

# THE GLORY OF THE FATHER REVEALED

John 1:10-18

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## Introduction

### → Illust. – What God Looks like

One day a boy told his mother that he was painting a picture of God. His mother said, "But no one knows what God looks like." He replied, "They will when I'm finished."

John 1:18 says that no one has ever seen God. (*Discuss this assertion...*)

See Exodus 24:9-11; 33:20 ff. Discuss how God showed himself to Moses, but only "from the back." – only the trailing end of his glory.

No one could look upon the full glory of God and live. Yet without a revelation we would have no way of knowing God.

### → Illust. – GOD IN THE FLESH

"I'll be back soon," a World War II soldier told his wife before leaving her and their infant son. Five years of war and fighting went by. The young mother would show her boy a portrait of the soldier and say, "See, that's your daddy. One day he's going to come home." In reality, she didn't know what to expect.

One morning the boy said, "Mommy, wouldn't it be great if Daddy would just step out of the picture frame?"

In one sense, that's what God did 2,000 years ago. As part of His eternal plan, He stepped out of heaven and became a man, so people could look at Jesus and say, "That's what God looks like." [Pursuit, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1993. Page 22.]

Refer to John 1:18 again – God the One and Only (the only begotten Son) has declared Him or made Him known. How has He done that? We know that God does not have a body. He does not have physical human features. The Bible makes it very clear that God is a spirit, although he can and has, on occasion, shown himself to people in a physical form.

But when we refer to God revealing Himself to us, we are more concerned with what He is like – his character and nature – than how he looks, because he has no physical appearance.

The first question we need to consider this morning is...

## Why Did Christ Come to Reveal the Father?

One of the problems mankind has always had in relating to God is the distance between God and man. Not physical distance, not space, but the spiritual distance and the difference between human finiteness and God's infinite nature.

A. W. Tozer, in his little book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, discussing the vast gulf between man and God, said this:

*"We must not think of God as highest in an ascending order of beings, starting with the single cell and going on up from the fish to the bird to the animal to man to angel to cherub to God. This would be to grant God eminence, even pre-eminence, but that is not enough; we must grant Him transcendence in the fullest meaning of that word, Forever, God stands apart, in light unapproachable."*

There is a little story that illustrates our problem in knowing God...

### → Illust. - 335: HE CAME NEAR

One wintry day as a Christian was walking down the street, he noticed that someone had dropped some bread on the ground. A flock of hungry sparrows had monopolized it for an unscheduled feast. The man paused, and then took a step in their direction. The birds became uneasy. Another step, and their nervousness increased. When he was almost upon them, they suddenly flew away, leaving their banquet unfinished. For a few moments the man stood there reflecting on what had happened. Why had those sparrows scattered in flight? He had meant them no harm. Almost immediately the thought came to him, it is you. You are too big. Then another question pressed itself upon his mind. How could he walk among those birds without frightening them by his size? Only if it were possible for him to become a sparrow and fly down among them.

That is precisely the problem we have with God. He, in His infinity, is so big, so immense, so awesome and so powerful, that we cannot relate to him, we do not understand Him, and it seems, to the human mind, that there can be no way of knowing Him, or trusting Him.

So God, in His desire to reveal Himself, as well as to make a way for man and God to come together in peace again, sent His Son into the world, and He came in human form. He came as one of us. Yet He came to reveal God to us. He came to show us what God is like.

## How did Jesus Christ reveal the Father to us?

There are four specific things I want to mention today, which Jesus came to reveal to us about the Father. I'm sure there are others, but I want to focus on these four aspects of God which were revealed in Jesus Christ.

### 1. He Came to Reveal the Nature of God.

Col. 1:15 – *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”*

Col. 1:19 – *“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,”*

Col. 2:9 – *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,”*

Christ revealed to us the nature of God. We can see what God the Father is like by looking at what His Son is like – He is exactly like His father. We often use that expression of earthly sons and fathers, but no one was ever so much like his father as Jesus was. Hebrews 1:3 – *“The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being,”*

All of the natural attributes of God were in the Son – omnipotence, omniscience, etc.

### 2. He Came to Reveal the Character of God

He came not only to reveal to us the natural attributes of God, he also came to show us what we call the moral attributes of God. These are the qualities which make up His character – things like:

- His love and compassion – woman at the well
- righteousness and holiness as shown in his anger toward sin
- condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees – Matt. 23
- disgust over injustice
- respect for that which was sacred – temple

In these and so many other ways Jesus revealed to us the character of God the Father – we get a glimpse of what God is really like.

### 3. He came to Reveal the Will of God

He came to teach us the things which are dear to the heart of God. *Discuss this briefly* – He came to teach us how to live, how to trust Him, how we ought to think and act and speak. In Matt 7:21 He told us how

important it is that we know and follow His will. *“Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

Throughout his time on earth He taught His followers, including you and me, what God's will is and how he wants us to seek his will.

He came to reveal the will of God...

### 4. He Came to Reveal the Works of God

In some ways this is similar to the previous point but there is a subtle difference. Not only did God want us to know what His will is, but He also wanted us to see His works. And Jesus came to do that work perfectly that we might see what it is that God is doing in the world. I want to take you to a few verses in the gospel of John:

- John 5:19-21, 36
- John 14:10-11

He wanted us not only to see the Work of God, but to be involved in doing the work of God – read on in John 14:12.

Jesus came to reveal the works of God. He came to show us what it is that God is doing in this world. He came to roll back the curtains to give us a glimpse of God's mighty plan and purpose for this world.

## Conclusion

No wonder John said, 1:18 – *“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.”* Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, brought God within our reach.

Incarnation - the embodiment of a deity in earthly form: the union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ

➔ Illust. - WITHIN REACH

A little girl once said to her mother, "Mama, I like you better than God." Her mother was taken aback by that and responded, "Oh, you shouldn't say that."

"Yes, but really, Mama, I do like you better than God."

Still somewhat shocked, her mother inquired, "But dear, what makes you say that?"

The child answered simply, "Because I can hug you!"

That little girl expressed the universal desire of man to have a connection with God in a personal, tangible way. A spirit without a body is difficult for us to conceive, but a real "flesh and bones" man is a concrete reality we can understand. In the incarnation, therefore, Jesus brought God to within embracing distance. Jesus came to show us what the Father is like. He came to bring God within reach.

The sad thing is that when he came the first time, most people rejected him – John 1:10-11. He came to reveal the Father in all his glory – his nature, his character, his will, his work. He came to bring God within reach. Most of all he came to bridge the chasm between God and man by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin.

But none of that matters if we do not recognize him and receive him through faith. Have you reached out to accept Him? He is reaching out to you; will you accept Him today?