



Loved to the End

The Second Week of Lent

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?”

John 14:8-9 (NIV)

Seeing the face of God. The idea is intriguing, terrifying, and a longing so deep we are barely even aware of it. Moreover, God wants to show Himself to us but understands that He, in all His glory, is way too much for us to comprehend. So He came to us clothed in human flesh: Jesus, God with His glory toned down enough that we can stand to be in His presence without fainting away. Thus, Philip could ask to see the Father, and Jesus could explain that the Father had been with them all along.



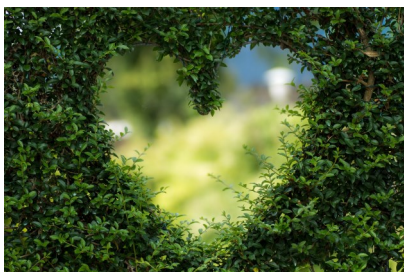
Whether or not we recognize it, we all are desperate to see God. Yet the thought rarely crosses our conscious minds before it skitters away, shy as a will-o-the-wisp. We want it; we are petrified of it. Why? Perhaps it’s because my seeing God implies God seeing me.

And then I fly into paroxysms of foolishness. Do I want God to see me? Yes, no! But He’s God. Of course, He sees me, right into the heart of me, all the time. He sees not only my actions but my intentions, my mixed motives, my quandaries and questionings, my sin and doubts. So, yes, it is scary to think of God seeing me.

Yet God also sees my desire for Him, my stumbling steps toward obedience, and all the beauty He put into my being. God sees the way I am fearfully and wonderfully made—body, mind, and soul—and He rejoices in me. That is awesome in the truest sense of the word.

We can’t hide from God, and to be honest, we don’t really want to because there is nothing more satisfying than being known—in all we are—and loved for all of it. And deep inside we have a sneaking suspicion that God has made us for exactly that: to be fully known and loved by Him.

Intriguing, terrifying, and oh-so wonderful.



What comes to mind when I think of God seeing me?

What can I do today to remind myself that I am both seen and loved by God?

Exercise:

1. Lift this exercise up to the Lord, asking Him to highlight what He wants you to notice.
2. Below are three Bible passages in which someone sees God. Choose one passage and try to picture yourself in the situation. How do you react to God's presence? How do you respond to what Jesus/God says?
3. When you've finished, spend a few minutes with God, thanking Him for how He has shown you His presence in your life and asking Him if there are other ways He wants you to experience Him.

John 14:8-11

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves."

Exodus 33:18-23 & 34:7-6

¹⁸ Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

¹⁹ And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

²¹ Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

...

⁶ And [the LORD] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

1 Kings 19:11-13

¹¹ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"