



First United Methodist Church of Hanford

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



505 N. Redington Street Hanford, CA93230
559-584-4075 (voice) 559-584-5438 (fax)
office@fumchanford.org <http://fumchanford.org>

Wednesday, June 10 Reflection

"God's gaze"

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."' "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." (Numbers 6: 22-27)

The Bible talks a lot about the use of the gaze, both in the sense of paying attention and of being able to understand what it is. In Spanish, when we want to tell some to evaluate what is in his interest to do, we say, "look into it" (vos fijate). In some professions, the recommendation to look at the person you work with is an indication of empathy, by giving place and importance to their presence and account when speaking, in the same way in expressing solidarity with this person when speaking and intervening in a situation.

An ongoing gaze personally shocks me a lot, I am sensitive to the eye, and I am also an observer. In my work as a pastor it is a fundamental tool to be able to evaluate a pastoral situation or see how a social problem is expressed in a person's life.

In the Bible, God's gaze has many of these things. God sees with empathy but also notices what happens. God sees and understands perfectly what it is. God puts his gaze on a person and the person does not resist looking him in the eye. God observes and evaluates creation, human behavior, social reality, political exercise, the consequences of everything that is done, including his own actions. Where God puts his gaze everything changes.

Jesus was deeply observant. I cannot imagine Jesus being able to tell a parable without observing everything that happens in the countryside as they walked from one village to another, how people are managed in their business in the market, how families live in their homes, how religious and political authorities behave in their governments, the problems their disciples have with their families and their tasks. Jesus would not be who he is without being able to see what the people of his time are laughing and crying about. One of those iconic passages about his gaze is the one where he says that his belly hurts from seeing people lost because the authorities don't give him answers. Jesus could see the uncertainty of the people and the need for a hope that gives them meaning to live.

This experience of God's gaze on the world and the lives of people, especially the most vulnerable people, the people suffering most, of those who are most persecuted, is this look of mercy, of empathy and commitment to them.

Aaron's blessing is centered to bless with the gaze of God. This is to put the person's life in the care of God. In the Jewish and Christian faith there is no deeper and more mobilizing desire than this. To be under the gaze of God is to walk with certainty because God illuminates the way. To live under the gaze of God is to be at peace because whatever God can pass is not going to take his gaze away from our lives. The gaze of God promises an open future because God will not rest until justice lives up to his name by transforming our lives and the life of the world.

This blessing was to be used in Israel when the people returned from exile and the worship of Israel is reorganized. Blessing with arms outstretched at the height of their shoulders and open hands show acceptance from God to all the people. Among that village the authorities were in the highest places. This openness of God for them has an enormous ethical burden and enables the social control of the people, who will judge these authorities in the eyes of God. These open hands express the mercy of God, giver and support of the lives of all equally, without exception, of men or women, Jews or foreigners, free or slaves, black or white, plants or animals, rivers or mountains. The care of God reaches all creation. This blessing is God's infinite act of grace for every creature.

God's gaze is not neutral, everyone knows perfectly well that his gaze is especially inclined towards people who are discriminated and exploited, and his gaze on those situations is a message to those who have a responsibility to generate social conditions so that there is equality for all people. The gaze of God enables us to bring to his presence and make public every situation of injustice that we live day by day, to bring it to the attention before God, to evaluate it in community in the light of the word and to proclaim justice and peace by taking the necessary measures and serving for the glory of God, for the world to believe, so that the life of each person may be a testimony of God's grace to the world.

“Be a Channel of God’s Grace”
Pastor Pablo Daniel Rovere