

What does God see in you? ... continued

Message for Sunday, August 26, 2018
by Bruce Fraser

Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:3-5;
3:12-14

Quick review: Last Sunday, we saw the videos which show how our culture has an unrealistic, unattainable image of what women should look like (it's true for men as well, by the way). Then we read in the Bible that God doesn't care about physical appearance; who we are on the inside is what really matters. In particular, having Jesus on the inside is vital.

Because God loves us, he wants to help us become like Jesus

Today: start by showing the video "God's Chisel." See the preview version here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QCkBL2DfVg.

Summary: A man prays to be more like Jesus, "whatever it takes." God appears in response to the prayer, and starts chiselling away the attitudes and habits which are not like Jesus. The man, of course, objects and makes excuses why he doesn't need that. It's both humorous and poignant.

<p>Table talk: If you were bold enough to pray like that, what part of your life do you think God would start to work on?</p>
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Philippians 2:3-5, New Living Translation:

Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.

Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had.

My attitude, your attitude—the way we look at life—should be like Jesus' attitude. Max Lucado, one of my favourite authors, who has an amazingly creative mind, takes that idea and paints a picture with it. This is how he begins one of his books:

What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you? What if, for twenty-four hours, Jesus wakes up in your bed, walks in your shoes, lives in your house, assumes your schedule? Your boss becomes his boss, your mother becomes his mother, your pains become his pains? With one exception, nothing about your life changes. Your health doesn't change. Your circumstances don't change. Your schedule isn't altered. Your problems aren't solved. Only one change occurs.

What if, for one day and one night, Jesus lives your life with his heart? Your heart gets the day off, and your life is led by the heart of Christ. His priorities govern your actions. His passions drive your decisions. His love directs your behaviour.

What would you be like? Would people notice a change? Your family—would they see something new? Your coworkers—would they sense a difference? What about the less fortunate? Would you treat them the same? And your friends? Would they detect more joy? How about your enemies? Would they receive more mercy from Christ's heart than from yours?

And you? How would you feel? What alterations would this transplant have on your stress level? Your mood swings? Your temper? Would you sleep better? Would you see sunsets differently? Death differently? Taxes differently? Any chance you'd need fewer aspirin or sedatives? How about your reaction to traffic delays? (Ouch, that touched a nerve.) Would you still dread what you are dreading? Better yet, would you still do what you are doing? ...

God wants you to be just like Jesus. He wants you to have a heart like his.¹

Paul says that God wants us to be holy, to be like Jesus. But even Paul admits that he falls short of that goal. He goes on, though, to say that's no excuse for not making that our goal, and doing everything we can towards that end:

Philippians 3:12-14, New Living Translation:

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to

¹ Max Lucado, *Just Like Jesus*, pages 1-3.

what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.

Table talk: How can you partner with God in this work of creating the “new you”? What is your part in the process?

Next Steps:

- Thank God that he loves you just the way you are.
- Thank God that he loves you so much he wants to help you grow and become more like Jesus. Who wouldn't want that?!
- Pray, surrendering yourself to God for him to do that work. You do your part, let God do his part.