

**Seeing Jesus:** by Graham Mol

This week during our staff meeting Dylan led us in the devotion and at the end he asked this question:

***“What would you do if Jesus was standing before you?”***

What would you say? How would you react? Each of us had a chance to share what we thought our reaction would be. Although our answers varied, you got the sense that this would be an incredible moment filled with awe and wonder, even tears of joy.

As I’ve reflected on this question, I’ve come to the conclusion that to see Jesus, to see His face, to see Him standing before you, to be in His presence is the highest goal for a believer. In that moment before Jesus, we’ll know that we’ve made it. We’re home, we are where we belong: the place that our hearts have always longed for is to be in His presence.

Someone who truly understood this was the apostle Paul. As I read the words that he wrote I can see that this had become His deepest desire:

*Philippians 3:7-14*

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Paul had once regarded himself highly as a man of God. A Pharisee among Pharisees. Someone of status. He was greatly educated. He was disciplined, faultless (in his opinion). Yet in a moment – on the road to Damascus – Paul witnessed the glory of Jesus and heard Him speak to him. The bright light caused him to be blinded and yet unseeing it was as if his eyes had been opened for the first time. Paul had found something worth far more than he ever had. Someone that nothing in this world could compare to.

I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

So strong is Paul’s desire to know Christ that he even sees suffering as an opportunity to relate to Jesus who suffered for our sake. These words he writes from imprisonment. Paul says earlier in this letter to the Philippians that to live is Christ and to die is gain. Death would mean moving from this life into the next. It would mean to see His Saviour as he receives the promise of eternal life with Christ. He is torn between the two desires – to die and be with Christ (the far better) and to continue living for the sake of the other believers as he continues to minister and serve them.

Paul presses on towards that goal of seeing and knowing Jesus more fully. He looks ahead to that day. In this life we won’t fully experience the richness, awe and wonder of seeing Jesus face-to-face. The experience of witnessing Him in all His glory would be too much for our finite and mortal minds and bodies! But there will come the day when we do. It is good for us to acknowledge this, to be reminded of what will truly fill the longing in our hearts.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy

in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ***For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.***

1 Corinthians 13:8-12

Does that not fill your heart with hope as you think of that day? Can you imagine what it will be like when we see Him face-to-face and not mere glimpses and reflections as in a mirror?

That's not to say that we can't experience the transformational power of seeing and knowing Christ in this life. Rather it will be complete, it will be perfect on that day. Right now we can seek the face of our God, we can seek to know Him.

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul speaks about the ministry of the Holy Spirit as part of the New Covenant in Christ. There are those relying on their own righteousness and following the law and not trusting in Christ – whom those very Scriptures point to. It is like a veil covers their hearts – obscuring them from seeing truly:

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

Seeing Jesus changes us. When our eyes are opened, by the Spirit, to see His glory; as we take in and meditate on and contemplate His glory, we are transformed. Our lives are changed. We begin to, more and more, resemble Jesus. We begin to reflect His glory – from glory to glory until that glorious day where we will see Him face-to-face. Our transformation will be complete.

Seeing Jesus changes us. So seek Him with your heart. Turn your eyes upon Him.

Practically speaking there are many ways in which we can do this. As unique individuals there are unique ways in which we relate to Him. Prayer, worship, service – all are expressions that can lead us closer to Him. There two simple but important points that I want to share with you as you seek Jesus:

1. Trust. Trust in His Holy Spirit, His presence with you to guide you, to open your eyes to see Jesus more clearly. When we are born again, when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we receive His Holy Spirit within us. The Spirit works within us to enable us to seek the Lord. So trust in His leading.
2. Turn your thoughts toward Jesus. This is to behold, to contemplate, to see Him. Take some time to ask yourself the question: What would I do if Jesus was standing before me? We can turn our thoughts to Jesus throughout the day, when you're in traffic, at work, at home with the family, take a moment to turn your thoughts towards Jesus. Think about Him and you will find that as you do something changes within you.