



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: APRIL 2022

by Lee Shipp

WHAT IS JESUS LIKE?

Look up into the heavens and behold who has created these things. Gaze into the cosmos, the unsearchable and insatiable powers of the ether, and behold the power of Him who created it all.

The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth. He is not sustained by those things which sustain us. He derives no increase by those things which He has made. He is not upheld by the things that uphold us. God has made everything by the power of His Word. From nothing and out of nothing, He has created all things. Nothing exists apart from Him and by His Word He upholds all things.

He is transcendent from all things created. He is invisible, yet manifest. He is everywhere distant, yet intimately close. There is nothing that is which is like unto Him! His nature is made from nothing. He is Spirit and they who worship Him can only worship Him in Spirit and truth.

Few have chased after Him. Most have lived unaware and unconcerned. Like children playing in the puddles of a shore, when before them is all the ocean's depth, men have concerned themselves with origins and not the Originator. We trifle with such unspectacular inventions when the uncreated is all around us being revealed and disclosed. But, we are occupied with building a better toy. Perhaps build a better telescope to discover something about the dirt on Saturn, when the incomprehensible, unfathomable self-existent One is waiting for someone to believe that He is.

Yes, send your telescopes into space, but not to examine dirt – discover the Creator. Stand in awe of His power. The heavens declare Thy glory Lord. And Jesus said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* But how shall we see Him? By what perception? Who or what shall help us see Him who is invisible!

Robbed of sight, few have allowed their hearts to be fascinated with the wonder of God. Fewer have entered an experience with Him by which they are so enraptured with the transcendence of God. Just look at how few in the church drop to their knees in His presence. The majority stands with boredom and flesh out the songs of the Most High God, and for this we are now paying a too heavy price. As Romans declare, they changed the image of the uncorruptible God into an image like men and animals. They did not like to retain God in their thoughts and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator. For this cause God handed them over to a reprobate mind to live and practice things that are destructive to the constitution of civilization's sanity. Mass confusion is the natural result of a people who abandon the Living God for the demon gods they would rather serve. This false worship has produced a world of moral confusion, gender confusion, spiritual confusion, and political confusion.

Is there an answer to this ruin? Yes! Restore the worship of the True and Living God.

God is not a good idea. He is necessary. Nothing else works apart from Him. No creature has life in itself; all life is a gift from God. Man is nothing without God. Without God man falls apart. Man is not original; his genius is less than elementary compared to the vast ethos of God's brilliance. Man has nothing to say. If he does say anything worthwhile, then at that point he is simply an echo of the original Word. So how can we know Him? How can we see Him? What is He like? Who can show us God? Various reports have told of missionaries seeing Hindu worshipers tapping on trees and stones and whispering, "Are you there?" to the god they hoped might reside within. But God did not come in the trees and stones. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld His glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1).*

He walked among us: present, near to everything, near to us, entering into our suffering, bearing our pain, and taking our sins. God drew near to us in the person of His Son Jesus, and Jesus lives to bring us near to God, to wake us up and give us eyes to see the invisible God. Jesus is the invisible God – visible. Jesus is the transcendent God – knowable. As Paul ascribes to Him, *Jesus, is the image of the invisible God. All things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist (Col 1:15-17).* Furthermore, the scriptures testify that *God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ... by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power (Hebrews 1:2-3).*

WHAT DID JESUS SHOW US?

What did Jesus show us? What did Jesus bring us? What was revealed in Jesus? What, in the person of Jesus, was manifested in flesh concerning God's heart? Jesus manifested

"GOD IS NOT A GOOD IDEA. HE IS NECESSARY."

God's love. John said in his gospel, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...For from his fullness*

we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (John 1:14,16-18 ESV).

How did Jesus make the Father known? - By giving us grace for grace, by offering us His fullness, His life, by showing that the true understanding of God is that He is full of grace and truth! Furthermore, those who receive this love are not worthy of it. John said the Father manifested His heart by giving Jesus to us and loving us when we did not love Him. *"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10 ESV).*

The God we see in Jesus is benevolent, kind, and forgiving toward His enemies. One who is willing to humble Himself to extend forgiveness. But wait, not only willing to humble Himself, but willing to sacrifice Himself so His enemies can live. Jesus would rather die on a cross than let you die in your sins. This is the way God wants to glorify Himself.

Man's glory is normally thought to lie in his ability to exalt himself and humble others to his will. "That is glory, that is power," says the world. Glory in a man's eyes is always that which exalts himself. However, in Jesus, we see that God's glory consists in the very opposite. God's glory and power are revealed in His grace and truth. God sought to reveal His heart by humbling Himself (Philippians 2) and

saving His enemies. Any god can cause the weak to tremble before their power and awe, but Jesus revealed His glory by His willingness to humble Himself for the sake of man. He would not reveal His heart by a mighty display of power that would break in pieces those that oppose Him, but in hiding that power and showing grace to the undeserving as they turn to Him in repentance.

THE INFINITELY DESIRABLE GOD

Here, in Jesus, is a revelation of God that makes Him not only understandable but also infinitely desirable. Might and power would make Him fearfully terrible, but goodness, grace, love, forgiveness, healing, saving, friendship, and fathering is what makes Him INFINITELY DESIRABLE. This glory is seen not in God's ability to threaten, bully, and judge, but in His ability to heal, forgive, and comfort. This Grace is a shining aspect of God's Glory!

