

Bible Portraits of Christ 03 His Face

by James Booker

The sermon explores the significance of Christ's face in scripture and its implications for believers' lives today.

Duration: 43:58

Scripture: Exodus 33:18, Exodus 33:20-23, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 22:3

Topics: "Gods Presence", "Divine Glory"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of seeing the face of God. He mentions Fanny Crosby, a blind hymn writer, who looked forward to the day when she would see God's face. The preacher also shares a story about a man who saw his son's face after experiencing multiple heart attacks, emphasizing the importance of God's presence in our lives. The sermon highlights the significance of facial expressions and how they convey different emotions and messages. The preacher concludes by emphasizing that when we gaze upon God's face, we are in touch with the divine and experience His glory.

Transcript

We have been considering together the, some of the Bible portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ. We've been looking at His hand. Last night we were noticing those blessed feet.

And as we were singing those lovely hymns tonight, we're going to think about that wonderful face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Shall we begin, please, this evening by turning to Revelation chapter 22? I'd like to turn to a number of passages this evening as we go along. And I trust you will not mind as we turn from one scripture to another, noticing some of the scriptures relating to the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3, Revelation chapter 22. And there shall be no more curse, for the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads. Just a further brief word of prayer.

Our Father, we do thank Thee that for each one of us as believers in Christ we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. And we praise Thee that the Holy Spirit delighteth to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to us. And so we pray for divine direction and guidance as we consider Thy precious word.

May Thy word indeed find a place in our hearts this evening, and we might be drawn to our Lord Jesus Christ afresh. For we pray this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen. Last year was the Queen's Jubilee year.

As far as England and Canada and the Commonwealth is concerned. And as a result, during that Jubilee year reign, she went to various Commonwealth countries, including Canada, and to Ottawa and the surrounding area of Ottawa. And during her visit there, she was going through some of the outlying areas.

And one of the believers in the meeting went to have a look at the Queen. And as the Queen walked down the street, she suddenly turned and walked over to where this woman was. There was quite a crowd gathered around, but she went straight to this Christian woman and spoke to her face to face.

And she said something like this, she said, I presume that you are a Canadian. Kind of an obvious question, but she asked that question. But the woman was so flustered at being approached by the Queen and looking the Queen in the face, that she fumbled for a moment and said, well, no, I'm really from Ottawa.

So she felt so embarrassed afterward that she made that she felt such a fool of herself in the presence of the Queen. Well, you know, if we get great delight at coming to be facing the Queen and being able to talk to her face to face, how much greater delight it ought to be for us to realize that we can come into the presence of the King of Kings. One of these days we're going to see him face to face.

And what a moment that will be. But in the meantime, we can, through the Holy Spirit of God, get glimpses of that wonderful face and know the blessing of being in his presence and sharing with him in our daily experience. And these are the thoughts I want to consider with you this evening.

The face of our Savior and what it should mean to us in our daily Christian life. In the Old Testament, the word face, the Hebrew word face, is mentioned many, many times. Some 336 times it is translated face.

Some 60 times it is the same word is translated countenance, or somewhere in that area. And some 75 times it's translated presence, his presence. So the thought of seeing him face to face is the thought of gazing upon his countenance.

It's the thought of being in his presence. In fact, you remember back in Genesis 3, they hid from the presence of the Lord, it tells us. They hid themselves from the presence or the face of the Lord.

You'll recall later on that Cain went out from the presence or from the face of the Lord. The same word, the same idea. And so that is used constantly through the Old Testament.

When we come to the New Testament, we have a direct reference to the face of the Lord Jesus Christ 16 specific times. And when you take those verses and consider them, there are some wonderful, challenging lessons, I believe, for us. But before we look at some of those verses, let's go back, please, to the Old Testament and look at Psalm 27.

Psalm 27, please. This is that lovely psalm where the psalmist says in verse 4 in Psalm 27, When thou sayest, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord. When thou sayest, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Now isn't it delightful to stop and realize that the Lord wants us to seek his face. He wants us to take time to come into his presence. Now that is marvelous and delightful to me, because you know, in natural life, the more important a person becomes, the more difficult it is to be in that person's presence.

If one wanted to go and see President Carter or someone who is in high authority, it would be a tremendous difficult thing to get a chance to see them face to face and to have a conversation with them. But here is our Lord, and through the glorious plan of salvation has so outlined this program with the desire that we might seek his face, that we might come into his presence and fellowship with him. You recall in connection with the tabernacle, the whole point of the tabernacle was so that he might dwell in the midst of his people until the time when our Savior was to come to break the veil and to tear that veil so that we might draw near into the very presence of our God.

