

Heavenly Perspective

Did you know it is possible to have snow in all fifty US states on a given winter's day? I recently heard that there is a volcano on the island of Maui in Hawaii that rises over 10,000 feet above sea level. To get to the top of that volcanic mountain you can actually go through desert, rainforest, and mountainous climates.

Standing at the foot of the volcano and looking up one will see rainforest and clouds. It may even be raining. Once at the top of the mountain a person will find bright sunshine and cold temperatures, with occasional snow! From one perspective the mountain looks dark and dreary; from the other perspective, it looks bright and invigorating. It's about perspective.

One of the challenges that we have is to try and see things from God's perspective. It's very easy to only see things from a worldly point of view because that is what we are mostly familiar with. God sees differently than we do.

Isaiah 55:6-9 (ESV):

**⁶“Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
⁷let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

When God was choosing a replacement for King Saul, He did not choose the way Samuel and others thought He would. Do you remember what He said? Look at **1 Samuel 16:7** (ESV):

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

David is a young man, maybe a young teenager. His brothers and others looked more the part of a king than he. Yet, it was the inside that mattered to God. He had a different perspective.

When the twelve spies came back from spying out the land ten had a bad report. Joshua and Caleb were anxious to conquer and receive what God had promised them. However, the ten were fearful. They said in **Numbers 13:33** (ESV):

And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.

They had a worldly perspective. They did not see as God sees. They did not trust as they should have, as Joshua and Caleb had.

Someone has pointed out that from God's heavenly perspective the giants and the regular sized people were basically indistinguishable. After I heard that, I saw a picture of an aerial view of a section Oklahoma City. One of the things I noticed was that it was hard to distinguish the height of the trees in that picture. From above they appeared closer in height than they really are. They also did not appear to be very tall at all.

Don't we make our judgments and express our prejudices based on our perceptions? James battled with the rich and poor issue in his book. He warns us not to show partiality in regard to money (see **James 2**). The sin of partiality is not limited to wealth or lack of, but can extend to every corner of our lives.

The trick is to see people as God does. Someone once asked how many prostitutes did Jesus see? The answer is none, He saw people with issues. That's why we can be united in Christ so **"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"** (Galatians 3:28, ESV). We are not about labels, we are about people.

One of the reasons I believe America was successful was because we got that principle right. Yes, we had a hard lesson to learn about slavery, but many of the Founders had that right from the beginning. State after state was open to all manner of people, especially in regard to religion. In a broad sense, Christianity was the religion of America, but it was broken down into a variety of denominations. There was everything from Roman Catholics, to the Church of England, to Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and on and on. They did not intend to judge one another for the most part, but allowed people the right to seek God as they best understood Him. That is why our First Amendment to the Constitution forbids the government from interfering with our practice of religion (not just worship).

What would happen if we could see like God sees? Maybe we would love like God loves. Maybe we would serve as God serves by humbly taking up the towel and washing the feet of friend and foe.

Keep the Light of God's Perspective Burning!