Of all the accusations hurled at Jesus, nobody ever accused Him of not loving them. Nobody walked away from Jesus saying, "I wonder what God is like?" Do they walk away from our churches saying, "I wonder what Jesus is like?" As Jesus was the witness of the Father, the church is the witness of Jesus. Man's potential is to reflect the uncreated Light. We are not that Light but a reflection. If there were no Light, there would be no us! And we are not that Voice but a mouthpiece of that Voice. Take that Voice away and we have nothing to say. The Church is the object upon which Jesus can manifest Himself.

Look at the darkness of space. Light is there but it has nothing to shine upon. Objects give glory to light as light gives glory to objects. Take away light and a rose are no longer beautiful. Your beauty is derived from the light shining upon you. Jesus was the object upon which His Father could shine and manifest His essence. The Church is that object upon which Jesus can shine in order that He may be revealed on the earth. People should look at us and see Christ. They should see grace and truth. Paul said the Kingdom of God is in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. That is what the reflection of Jesus should be through us. The Church should make Jesus infinitely desirable.

Those living behind the cloak of religious piety, who have no grace, want us to live in tears and sorrow. They would constantly remind us of our corruption, demanding we live in a state of humiliation. Is this really the worship God wants?

Are you a reflection of the true Light? If People want to be like Jesus but don't want to be like you then something is wrong with your revelation of Jesus. If people can't fellowship with you because you are too holy, then you are unlike Christ and your spirituality is poison! According to the scriptures, the worship that truly honors God is the worship of a joyful heart because the Lord is their God. *"Blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!" (Psalms 144:15).*

But these religious joy robbers are so unfamiliar with Jesus. They are so far from the love of God. They are constantly presenting a god that nobody wants to worship or be close to. They not only change the image of the uncorruptible God, but they change His message. It is as though the words of Jesus have been changed into "And all men will know you are my disciples by your AGONY, YOUR CONSTANT TEARS OF REPENTANCE, YOUR WAILING OVER YOUR SHORT-COMINGS!" As though the Kingdom of God is religion, turmoil, and agony In The Holy Ghost.

I believe when the Lord is among His people there ought to be a shout of triumph. The King is in our midst, let the people rejoice! Yes, we cry and repent, but is there not fruit from that sowing? Should we not rejoice in the Father who forgives us? Shall we not joy in the Father who loves us and gives us hope. Is it wrong to enjoy JOY when the King has delivered us and guaranteed our provision of freedom?

MAKE JESUS INFINITELY DESIRABLE

Seek only to be an expression of Jesus. Rely fully upon the grace of God. Live in the Holy Spirit. Walk in the Spirit. Commune with the Holy Spirit. He is the great possibility. By Him and through Him can believers manifest the worthy demonstration of Jesus in the world.

Don't hide the joy. Lavish forgiveness upon the sinner. Be extravagant with the love of God. Give it everywhere, especially where it is not welcomed. Preach hope to the hopeless. Go after the suffering. Welcome the rejected and outcast. Suffer all for Him. Take every occasion as an opportunity to manifest what He is indeed like.

If you get hit with abuse, let Jesus come out of you. Don't hide your true self behind the cloak of religious piety. This hypocrisy stinks to high heaven. Be real. Be raw. Let people see you walk in failure, pain, success, and joy. Let them see it all! Don't be afraid of your weakness as though it is something you must hide lest someone discover that you are not perfect. Your ability to admit your weakness is your strength, for then grace and glory rest upon you.

When you fail to reveal Christ then sincerely repent; get up and walk on so others may see what a good Father He is to you. Here is a newsflash – everyone knows you are not perfect. God only had one good Son and you are not Him. I am so hungry for a true baptism of holiness. Not religious holiness but the kind where I am finished with self. Where I have no reputation to defend. A holiness that has produced a pure heart that sees God and not wretches everywhere!

So here is my thesis: What does a man look like who has been saved by the blood of another? What does a man look like who has not gotten what he deserved but infinitely better? What does mercy draped over a sinner look like? What does the passion to love God look like in a man who discovers how deep God loves him? What does the passion look like and feel like in a heart that has been given hope? How does this person live? How does he look? What is he like? What does the spiritual look like? Is he jovial or stern? Happy or sad? Inviting or scary?

What does the man look like who has just been rescued by the grace of God? Imagine the attitude of a man who has been consoled by God's gospel of grace assuring him I will never remember your sins again. I will never leave you nor forsake you. I am coming again to get you so you can be with me forever - IN PARADISE. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you and comfort you. I want you to be with me and see the Glory I had with the Father before the world began. No weapon formed against you shall prosper. I give you peace beyond understanding. I will deliver you from every bondage. I will fight for you against every enemy. When you pass through the fire you will not be burned. When you pass through the water you will not drown. I will heal all your diseases. I will direct your paths. I will give you power. I will feed you. I will not let you be condemned. By love, I will deliver you from all fear. I will put no conditions on my love for you. I will perfect all that concerns you. When you are in trouble, I will be your help. I will be your shepherd. I will lead you beside still waters. I will restore your soul. I will let angels camp all around you for protection. I will comfort you in all your sorrow. I will give you joy for mourning. I will be your shield. No good thing will I withhold from you. I will marry you.

Would this man be the most merciful man you ever met? Would he be kind and patient?

Would he be joyful? When he is sad would he not have a place to run to?

I'd rather live my life as a fool believing the New Covenant Gospel than hold any other belief! The religion that men and devils have concocted provides no reason to live and no hope to go on. Only God could come up with something so truly fantastic as Christianity. So, what is Jesus like? He is astounding! He is transcendently glorious. He is like nothing else. He is like no one else. There is not another like Him – nowhere; never has been, never will be.