

His Wonderful Watchcare

Deuteronomy 32: 10-12

Sometimes it seems as though God does not care anymore! Have you ever felt that way? Or perhaps you believe He cares, but at times you have difficulty seeing how He does. Every one of us is plagued with doubts and fears sometimes about the care or interest God has for us in our everyday problems. When circumstances don't go as we feel they should, or when tragedy strikes, we have trouble understanding that God cares for us. When things go right, we have an easier time of it.

But God is good! How can we know that? Out of the many possible ways, today we will look at one of them. We can know the goodness of God through the way He watches over us. We call this "watchcare."

When you've got enough money to pay the bills, or when you've just received a promotion, or the crops you just gathered are the best they've been in many years, or when family relationships are good, you don't doubt what I just said. But when there's no money, when things just aren't going your way, when the kids are sick, when things are strained at your house, or when everything goes wrong with your crop, you might disagree with me. Then you're more likely to ask "When can *I* know the goodness of God for *myself*?" When can you know how good God is because of the way he watches over you and cares for you?

1 One of the times we can know God's goodness through his watchcare is when he removes our security.

Moses was delivering his farewell speech to the people of Israel, just before they were to enter the promised land of Canaan. He was reminding them of all the wonderful things God had done for them, and he compared God's watchcare over them to the mother eagle caring for her young, and teaching them to fly. He says, "*like an eagle that stirs up its nest....*" That sounds like a strange thing to say, and an even stranger thing to do. But let's look deeper.

The first thing the mother eagle does is to find a good, safe place for her young. She soars high onto a ledge, away from everything that would harm or endanger her babies. There she begins to build her nest. She gathers briars, sticks, and sharp pieces of wood. When she has made this prickly framework, her next task is to line the nest with rabbit and squirrel skin and then finally with feathers, making a nice, soft, comfortable nest for her baby eaglets.

She lays the eggs, and finally the eggs are hatched. Everything is warm and comfortable for the babies. Everything is soft and safe! The mother feeds the babies until they are plump and growing without a worry or concern in the entire world.

But one day the situation changes! The mother eagle reaches down into the nest with her long beak, and jerks out all the lining from the nest and throws it out! The eaglets are left sitting on thorns and thistles, sharp, and prickly, and uncomfortable. Their warm and comfortable home has suddenly become a very unpleasant place to be!

They look up with questioning and doubting eyes to see their mother as they have never seen her before. She unfolds her great wings and stretches them majestically. Perhaps, if baby eaglets could talk, they would say, "Help us! You've always made our lives comfortable and given us everything we've ever needed. Why don't you stop our suffering?"

But the mother eagle knows exactly what she is doing. So she reaches down again, and begins to pull the nest apart, stick by stick, briar by briar, thorn by thorn. Finally, not much is left of the nest at all, just barely enough to support her babies. And then by example she begins to teach her young ones how to fly. But why does she teach them like this?

She scatters the sticks of the nest so that her family might reach their full potentials as eagles! They were not meant to live their entire lives in a nest! They were designed and born to fly, to soar like, well, like eagles! And their mother knew that the only way they were going to learn to do that, was for her to free them from their nest, so that they could be all that God had intended them to be.

God sometimes has to do that to us. Just as He had to tear up the comfortable nest that the Hebrews had in Egypt, even so He sometimes has to do things that make us question Him. Things happen in our lives that make us say, "God, surely this time you've made a mistake!" But God knows what He is doing. He knows that unless our nests are disturbed, unless they are sometimes literally broken to pieces, we'll never become the kind of people He wants us to be. It is so easy for us to become complacent and settle back to watch the world go by and think how blessed we are.

Sometimes God has to stir up our nests, to shake us loose from those things that hinder our growth as the people of God! When He removes those things that make us feel secure, it might be because He wants us to soar like an eagle—to fly on the wings of faith! God is watching and God cares!

2 Another time we can know the goodness of God through His watchcare is when He guards us.

Now when the mother eagle stirs up the nest, she doesn't leave her children to fend for themselves. She stays close by in order to protect them from danger. Moses said that the mother eagle "*hovers over*" her young (v.11). She lingers over them—to make certain that they do not go plummeting down the face of the rocky cliff. She doesn't want them to fall, not just yet. She broke up the nest, that's true—but she stays to assure them of her presence, even when the nest is falling apart. Even when their world was crumbling beneath them, she wanted them to know that she was there to guard them from danger, just as she always had before.

