus compared salvation to eating a feast in a banquet hall that one enters through a narrow door. After the door was locked by the owner, some came knocking, seeking to gain entrance. They said, ***‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’***¹ However, the door was locked and stayed locked.

The present account is an example of people who might talk like that. Jesus is again invited to the home of a Pharisee for a festive Sabbath meal.

As Jesus is reclining at the table, He finds himself face-to-face with a man suffering from dropsy. This is an affliction that causes an abnormal accumulation of fluids in connective tissues and cavities of the body, with symptoms of swelling and defective circulation. It is usually a sign of more serious medical problems.

Before helping this diseased man, Jesus asks a question of the Pharisees and experts in the law who were present at the meal: *“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”* In the case of the crippled woman healed in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus did not ask before He acted.²

The query of Jesus elicits an uneasy silence. A study of Jewish religious teaching reveals that there was disagreement as to the proper answer.

In one law book it is written, *“Let no one assist a beast in giving birth on the Sabbath day. Even if it drops [its newborn] into a cistern or into a pit, one is not to raise it up on the Sabbath.”* But other teachers said that needed assistance should be given even on the Sabbath to animals that required it.

When the religious authorities present at the meal refused to answer Jesus’ question, He went ahead and healed the man with dropsy. The follow-up question asked by Jesus implies that actions speak louder than words.

No matter what the law experts might teach in theory, in actual practice they would help a child or an animal that falls into a well on the Sabbath Day. This proves that healing on the Sabbath is lawful even if that healing could have been put off to another day. Again, there is only silence from Jesus’ critics. Their very silence speaks volumes.

They are watching Jesus and Jesus is watching them.

2. Christians, You Are Being Watched Watched By Your Enemies

The Enemies Watched Jesus

The searchlight of enemy eyes were directed at Jesus. Now, it depends upon what kind of heart directs a person’s eyes. Scripture admonishes all the ends of the earth to look to Jesus and be saved.

But these men were not conscious of any need of salvation, for pardon, or for an atoning sacrifice for sins. They were blind to their own faults, but quick to notice the faults of others. Tax-collectors, adulterers, murderers, robbers would have need to cry in the Temple, *“God be merciful to us sinners.”* But the Pharisees - Never!

Jesus had made them feel uncomfortable in their self-righteousness. They had resented His criticism. Their pride was deeply hurt. They were envious of

His popularity. They regarded Jesus as an enemy of theirs, a deceiver of the people, a destroyer of the religion of Moses, and a dangerous character. — They were afraid that Jesus would ruin their influence with the people and their income from the people.

With what kind of eyes, do you think, did they watch Jesus on that Sabbath day in the house of one of their fellows? Certainly not with eyes sympathetic to Christ and His claims, His mission, and His works; not with eyes that would put the best construction on everything; not with the eyes of a friend, but with those of an relentless enemy.

They were watching and waiting for something to happen which would give them grounds for accusing Jesus before the Sanhedrin.

We generally find what we are looking for. Jesus healed the man sick with dropsy, and in spite of all instruction to the contrary on the part of the Jesus, the Pharisees thought that He had again proved Himself a desecrater of the Sabbath, as a man lacking in piety and reverence. Oh, the blindness of these seeing eyes!

The Enemies Watch Your Doctrine

Our text says ***“They watched Him closely.”*** The religion of Jesus is still being watched. Eager eyes are upon Christ. Thank God that He has given you the eyes of faith and love. But there are eyes which breathe hatred and suspicion. Such eyes scan the Book of God, looking for mistakes and inaccuracies and contradictions. Even though their criticism has been refuted again and again, people of biased minds continue in their nefarious work of disparaging the infallibility and historical accuracy of God’s Book of Truth.

Others look at the teachings of Christ and His Apostles and muster all the strength of their God-estranged intellect to discredit the moral standards of Christ.

They especially direct the shafts of their criticism and contempt upon the doctrine of the sin-atoning cross. This destructive work is being done not only by atheists and open enemies of the Church, but by liberalists in the outward Church.

The Enemies Watch Your Life

But, Christians, the eyes of the world are not only looking upon the doctrine which your Church proclaims, but also and particularly upon your life. What an offence to the heathen to see nations in which Christianity has been taught and preached for over a thousand years taking up arms against each other.

