



Volume 14 Issue 26

June 30, 2019

THE CAMERA'S EYE

I've never much been one for photography. For me, fiddling with a camera and peering through a viewfinder spoils the enjoyment of a memorable moment.

I've known plenty of folks, though, who were obsessive picture-takers — people for whom every family outing, vacation, birthday, ball game, graduation, or other event necessitated the packing along of a veritable wealth of photo and/or video equipment. These people typically love sharing their snapshots or home movies with the rest of an unsuspecting — and generally disinterested — world, which means that if

you know such a person, you've witnessed far more of their Kodak moments than you ever thought you wanted to see.

(And if you're one of these budding newshounds, please be assured that I'm not talking about you. At least, not intentionally.)

One observation about pictures: people only record the good stuff. I have yet to have anyone insist that I look through a packet of prints from their most recent family argument or a funeral, or portraits of them standing forlornly in the parking lot the day they were fired from their job. You'd

never know these things ever happened from leafing through someone's photo album. (I did, however, once endure a close-up video of someone's eye surgery. Yuck.)

A camera affords the opportunity to sanitize reality. You can take a picture of the one corner of your living room that's tidy, and a person looking at the photo would never guess that the rest of your house looks like a hurricane blew through it. And we've all seen those false-fronted buildings at the movie studio that look solid when shot from the proper angle, even though they're hollow inside.

God's word makes a very poor camera. It insists on showing us, not just the best and happiest and cleanest facets of our lives, but all the dirt and grit and misery as well. The Bible gives us fair warning that it will reveal the very worst sides of

ourselves by the manner in which it presents its characters. Such men as Noah, Abraham, Lot, Samson, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and Simon Peter are all shown not just in their moments of heroic righteousness, but also in times of shameful — even tragic — weakness. If these great persons of faith do not escape the unflattering glare of truth, we can be certain that we will not either.

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12-13). We can hide our flaws and our awkward moments

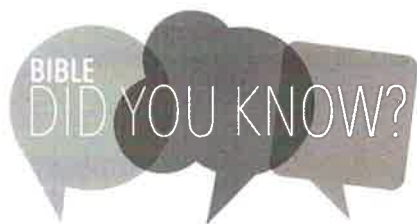
from the eye of a camera, but we cannot escape the judgment of God's word.

There is, however, some comfort in this verity. *"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His'"* (2 Timothy 2:19). It is a blessed relief to know that God sees us as completely as it is possible to see, beyond even our own capability of introspection. Because we are *"fully known"* (1 Corinthians 13:12) by God, we can have confidence that He understands our every shortcoming and appreciates our every need. *"The man who loves God is known by God"* (1 Corinthians 8:3).

Having lived in the flesh, Jesus has experienced firsthand the harsh moments of human existence. Despite our foibles and failings, He is not ashamed to call us His brothers (Hebrews

2:11). This was why He came to earth as He did: *"For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted"* (Hebrews 2:17-18). Jesus sees our worst, and loves us still.

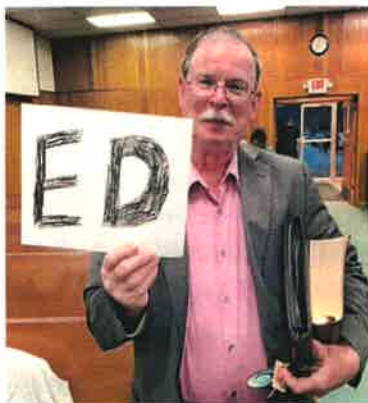
— [Michael D. Rankins](#)



"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of

FIFTH SUNDAY PHOTOS

Every fifth Sunday of the month, we try to highlight some of great things happening around our congregation that were captured through photography. If you happen to get a good picture of one of those great things, please feel free to post it on our Facebook page, tag us on Instagram (@wellsburgchurch), tweet us at @wellsburgchurch, or e-mail us at minister@wellsburgchurchofchrist.com with a little description of what is happening in the picture.



Ed is always willing to help out, even absentminded preachers who forget your name from the pulpit!



Thank you, Ken and Paula, for the encouraging marriage class! We met once a month to study and encourage each other using excellent material from videos made by Kirk Cameron and his wife Chelsea.



We had an encouraging evening at our once a month Friday night bible study talking about changing in our development as Christians. What a wonderful thought that the gospel transforms us to be like Christ!



Thank you, Barbara Stephens, for setting up and organizing the once a month sing and study at Valley Haven nursing home! The residents look forward to it so much and is always an uplifting time together!