In the middle of crisis, when your world caves in around you, God wants you to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that He is near to you. He wants you to know that He loves you, and that even though He has stirred up your nest, and shaken your entire world apart, that He is there to protect you from danger. He is there to assure us of His presence when our world is falling in.

At least two of the psalms teach us about the protection and guarding presence of God in our lives. Psalm 91:4 reads, "*He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*" Psalm 125:2 reads, "*As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.*"

God is good, and you can know that by the way He watches over you, and cares for you!

3 A third time we can know the goodness of God through His watchcare is when He supports us.

The picture of a mother eagle teaching her children to fly continues. The mother eagle swoops down and allows her frightened eaglets to climb onto her wings. Then, up they go into the blueness of the vast sky ... up hundreds and hundreds of feet. The little birds begin to see a world they have never seen before, a world they never knew existed. But just as they become caught up with this new

experience, suddenly the mother eagle turns a flip-flop in mid-air, sending her babies screaming to the ground.

They are faced with a new problem, and their instincts take over. They, too, begin to spread their wings, just as they had seen their mother do, and they begin to glide and use the strength they never knew about before! They are soaring, just like their mother!

But their little wings are not accustomed to this, and they cannot soar for very long. They soon grow tired, but when they do, the mother eagle is right there. Just as they begin to fall again, she swoops down and allows her young to land on her wings. She is their support when their little wings grow tired. She is their courage when their hope is gone. She is their example of how to fly. She supports them when there is nothing else left.

When God stirs our nest, He remains beneath us to give us strength and support. Moses put it another way in the next chapter of Deuteronomy (33:27), “*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.*” If God stirs up your nest, He remains with you to support you when your faith grows weary. He is there to be your courage when all hope is gone. He is there to be your example of how to “fly.”

Isaiah 41:10 reads, “*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*” And in your darkest night, when you have no other place to turn, God is there like a mother eagle who cares for her young. When your hope is gone, you can rest in God, just as the eaglets rest on their mother’s wings.

4 A fourth time we can know the goodness of God through His watchcare is when He leads us.

In v. 12, Moses states that just as a mother eagle is the only support, the only guide for her young eaglets, in the same way, God alone guided Israel through their wilderness travels.

As a mother eagle guides her children constantly in order to teach them to fly, God guides us constantly, never taking His eye from us.

As a mother eagle guides her children lovingly, because she is their mother, God guides us with so much more love, because He is our Creator, and our Heavenly Father. He knows the way!

As a mother eagle guides her children wisely, knowing each step of the way, knowing exactly what to do in order to get her children to fly, God guides us wisely. He knows the way, and He doesn't make mistakes.

God is the only one who can guide us in our wanderings and searchings, in our doubts and fears. He is the only one who can guide us constantly. He is the only one who loves us so much that He would send His son to die for us. He is the only one who can guide us wisely for all of eternity, beginning here and now. Here are reminders from Scripture:

Psalm 23:2, *"He makes me lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside quiet waters."*

Isaiah 42:16, *"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."*

When God leads us, and He seeks to do that always, you and I can know just how good God really is.

Isaiah 40:31 reads, *"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."*

John Piper has written, "God will not turn away from doing you good. He will keep on doing good. He doesn't do good to his children sometimes and bad to them other times. He keeps on doing good and he never will stop doing good for ten thousand ages of ages. When things are going "bad" that does not mean God has stopped doing good. It means he is shifting things around to get them in place for more good, if you will go on loving him."

Are you plagued with troubles for which there seem to be no answer? Has there been a recent upheaval in your life, and you feel as though you are falling? Or it may be nothing in particular, nothing you can really point to, but you know there's some unrest in your heart, some uneasiness. Remember the eagle, who stirs up the nest so the little ones may learn how to fly. Think then of God, who often must do

the same thing to us. We want life to always be smooth and easy, but that would not necessarily be good.

How can you know this for yourself? How can it be real to you in your life? The Bible tells us how: “*Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him*” (Psalm 34:8).

“Taste” Him—taste the reality of God in your life. You don’t do this by giving lip service to Him, or by merely saying you believe in Him. “Taste” Him—experience Him, respond to His leadership in faith, and trust Him. It can make all the difference in the world.