

I. THE CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS: GAZING ON THE BEAUTY OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. The Songs of Christmas invite us to come and behold His face. There is something mysterious, majestic, paradoxical, surprising, and heart-warming about the fact that the Son of God is born among men.
- B. There is a majesty and beauty to the day on which Jesus was born. Christmas is unique in that ordinary people (shepherds, children, seniors, people from all walks of life), not just prophets, priests, and seers were able to look upon the face of the Son of God.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Cor. 4:6-7)

- C. "Silent Night" is not just about a baby sleeping on a peaceful evening.

*Silent night, holy night Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of re-deeming grace,
Jesus Lord at Thy birth, Jesus Lord at Thy birth.*

II. WE GET TO SEE HIS FACE

- A. What is the goal of the Christian life? It is to know God. It is to see His face.
They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:4-5)
1. In the New Jerusalem, our eternal home, that comes down from heaven, and heaven and earth are joined together under Christ (Eph. 1:9-10). In this Eternal City, there is a throne and out of the throne proceeds a river, the river of life, and the tree of life is there. It is at that time that those who serve God will see His face.

- B. What does Jesus' face look like? Those who have seen Him describe it as light.

*...and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. (Revelation 1:16)
And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:2)
*His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. (Daniel 10:6)**

- C. It can be said that the aim of the Christian life is to see God's face. To see God's face is to know Him. In other words, the highest attainment for man is to know God.

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed 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 ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:7-11)

1. Religion is trying to earn God's favor or acceptance by your own works. It will never work. It leads to either pride from a false legalism or misery from utter failure to attain righteousness. Neither is of God. God calls us to relationship: to know Him, to see His face.

⁸ *Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8-9)*

2. We can't earn relationship. God has to give His heart to us. And He did. God condescended in tender mercies and became a man forever. Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9).

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21-23)

- D. John's ministry was to prepare people to see Jesus' face.

1. Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit and he prophesies over his son John and the role that he will play in preparing the people for Jesus' appearing.

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, ⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, ⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; ⁷⁹ To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:76-79)

III. We have been invited to Know God Himself

- A. Christmas is one step closer to knowing God fully. Christmas calls us to this highest calling of knowing God.

1. Jesus Second coming is expressed as Jesus' appearing or unveiling.

- B. God has made Himself knowable. He has revealed Himself to us.

- C. There are those who reject the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. They mocked Him and spat in His face.

⁶⁷ *Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, (Matthew 26:67)*

- D. It has always been about seeing God's face. In His face, there is light. We know truth, how God truly is. God is great and God is humble.
- E. Christmas leads us to know the lengths that God would go to demonstrate His love for us.
1. Allen Hood: "The Incarnation revealed the passionate, zealous, pursuing heart of God."
- But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*
2. What kind of love is this?! Christmas leads us to come and behold the face of God.

IV. Conclusion:

- A. Jesus is the Dayspring, the first light of day, the dawn, or daybreak. The Day springs forth, light, life.
- Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; (Luke 1:78)*
- Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us (Luke 1:78 – NLT).*
- B. The way in is the way on. As we behold Jesus, and gaze upon His beauty, we are transformed into His image
- Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)*
1. True inner transformation into the image of Christ only comes from an encounter with the living God.