It was the Lord's longing just to have his people draw nigh to him. Seek ye my face! And yet I find in my own Christian life, I don't know how you find this, but I find in my own Christian life, the most difficult thing that I need to be exercised about is that time with the Lord himself. I find it not too difficult to get into the word of God, not too difficult to be involved in seeking to serve the Lord in this way and that way, but to spend time alone with him on my knees in his presence.

It seems that this comes in and that comes in and so many things to interfere with the importance of being in the presence of the King of Kings and to meet with him day by day as it were face to face. How important that is, beloved! So important that no doubt Satan is busy seeking to hinder us from enjoying that experience daily. Now what does it mean? What are some of the lessons about approaching him and beholding him face to face in our present life down here? Well, I think it has a number of lessons and here are some of them.

It has the lesson of favor. There are a number of scriptures that suggest that in the Old Testament we are coming to the Lord. In fact, notice what it says in Psalm 27, verse 9, "...Hide not thy face far from me, put not thy servant away in anger, thou hast been my help." Now here you see the psalmist is concerned that the Lord might turn his face away.

You see, if the psalmist gets out of touch with the Lord and seeks to allow sin to come into his life, it will cause the Lord's face to turn from him. And so the idea of the Lord's favor being upon us and his face or his presence toward us are vitally linked together. And then you remember, well let's just turn for a moment, we're close by to the book of Esther.

Let's turn there, please. In Esther, chapter 1, we have a list of seven princes. And rather than mention their names and perhaps misquote some of them, we'll just go down to the middle of the verse and it says, "...the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom." Now that was a tremendous privilege at that particular time.

Not everyone had the privilege of coming in and facing the king and being in a position where they could see the face of the king. That was a tremendous honor. These men, these seven men, were in a position that no one else in the kingdom had.

So that later on in the story, you recall, Mordecai comes to Esther, suggests that he goes into the king to plead on behalf of the Jewish people and she emphasizes that it was difficult to do so because when you go to chapter 4 and verse 11 it says, "...all the king's servants and the people of the king's province do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, and there is no law of his to be put to death, except such to whom the king shall hold the golden scepter, that he may live. But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days." And then you find in verse 16 she says, "...nevertheless I am willing to go in, I am willing to take the chance." And so as a result they have a three-day fast and they get an exercise before God and then at the end of the three

days we find that Esther enters into the presence of the king in verse 1 of chapter 5. "...now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel, stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house, and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house over against the gate of the house. And it was so when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court that she obtained favor in his sight.

And the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, touched the top of the scepter, and said to the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther? What is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom." And so you see here we have just a little picture of the conditions back then. The king in all his authority and even Esther the queen just fearing to come into the king's presence to see him face to face.

In this case she puts on the royal apparel and so she enters in and the king is delighted to see her and immediately responds by offering her whatever her heart's delight was. While we dressed in the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness of God, we have the privilege now of approaching the presence of our king. We are to come boldly to the throne of grace.

And the word boldly suggests the idea of liberty to speak, liberty to talk, liberty to converse with our Lord. What a tremendous honor and privilege. All we need to seek him and seek his face daily.

And then just one other verse along this passage in this light over in the book of Exodus, please, chapter 33. Exodus chapter 33. You remember here we have the story relating to Moses desiring to see the Lord's glory.

And in verse 18 of chapter 33 of Exodus, Moses said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness the Lord speaking first before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.

I will be merciful, will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face, but there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and succumb to pass while my glory passeth by.

I will put thee in the cliff to the rock. I will cover thee with mine hand while I pass by, and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back part. But my face shall not be seen.

Well, we have here a picture, have we not, of our relationship with the Lord? Only our relationship is even so much greater than Moses. But you notice the Lord said, There is a place by me, there is a place near me, there is a place, Moses, where you can get close to me. Where is it, said Moses? It's on the rock.

Well, the Lord has placed our feet upon the rock, Christ Jesus. That's where we got into this intimate, close relationship with him. There's a place by me, it's on the rock, it says, and it shall succumb to pass when my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in the cliff of the rock.

And of course, that's where we are in Christ, are we not? In him. I'll cover thee with mine hand while I pass by, and through Christ today, we see the glories of God, not in all its fullness, not till we get to heaven itself. But in the meantime, we see the glories of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And that just little picture that Moses had on the mountain, caused him, if you go on to the next chapter, which time forbids looking at, causes him to, well, we must look at this one particular verse, because it's

just a delightful thing. In verse 5 it says, And the Lord descended in a cloud, and stood with him there. Now isn't that just thrilling? And the Lord descended in a cloud, and stood with him there.

The Lord said, this is what you're to do, Moses, you're to come up early in the morning and present yourself to me. And he gave all the instructions as to exactly how to approach him, which the word of God gives us instructions how we may approach him. And having done so, Moses having done his part, the Lord descended, and they converged together.

