

Seeing Jesus as He Is

Nothing transforms the human heart like the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. But the church of today has been ignoring that life-changing revelation.

Many years ago, I was riding on our church bus, helping return children to their parents who allowed us to take them to children's church. One particular 5-year-old boy was very disruptive—angry, fighting and using foul language.

I could see that his young life was full of rejection, surrounded by much ungodliness. I wanted to share the love of Christ with him. I turned to him, looked him square in the eyes and said, "I love you."

He immediately recoiled, a shocked look on his face. Protesting strongly, he said, "If you do that, my mom will have the police arrest you."

Bewildered, I said again, "No, I said I love you."

He responded, "My mommy told me that if anyone touched me like that, I should tell the police."

As you can imagine, I was confused. As I questioned him further, I found out that he lived in a single-wide trailer, and his mother would have a train of men come over and have sex with her in front of him.

She told him they were making love, but he was not to let anyone touch him like that until he was an adult. I was trying to show the love of Christ, but because he had a completely perverted view of what love was, he responded, understandably, with shock and fear.

'Who Do You Say That I Am?'

We see this same reality played out every day in various

forms. Much of the church has allowed the world to define what love is; therefore, many have a perverted image of who God is. They say, "God is love, so He must act as I imagine love would act." Since God is love, He couldn't be against gay marriage, premarital sex, homosexuality or many other things, as long as they are done in "love."

I have spent much time in Africa preaching the gospel, and I have recently started to preach on the Father heart of God. Generally, the response to my preaching is very positive: people shouting, jumping out of their seats and responding overwhelmingly to the altar calls. However, when I started to preach on the fiery passionate desire that the Father has for us, they looked at me with disbelief. Unlike other places in the world, their response was muted.

I inquired about their view of what a father is. In these cultures, the father is almost never affectionate or merciful; he is the disciplinarian. When someone shouted, "Father is home," the kids would run and hide because someone would probably be whipped.

I couldn't even imagine how distorted an image they had of the Father God. When my children were young, they would come to the gate at the airport, and as soon I came off the plane, they would run and give me a huge hug. However, in this part of Africa, the concept of running into Daddy's arms was completely foreign.

One of the most pivotal shifts in all of the Bible happens in Matthew 16:15-17. "He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'"

Jesus asked the most important question of all: Who do *you* say that I am? Who *you* think Jesus is impacts every aspect of your

life. When He asked in verse 13, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" they responded, "Some say that You are John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (v. 14). Jesus then asked them, "But who do *you* say that I am?"

Many see Jesus as a great teacher, an inspirational leader, a religious figure. Even many Christians only see Jesus as an ever-loving, ever-forgiving, ever-accepting, gift-giving, nonjudging, equity-restoring pacifist. Others see Jesus as an always angry, constantly disappointed in them, distant God. How we see and perceive Jesus determines what we can receive from Him.

Jesus was saying to Peter. "The blessings are now coming upon you because you have a correct revelation of who I am." The correct revelation of who Jesus really is forms the foundation for the true church. Only as we see Jesus as He truly is can we become like Him.

Throughout modern Christianity there have been countless sermons, books and conferences teaching God's people who they are in Christ. But just like the little boy on the bus, if you don't have a correct image of who Jesus is, you will never truly understand who you are in Christ.

'We Shall See Him as He Is'

We must keep our focus on the revelation of Jesus. The apostle Paul, at the end of his life, was consumed with this truth. "I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:8, 10-11, NKJV).

Paul was focused both on truly knowing who Jesus is and on the

end of the age—the same thing Jesus focused on. He said, “I want to fully know Jesus even in suffering and death. And I am looking toward the end of the age, the resurrection from the dead.” These two themes dominated the latter part of his life, and they should dominate ours.

We have countless books and teachings about 30 steps to victory, 18 steps to faith, 12 steps to overcoming addictions, and so on. There is nothing that can even come close to the transformation of the human heart like the pure, deep and intimate revelation knowledge of the person of Jesus.

“And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18, AMPC).

As we continually behold Jesus in the Word of God, we are being transformed into His likeness. Only as we see Him as He is do we become like Him, which is our eternal destiny. “We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2b, NKJV). “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29a).

