

Eye of the Beholder

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If you listened to the speakers at the funeral service for Former President Reagan, you may have noticed something that many of the speakers said. More than one of them told of how President Reagan deeply revered Americans. He saw greatness in them and held them in tremendously high regard. They went on to talk about President Reagan in the same terms.

It seems to me that many people tend to see in other people that which they see in themselves. The old expression, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," certainly is true. We tend to see in other people that which we choose to see. If I see myself badly, I will tend to see badness in other people. The reason we do this is because subconsciously, we think that if other people are worse than we are, maybe we aren't so bad, after all.

Unfortunately, this seldom makes us really feel better. It simply gets us into the practice of looking for the worst in people, rather than the best. If you think about it, does it make you feel better to be around people who are worse than you, or people who are good and see good in you. Most of us prefer to be with people who recognize our fine qualities. These are people we see as bringing out the best in other people.

Sometimes I wonder if this isn't the reason that a lot of people neglect going to church. After all, it is no fun to go to church with people who are critical of us, telling us how bad we are. While it is true that the Bible tells us very clearly that we are all sinners and in need of God's forgiveness, it is equally clear in telling us that even though we are sinners, God loves us very much. In fact, He loves us so much that the Bible says that even while we were sinners, He sent His only Son to die for us.

We have to ask ourselves, if we are loved that much, how could we possibly be that bad? The reality is that the love of God is that great. No one could ever be so bad that God can't love us. The reason God loves us so much is that we are created in His image. When He looks at us, He doesn't just see the sin; He sees His own likeness within us. Just as President Reagan saw goodness in the people around him, God sees Himself in all of us. We still need to deal with the issue of sin, but one thing we don't have to deal with is making ourselves worthy of God's love. He has already done that.

How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as someone who is loved by God and created in His image? Do you allow others to see godliness in you? What do you see in the people around you? If you see others in a critical manner, maybe it is because you have never allowed yourself to be made over by God. When God changes you, He changes your outlook on those around you.

One thing that people said about President Reagan was that even his political opponents never saw him as an adversary. They liked him because he saw in them the same love for his country that he had. I would like to challenge you to take stock of how you see others, and then look closely at how you see yourself. If you don't like what you see, God is ready to change what you view.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in church on Sunday.