Just think, when we get alone in our closet, when we get in touch with the Lord, he, as it were, descends and he meets with Israel, and talks with us. No wonder Moses, in that experience, made haste in verse 8, bowed his head toward the earth, and said, And beloved, we need today such a fresh glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ. He needs to get a grip on our hearts and souls, so that as we were singing tonight, when we see him, all earth's glories fade away in the light of his glory and his grace.

Now notice, will you, some of the things about his face, very, very quickly. I want to suggest that his face is a divine face. As you know, we show, convey many things by our face.

Just as the hand shows us different things, so the face shows different things. You'd be surprised, those of you who do not preach or give forth ministry from the platform, you would be surprised what the person who does, who is up here speaking, does see from here. The faces, and the bored faces, and the happy faces, the indifferent faces.

And faces do convey different things as we look out. Faces that are looking up to the ceiling and kind of wandering around, you know, well their mind is certainly not here. And so the face does convey certain things.

A husband or wife gets to know just when that face on the partner is a pleasant face that causes a happy relationship, or where there's warning signals and all that sort of thing. The face conveys many things. The face of our Savior conveys many lessons.

And the first main lesson I want you to think of when you think of his face is that when you gaze upon him, when you get into his presence, when you're occupied with him, you see and you are in touch with a divine face. The divine face. Turn with me please to the book of Acts, chapter 9. In verse 3 we read, And Saul journeyed.

He came to Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? A light shining round him. In the midst of the day, in the hot, humid eastern country, when the sun is so bright and brilliant, there was a light that shone through it all.

Blinding Saul of Tarsus. He describes that again, you remember, later on in the book of Acts, chapter 26. And he says this in verse 13, describing his occasion of seeing the Savior face to face.

He says, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. I saw a light above the brightness of the sun. That face of glory.

That divine face. No wonder no one could look upon him and live. To behold his glory and all its fullness and survive.

Over in Daniel, we won't bother to turn to him, but in Daniel chapter 10 and verse 6, we read that his face was as lightning. And you know how that blinding flash of lightning, what it does to you when you're in a dark night and you see that lightning flashing and all its brilliance. And then just one other verse along this line in Revelation chapter 1. And here John gets a glimpse of his Lord in the glory.

And we read in verse 16, And he had in his right hand seven stars out of his mouth when a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength. I suggest to you, beloved, these verses and other verses linked with them, suggest to us as we gaze upon the face of our Savior, it is the face of the divine one. The divine face.

But then, turn with me to Luke's gospel chapter 9. Luke's gospel chapter 9. Verse 51 says this, And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. He sent messengers before his face, and they went into a village of Samaria to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

His face. What I see here, beloved, in one word, determination. Here I see a face of determination.

Not only was his face divine, it's a determined face. Over in Isaiah chapter 50, it says he set his face as a flint, that is, as a rock, set, unmovable. Before him was a rough and difficult path.

Calvary was before him, and the work that the Father gave him to do, the redemption work for all of mankind, wrestling with the evil one, Satan, delivering us who through all our lifetime are subject to bondage, into this freedom that he alone could provide. And he set his face as a flint to bear our load. Do you remember Cain? One sin and punishment is made upon him, and he says something like this, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

The punishment of one sin. Greater than I can bear, he says. Yet we see our Savior setting his place to the Calvary, being wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

His own self he bears our sins in his own body on the tree. What a load was his to bear. But his face was set, his face was determined.

Nothing could deter him from it. What a determined face. Satan tried to put him sidetracked in Matthew 4, in Luke 4, through the temptation, but his face was set.

They sought to put him over the brow of a hill, but his face was set. Nothing could turn him away. Later on in Matthew's gospel, you remember, the Lord explains to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, he must suffer, he must die.

Peter said, Be it far from thee, Lord. It shall not be. Another stumbling block in the way, and the Lord immediately says, Get thee behind me, Satan.

Our Savior is not the same. Nothing could deter him. Thank God for that pace of determination, because he had us in mind.

And all the way to Calvary, he went for us. But, beloved, that face is changed again in appearance. Turn with me to Matthew's gospel, chapter 26.

Matthew's gospel, chapter 26. Matthew 26, verse 67. Then did they spit in his face.

If you were to turn to Mark, we won't bother to, but if you turn to Mark's gospel, chapter 14, and verse 65, it says, Then they covered his face. If you turn to Luke's gospel, chapter 22, and verse 64, it says, There they struck his face. So we see when we put the three gospels together, they spit in his face.

They covered his face. They struck his face. That blessed face.

That divine face. That determined face. But now the despised, the despised face.

The despised for us. But all this did not deter him. He still went on.

Blessed be his holy name. I don't think there's much more insult, or much greater insult, than for someone to come up to you, and this has happened to me maybe once or twice in my whole life, but for someone to come in a state of agitation and resentment or bitterness, and walk up to you and spit in your face. Here is the Lord of Glory, and he allows these creatures to spit in his face.