Paul in Ephesians was praying for the most spiritually mature people of His day. He prayed that God would grant them a special new anointing. An anointing of “wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him” (Eph. 1:17b, AMPC).

He said this would happen “By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light” (Eph. 1:18). This light is “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6, NKJV). Only the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as revealed in the face of Jesus, flooding our

hearts and minds, will truly transform us into His image. The revelation knowledge of Him changes everything.

Most Christians believe the main reason Jesus came to the earth was to forgive us of our sins so we can escape hell and go to heaven. However, in John 17, Jesus gives us His greatest purpose: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:3-4).

Jesus finished the work the Father sent Him to do, which was to glorify Him: “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. ... And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:6a, 26).

Jesus came to reveal the Father to us so the fullness of the love of God can be in us. Eternal life is found in the revelation of who Jesus is. His purpose was to reconcile us to God and to reveal who He really is.

The revelation of the fullness of the glory of God lies in the revelation of who Jesus really is: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9b), and God reveals “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6b).

‘The Maturity of the Times and the Climax of the Ages’

My life’s journey has been this one thing: that I may know Him. That journey has led me to what may be the most significant chapter in the whole Bible, which gives more understanding of the person of Jesus Christ than any other. It contains 30 amazing descriptions of Jesus, each loaded with incredible revelation of who Jesus is and what He is focused on. These descriptions reveal His character, His nature, His authority and His kingdom. This portion of Scripture is the first chapter of Revelation.

The first five words of the book of Revelation reveals what the entire book is about: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The book is mostly about revealing who Jesus is and what He is about to do in order to fulfill His eternal plan for mankind. The next few words give us incredible insight: "which God gave Him to show His servants" (Rev. 1:1b).

God the Father gave the instructions for Jesus to show His servants these revelations. The Father was giving to an end-time generation the revelations they needed to stand victorious in the most intense time the world would ever experience. God planned for the last days to be releasing the greatest revelation of Jesus that the world would ever know.

Paul in Ephesians told us the time was coming when God would reveal more of Himself and His plans than any other time in history. He called that period "the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages" (Eph. 1:10a, AMPC). God was saying that in the last days, He would unveil the great mysteries of Jesus in an unprecedented dimension: "Making known to us the mystery (secret) of His will (of His plan, of His purpose). [And it is this:] In accordance with His good pleasure (His merciful intention) which He had previously purposed and set forth in Him, [He planned] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth" (Eph. 1:9-10).

The Father knew that the only thing that would empower an end-time people to stand in the face of wickedness would be the greatest revelation of His Son Jesus that the world has ever known. We are in those days, the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages. I don't know how long it will last—10, 20, 50, 100 years or more—but I know this is it.

All the fancy church buildings, slick messages on prosperity, how-to sermons for marriage, business, rearing children and so forth will not be sufficient in the days we have entered. The

COVID pandemic and “woke” cultural revolution have exposed one glaring truth: Much of the church is not ready to stand bold and fearlessly in the face of governmental, societal and political pressure and threats.

We have compromised the message of holiness, become addicted to our worldly entertainments and embraced the spirit of the day. Our image of who God is looks nothing like that of the great revivalists of old. Our songs, our services and sermons revolve almost exclusively about me and my blessings and benefits. Messages on the cross, death to self, laying down our lives and forsaking all to know Him are few and far between. The me-centric gospel is a far cry from “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24, NKJV).

God spoke to me on Dec. 28, 2019. He said, “Tell my people that the decade of the '20s will be a decade of extremes.” Within weeks, COVID was sweeping the world. Now a global economic crisis is emerging; wars have broken out; and political upheavals, riots, violence and crime have invaded our streets. Radical, perverse ideologies are being forced upon our children, and the increasing criminalization of Christianity in the Western world is rapidly rising.

The feel-good messages and sermonettes for Christianettes won't be enough. God knew this. The 30 descriptions of Jesus in Revelation 1 reveal His plan, His power, His nature, His authority and to what extent He is willing to go to restore us to the Father's original intent, which was to have a bride who is worthy for His Son, Jesus.

As we keep “looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2a), we will have the power and strength we need to walk in victory in these difficult days. Nothing transforms the human heart like the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

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