Christian killing Christian, one Christian country raining bombs upon another Christian country. Then there is also the exploitation by Christian nations. The division of Christendom is an offence to the unchurched. They do not understand that these divisions are caused by the unwillingness of people to bow before the clear teachings of the Word, but they put the blame upon the Bible and call it a book of riddles.

The world watches closely every Christian congregation. They did so in the Apostolic Age, and what did they see? Marvellous Christian love, generous care of the poor, fortitude in tribulation, courage in day of persecution, and calm hope against the hour of death.

What about our congregations? Contempt for the Church is aroused when the children of the world see strife and contention in a Christian congregation, and a worldly spirit in the lives of the people of God. They notice indifference in church members to the house of God, niggardly support of Church, “knocking” of congregations and its leaders from lips of members.

But if peace and harmony and co-operation reign in a Christian congregation, if the poor are generously supported, the church filled with devout worshipers, the work of the Church expanded by the willing sacrifices of its members and the lives of the Christians examples of virtue and unselfish service, then the Church is giving to the world the finest sort of publicity.

We are watched also by the weak in the kingdom. Children watch their parents. For the sake of those weak in Christian knowledge those who are strong must walk circumspectly and cautiously, and wisely use their Christian liberty in matters not prohibited in God’s Word.

Also the eyes of the insincere and hypocrites are upon us. They, like the Pharisees, have hearts full of malice and loveless-ness, and are always on the lookout for something to criticise. They find delight in gossip and slander, and they easily challenge the motives of all that Christians do and say.

Christians, members of the Church, you are being watched by the world, by the weak and by the insincere.

We read in Philippians 1:27–28, .. *let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,* ²⁸ *and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.*

So walk as it is fitting in the Gospel of Christ lest the name of our blessed Saviour be spoken evil of through us. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*³

3. Christians, You Are Being Watched Watched By Your Saviour

Jesus Watched The Pharisees

Jesus saw their hypocrisy. He is invited to the home as though they wished to honour Him. They pretended to be His friends, yet hatred was in their hearts and evil purposes in their souls.

Jesus saw the man sick with dropsy, and his condition was an appeal to the Saviour’s sympathetic love. But it was Sabbath, and the Pharisees were watching. Jesus asked them, *“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?”* They held their peace. The Saviour knew why. They were not intellectually honest. They placed their traditions above the simple law of love.

Christ bluntly tells them that if their beast of burden or their ox would fall into a pit, they would drag him out on the Sabbath, not prompted by pity upon a beast, but prompted by a mercenary “spirit.” But Jesus noticed how they closed their heart to His instruction that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. He saw their spiritual hardness of heart. Jesus observed them and noted their love of honour.

Jesus Watches The Christians

Christians, you are being watched by Jesus who is our God and Saviour and who has redeemed us with His blood and made us His children in order that we walk before Him in sincerity, humility, and love.

Our life is an open book before Jesus. He is present in our homes, at our work, and as we go out for recreation and fun. He hears our talk and knows the motives of our hearts. He is present when we divide our income.

He goes with the students and the soldiers when they leave home and the parental eye can no longer watch them. He goes with you if you go to a strange city to work or when you go out at night. We can never escape His all-seeing eyes. What an encouragement to holiness, to faithfulness, and to repentance. ***“Walk before Me, and be perfect”***⁴ Scripture says.

The blessed Saviour looked on the man sick with dropsy, and in the pity of His heart and the strength of His omnipotence Jesus healed Him. The Redeemer also sees our needs and the most secret woe of our heart.

He observes with a heart of compassion, and His mighty hand is not shortened to help and sustain all who call upon Him in the day of trouble. What a source of consolation and a bulwark of strength in life’s toil and trouble! We are never alone. Upon us and our loved ones, whether close by or far away or in danger are the eyes of a Friend mighty to save and to deliver.

Let us live our life as children of the day. As children of light let us walk in the Light. You are being watched closely by man and by your God and Saviour. May God’s Spirit help us always to be mindful and conscious of watching eyes.

Let us close with this word of Scripture, 1 John 1:5–7, ***⁵ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.***

⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
Amen.

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

¹ Luke 13:26

² Luke 13:10–17

³ Matthew 5:16

⁴ Genesis 17:1