



## THE FACES OF GOD

### Evangelism

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Sunday, February 28, 2010



**Intro:** How will people who have never seen the face of God...people who have no idea who God is or what He is like, ever see Him for the loving gracious Father that He is? They will see Him through our eyes...they will see Him through our love!

## VIDEO

Evangelism isn't just words...its action...its love in action. But I don't think that you can fully understand how to love other people until first you understand how much God loves you. You cannot offer to other people what you don't possess yourself. You can't be gracious to others if you haven't felt God's grace. You can't be merciful to others if you haven't felt God's mercy. You can't be loving to others unless you understand how much God loves you.

The fact is the deepest wounds you've ever had in your life bar none are the wounds of rejection. Maybe you've been told that you were worthless or you're never going to amount to anything. In those deep wounds of rejection are your deepest hurts. Everybody experiences rejection in life and we spend most of our lives trying to avoid it.

In fact, most of what you do is a combination of trying to be accepted by other people and trying to avoid rejection. It affects the kind of clothes you wear. It affects the way you style your hair. It affects the kind of car you drive, the career you choose, it seems that everything in your life is touched in some way by the fear of rejection.

So the starting point in learning to love people who have no idea of what God is really like is you have to realize how much God loves and accepts you. Look at this verse: **John 6:37, "The Father gives Me My people. Every one of them will**

**come to Me, and I will always accept them.”** Jesus says I will always, always, always accept them. It’s not a conditional acceptance. He says I will always accept you.

**Titus 3:7, “Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable. He made us acceptable to God and He gave us the hope of eternal life.”** How does He make us acceptable? It is by His grace. It’s not that you changed. It’s not that you got any better. It’s not that you never sin. No, you’re going to sin the rest of your life. Jesus just says I’m going to make you acceptable by My grace. It’s not based on performance.

Once I know the most important thing in life there is to know, that God loves me, then God expects me to share that with other people. Look at this verse: **Acts 1:8, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

What is a witness? **A witness is: *somebody who just tells what they have seen.*** A witness tells what happened to them. You see you are the expert on your life. Nobody can be a better witness on your life than you. Nobody can be a better witness of what God has done in your life than you, because you are the authority on your life -- not some pastoral professional.

He doesn’t say you will be my defense attorney. He didn’t say you will be my salesman. You don’t have to defend God. You don’t have to be a salesman for God. All God wants you to do is He wants you to be a witness; to tell other people what God has done for you; to allow other people to see the God of love and forgiveness in your eyes.

So God is sending me into the world to share the good news of His love but where am I specifically to go and share it? **First, I’ve got to go to...**

### **The People In My World**

**Acts 1:8, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** Now, when Jesus told this to His followers, do you know where they were? They were in Jerusalem. So here’s the

point: He is saying, first, I want you to start at home. I want you to start with the people closest to you right there in your own city, your own community.

That's the starting point. I must share with the people in my world. There's a guy who Jesus healed. And after Jesus healed him, he wanted to travel with Jesus and Jesus said, *"No, I don't want you to do that."* In **Luke 8:39**, He said this, **"go back home and tell people how much God has done for you.' So, that man went all over town telling how much Jesus had done for him."**

Jesus says the same thing to you. He wants you to go to your friends, your family, your coworkers, and your neighbors. He wants others to see His love in our eyes.

Now, why don't we do this? Well, one reason is:

We believe the myth that people aren't interested in spiritual issues. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every single poll and every single survey says Americans are more interested in spiritual things now than they were ten years ago, more not less.

I read once that George Gallup did a survey and discovered that 65 million Americans have no church home, but 34 million of them said they would attend if somebody would just invite them -- 34 million people are just waiting for an invitation!

Look at the next verse – **2 Peter 3:9**, **"God doesn't want anyone to be lost, but He wants all people to change their hearts and lives!"** God is not willing that any should perish. And as long as there's one person on earth who doesn't know the Good News, God says we've got to keep reaching out.

Now, you were made for a mission, the mission of telling others the good news of Jesus Christ, and the first place that I am to start is with the people in my world. But that's not enough. It is not enough to just care about the people who are around you. Second...

**I Must Dare To Reach Beyond My World**

He said, **“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem”** and then He says, **“and in all Judea and Samaria”**, that’s like the county next door and Samaritans happen to be different culturally and different racially. So He said, **“I want you to go to people nearby, but that are different from you.”**

I must dare to reach beyond my world. Love demands I move beyond my comfort zone to people with a different background, different education, different language, and different economics. You see our mission has such eternal consequences, heaven and hell, that we must be willing to risk anything to get the message out.

The Bible says this in **I Corinthians 9:22**, **“Whatever each person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.”** (LB). You see Christians are called to build bridges, not walls. I must dare to reach beyond my world.

The Bible says one day Jesus is going to separate people into two groups: sheep and goats. And He’s going to say to one group, **Matthew 25:35-36**, **“I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was thirsty and you gave Me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited Me into your home. I was naked, and you gave Me clothing. I was sick and you cared for Me. I was in prison and you visited Me.”** If you go back and read the rest of that verse, **Matthew 25**, people are going to say, **“When did we do that for you, Lord?”** And He says, **“When you have done it to one of the least of my brothers or sisters, you’ve done it to Me.”**

That, ladies and gentlemen, is what Christianity is all about. It is about taking the message of the cross to some messy, broken lives. It’s all about loving the unlovely! In fact Jesus said, **Luke 4:18**, **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. To set free those who are downtrodden.”**

But it is not enough to just share with those in my world; it is not even enough to reach beyond my world. If I am going to be like Jesus...

**I Must Care About The Whole World**

**Acts 1:8, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Mark 16:15, “Jesus said to His followers, ‘Go everywhere in the world and tell the Good News to everyone.’”**

Now, Was Jesus talking to pastors there? No. Was He talking to missionaries there? No. He’s talking to just normal followers. If you’re a Christian, Jesus said, **“follow Me, and I’ll make you a fisher of men.”** If you’re not fishing, you’re not following. He says to His followers, go everywhere -- because everybody deserves to hear the Good News.

Look at this next verse, **Galatians 6:2, “Stoop down and reach out to those who were oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ’s law.”** What is Christ’s law? Love your neighbor as yourself. God says our actions are proved by our love. I just don’t think that we are fully aware of our world’s great needs. I read this several weeks ago that...

1 billion people in the world live on \$1 a day.

114 million don’t have basic education.

584 million women in the world can’t read.

800 million people in the world go to bed hungry every night.

26 million people in the world are slaves.

Look at the next verse, **James 1:27, “Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: reach out to the homeless and the loveless in their plight.”** (MSG) You know, when you read the Bible, you see that Jesus always rooted for the underdog that people in that society wanted to ignore, the powerless, the poor, the left behind, the imprisoned, the orphaned, the widowed, the aged, the mentally ill, the social outcasts, the sick, the lepers. If Jesus were alive today, who do you think that He would be hanging out with?

There are the lost of your community...there are the lost of your city....there are the lost of the world. The question is: Will you go?

**SONG—"I Will Go"**

Challenge people to fill out post card with name and address and an action step as to what they intend to do to take a step to reach out to their friends. (invite them to church, take them to lunch and have an intentional conversation, meet a need, build a deck, etc...) Write on this card what you intend to do...write down your action step and then bring it to the front and put it in a bucket. And in a few weeks we are going to send you this card back as a reminder to follow through and take an action.

**SONG—"The Broken And The Tired"**