To cover it. To smite it. In Isaiah, chapter 50, we are told there that they plucked the hairs from his cheek.

That blessed face. He said, I gave my face to shame and to sin to despise. One of these days, beloved, we're going to see that blessed face.

That was once despised. But in Isaiah, chapter 52, you remember, verse 14. A most solemn, challenging verse.

Isaiah 52, and verse 14. As you recall, these last three verses are more or less a review of all that we have in Isaiah, chapter 53. And he says in verse 14, as many as were sworn to thee, his visage, his countenance was so marred more than any man.

Not only is it a divine face, not only was it a determined face, a despised face, but here a disfigured face. Marred more than any man. Who can tell what Christ went through? We sometimes think, oh, make me understand it and help me to take it in.

What it meant to be the Holy One, to bear away all his bones. So his vision, his face was so affected by the agony of Calvary and all that he endured, that it was not, it just seemed to lose the form of the face of a man. The disfigured face.

But then, notice quickly, over in 2 Corinthians, chapter 4. 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, please. Verse 6, 2 Corinthians, chapter 4 and verse 6. His face is mentioned to us again. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness.

You recall back in Genesis 1. Let there be light. There was light. He has shined in our hearts.

Oh, the light. Do you remember that day when the light, the glorious gospel, shone into that dark heart of yours? To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Because in that blessed face, beloved, we see the glory of God.

We see God in all his glory. As we gaze upon him, the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

Why, saith Paul, then show us the Father. And so as we meditate upon our Savior, as we gaze upon him in our daily experience, through the word and in communion by the Holy Spirit of God, and as we gaze upon that blessed face, we see a very descriptive face. It's a face that describes the glory of God.

So that we share to others the glories of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What an honor we have. But oh, that means that the more we must spend more time in touch with our Savior, face-to-face with him, so that we can share with others.

No doubt this is associated with the lesson he's been telling us about Moses in the chapter before. Because, you see, Moses, remember, up on the mountain was in touch with his Lord, and when he came down he whispered not, but his face had shined. In touch with his Lord on the mountain, he began to reflect some of that glory.

And we, with unveiled faces, behold the glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed from one degree of glory to another, even as by the Spirit of God, so that as we're occupied with him, when we're in his presence, then the Holy Spirit begins to develop us into the likeness of the Lord himself. What a tremendous honor. Then, quickly, to Revelation chapter 6. Revelation chapter 6. We have the awful account of that day prior to the coming of our Lord in the Revelation and his judgment.

Verse 15, chapter 6 of Revelation, the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the chief captains, the mighty men, every bondman, every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains, said to the mountains, the rocks fall on us, hide us from the faith of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Oh, beloved, the features have changed. Still divine, but that's not the stress here.

Not determination here, although that's suggested. Not despised anymore, not disfigured, but dreaded. There are those who would have dreaded to see that face.

Hide it from his face! I trust there's no one here tonight still without Christ. Not ready to meet him. For, beloved, there'll be something dreadful on that day to see his face.

In Revelation chapter 20, we read about him on the throne, from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away. Flee away, dreaded face. For the unbeliever.

Finally, where we began at the beginning of our meeting to Revelation chapter 22, verse 3, there shall be no more curse for the throne of God, and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their forehead. And this, to me, suggests a delightful face. How delightful, face to face, with Christ, my Savior.

And they, who, the saints, shall see the certain day, his face, the sight. And what a sight that's going to be. Annie Crosby, who was blind at six weeks old, apparently, wrote so many hymns that link with the thought of seeing his face.

Never having the privilege of remembering seeing anything throughout her whole long life. Yet she looked forward to that day she spoke about when her life's work was ended. You remember that lovely hymn? She says, his smile will be the first to welcome me.

I believe it was Richard Giffon that spoke about his father in the last days of his life. And apparently had a number of heart attacks, and in some of these heart attacks, he went unconscious. After this happening

two or three times, he went through another attack, and his son worked on him, and as he revived, and his mind began to clear, and he looked around, and looked up and saw his son over him.

He said something like this. He said, you know, he said, someday I'm going to have a spell just like this. And when I open my eyes, it won't be you that I'll be looking at.

It'll be my Savior, face to face. What a glorious prospect for each one of God's children. What will it be to behold him face to face? Let's sing one verse of that hymn, face to face with Christ, my Savior.

I believe it's 617. 617. May I just say one thing before we read the chorus.

Lord, I'd like to consider with you tomorrow night the Savior's touch. We've looked at his hand, and we've got a little picture of that, I trust. But his touch still has its ancient power, and that's the theme tomorrow evening, the touch of the Master's hand.

Shall we stand, please, and just sing the first verse, and we'll immediately be over.

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