

God Has a Face

Աստուած Դէմք Ունի

Psalm 27

When my kids were little, one of the favorite games that Sevan and I played with them was hide and seek. Whenever my kids saw our face, there was a smile and joy on their faces; they saw a familiar face that they recognized; they saw the face of the mother who fed them; they saw the face of the father who sang songs to them; in other words, seeing the faces brought joy, peace, and comfort to our children. I am sure our experience is yours as well.

My sermon title is: **God has a face**. Really? Does God have a face? Can we see that God, the all-knowing, the omnipotent, the sovereign, the ever-present, the all-powerful, the righteous, the just, holy, loving, and merciful has a face, a familiar face?

Early on in history humanity wanted to see God. In different religions, one can find that concept. For some, god is abstract it is in you. For others, it is in nature; for others god is transcendent, far away from us...

The Biblical understanding of God is different. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was a personal God appearing to different individuals in different experiences. God loved His creation and wanted to communicate with them. He did and He does and He will be doing it again and again.

While I was studying to prepare this sermon, I went to the Old Testament to see how God appeared to people.

In the beginning, in creation, we see that God spoke and things happened. Then God created humanity and loved to communicate with them (Adam and Eve). Before they sinned, God talked to them face to face. (It is not written, I assume). After they sinned God gave them garments to cover their nakedness. What I am saying is that we see personal care from God and tough love. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. Sin had consequences, which we bear until today.

Then in Old Testament I see God talking. We read many places: "God said," "thus says the Lord..." so many places.

-To Abram/Abraham:

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. (Gen 12:7 ESV)

And the LORD appeared to him (Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. (Gen 18:1 ESV)

-To Isaac:

And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake." (Gen 26:24 ESV)

- Jacob wrestled with God (Gen 32: 22-31)

-God spoke to Moses, but also appeared in the burning bush:

When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" (Exodus 3:4 NIV)

Moses had a close relationship with God, like friend to friend:

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. (Exodus 33:11a ESV)

I am not sure what this verse means; is it saying that Moses and God spoke often that they were very close in an intimate relationship as if face to face? We don't know exactly what happened there.

-Moses insisted on seeing God's glory, and here is God's response:

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." (Exodus 33:18-20 ESV)

God is holy and we cannot see His face...

Yet God appeared, or spoke through **thunder** too.

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind (storm) and said (Job 38:1 ESV)

Through a **whisper**

And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. (1 King 19:12 ESV)

God revealed Himself through dreams:

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." (1 King 3:5 ESV)

Then there was 400 years of silence.

We arrive to today, to the Christmas night when Mary and Joseph have a newborn child, baby Jesus. A miraculous conception, and a miraculous birth: God in flesh.

God has a face.

God has a human face in Jesus.

So what? It is the calendar tell us that we arrived to the season. So what?

David wrote in Psalm 27 a wish that I pray will be your wish as well:

**One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple....(4)**

Then David affirms that so important for humanity to seek God's face (v8)

**You have said, "Seek my face."
My heart says to you,
"Your face, LORD, do I seek."(8)**

So the question this morning: are you seeking God's face? What does it mean that God has a face...?

1. God has a Face: He became human like us, but without sin

"You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin." (1 John 3:5 ESV)

One cannot celebrate Christmas without the awareness that we are sinners and need to be rescued; we cannot be saved without God's presence (his face) in our lives (hearts).

His face reminds us that Jesus lived the human experience yet without sin.

In the Old Testament the only way to “see God” to “repent” was to see the High Priest. With Jesus’ incarnation we have the new and the ONLY High Priest.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:14,15 ESV)

2. God has a Face: He is not just a baby in a manger

He grew up, he disciplined people, he taught, cared, loved, healed, shepherded, and most importantly became the only way to God, only way to find salvation, the only way to bring justification and redemption from our sins, the only way to see God’s face, His presence. He died and rose to redeem us.

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:11-12 ESV

3. God has a Face: He gives us the confidence to approach Him

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16 ESV)

I love the word confidence in this verse. Who can approach God? No one... Through Jesus we can approach the throne of HIS GRACE with confidence.

4. God has a Face: His face brings peace, hope, comfort, and joy to anyone who seeks HIM.

He reveals himself to anyone who is seeking Him.

He is accessible to anyone who seeks Him.

These words Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love are manifested in Jesus. Those are not abstract concepts; they are realities. Jesus is HOPE, Jesus is JOY; Jesus is PEACE; Jesus is LOVE; by seeking His face, we will have His Hope, Joy, Peace and Love.

King David said:

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me!

⁂ You have said, "Seek my face."

My heart says to you,
"Your face, Lord, do I seek."

I want to challenge you by asking you not to celebrate Christmas without seeking HIS FACE.

In this poem written some fifteen centuries ago, Augustine tried to capture the mystery of the Incarnation:

Maker of the sun,
He is made under the sun.
In the Father he remains,
From his mother he goes forth.
Creator of heaven and earth,
He was born on earth under heaven.
Unspeakably wise,
He is wisely speechless.
Filling the world,
He lies in a manger.
Ruler of the stars,
He nurses at his mother's bosom.
He is both great in the nature of God,
And small in the form of a servant.

GOD
the greatest Lover
SO LOVED
the greatest degree
THE WORLD
the greatest number
THAT HE GAVE
the greatest act
HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON
the greatest Gift

THAT WHOSOEVER
the greatest invitation
BELIEVETH
the greatest simplicity
IN HIM
the greatest Person
SHOULD NOT PERISH
the greatest deliverance
BUT
the greatest difference
HAVE
the greatest certainty
EVERLASTING LIFE
the greatest possession

(author unknown based on John 3:16)

חָזָה **châzâh**, khaw-zaw'; a primitive root; to gaze at; mentally to perceive, contemplate (with pleasure); specifically, to have a vision of:—behold, look, prophesy, provide, see.

נֹעַם **nô'am**, no'-am; from **H5276**; agreeableness, i.e. delight, suitableness, splendor or grace:—beauty, pleasant(-ness).