

The 4 Faces of Christ Rev 4

by Billy Strachan

Billy Strachan's sermon explores the four faces of Christ as depicted in Revelation 4, emphasizing the transformation of believers from humanity to divinity through servanthood and faith.

Duration: 34:32

Scripture: Isaiah 55:8-9, Ezekiel 1:1, John 1:9, Revelation 4:1-4

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeking the Lord with our whole mind, will, and emotions. He encourages the audience not to let negative feelings or distractions hinder their pursuit of God. The preacher refers to the vision of the apostle John in the book of Revelation, where he saw four faces representing different aspects of God's character. The sermon concludes with a call to strive to manifest all four aspects in our lives and to worship and honor God.

Transcript

The book of the Revelation, the book of the Revelation and chapter four, Revelation chapter four. It's towards the end of the Bible. It's not in the maps son, it's further over from the maps.

Yes, I know they're pretty pictures but it's, yes. Revelation chapter four. After this, that was after Jesus had declared his last will and testament to the seven churches.

After this, I looked and behold, a door was open in heaven and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me. Which said, come up here and I will show thee things that must be in the future. And immediately I was in the spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats. And upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.

And in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion. And the second beast like a calf of an ox.

And the third beast had a face as a man. And the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him.

And they were full of eyes within. And they rest not day and night saying holy holy holy Lord God almighty which was and is and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne who liveth forever and ever the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth forever and ever.

And cast their crowns before the throne saying thou art worthy oh Lord to receive glory and honor and power for you have created everything. And for your pleasure they are and were created. The words given to the Apostle John to write down.

And don't forget that he too was a prisoner a captive. For we read in the first chapter and in the ninth verse I John who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. And John said in that fourth chapter I looked and behold a prisoner that was in an attitude where he was capable of looking and perceiving and getting a great blessing to put to paper to parchment that would be recorded all down the ages for us as a warning of what's to come.

And we saw that Ezekiel was also a prisoner and his first statement was I looked and I beheld. But you'll notice that the blessing came to a person that was not having a happy time with their act together untouched by the problems of life their feet off the ground buried in health wealth and prosperity. And so up and away from everybody that there was no alternative but for God to bless them.

No no as a matter of fact these revelations both to Ezekiel and John came to men that were stuck amongst everybody else going through the same tribulations as everyone else was going through. A captive by the river Heber or a captive in the isle of Patmos capable of seeing understanding communicating leaving a message behind for all ages that would be a blessing to us today. But we've already seen since you've arrived that this is typical of God a tired Jesus sitting on a well and it's the opening up of the Samaritans coming to Christ.

A hungry Peter on a roof fainting with hunger the prelude to the Gentiles being introduced to Christ. An apostle wanting to get away from people and get a bit of peace and quiet. You might even have come to that conclusion already here at this school.

Oh is there any corner in this building where we can shut off the voices of them those the other ones. They're everywhere I've discovered that since Friday. You can't go around a corner but there they are then those they the other ones.

And this place would be so holy so wonderful and I could get a communication from the Father direct to my heart if I could just find a place for quiet from them the other ones. Oh yes and yet for Paul he sat down in what he thought was going to be a nice little spot for prayer and within minutes a gaggle of women came along to do the laundry. Dumped the stuff down by the riverbed and started the chatter.

Oh it's them. And little realizing that those were they going to be the first of Greece to come to Christ. Yes go to a river to pray.

There's blessing. Be a prisoner by a river. There's vision.

Be a prisoner for the testimony of Christ. There's revelation. And what were the others doing in Ezekiel's day? Flinging their harps in the trees.

Sitting down to have a good cry about it and just dwelling in the past and missing missing an opportunity to see that in the midst of all of those problems that are common to all of us God's just on the verge of bringing in some great blessing. And when Ezekiel paid attention to what must have been frightening there are those that considered him an evangelical schizophrenic. I mean the man did so many unusual things.

Have you seen him? No. What's he doing? He's playing in the streets with toy forts. Oh well I always did think he was a bit gone.

Have you heard his story about the wheels within wheels and all the eyes? Yes. Have you seen what he's doing today? No. What? Shaving his hair off.

All of it. All of it. And he's throwing it in the wind.

Some of it he's thrown in the wind. Some of it he's burned in the fire and he's sitting chopping the rest up. But some of it he's taking and he's tying inside his suit.

Strange. Supposed to be a prophet here. Never trust them.

They're all a bit gone. And he wasn't gone. He had arrived.

He had arrived just because things aren't neat and in the way that you want them in the way that you anticipate that they should come. Doesn't mean that it's junk because one of the texts you're going to have to learn in this school and remind yourself of it every day is this. My ways are not your ways said the Lord.

For as high as the heavens are to the earth that's how different I do things. Very different. And if I ever left you lot to write a revelation of God you can throw away.

It would be too neat. Too tidy. When I declare truth I do it my way.

And there is a key to understanding my truth. The soul that shall seek for me with the whole mind willing emotions will find me. Now get that down first morning because if already your emotions are upset from having been so far from home and you're feeling it's rough in these early days being amongst so many strange people and you may have a quality called shyness.

You may be a little bit tense. Don't allow those feelings to get in the way of seeking the Lord with your whole mind will and emotions because he's to be found when there is an application not only intellectually but with your will and your feeling. And what was the main thing that came out of his first vision? Just four faces.

Just four faces. The face of a man. The face of a lion.

The face of an ox. The face of an eagle. And John in his vision saw exactly the same.

But they weren't down on the earth in a dust storm. They were around a throne. The centuries of time that had passed from Ezekiel to John had taken them from earth and now they're occupied day and night worshipping the risen Christ sitting on the throne the anointed of God.

But their faces are the same. A lion. A man.

An ox. An eagle. You will discover as you study scripture that these four faces present to you the four aspects of the completeness of Christ.

And the four gospels in themselves are written along those lines. Matthew's gospel is the gospel of the king. And the lion of Judah.

Our Messiah is the king. And the symbol of Matthew's gospel is the lion. He's the king.

He's the Messiah. He's the fulfillment of all the promises made to Israel in the person of Jesus. And Matthew's gospel is out to prove that beyond a shadow of a doubt.

But when you turn to Mark there you have the ox like aspect. And the ox is just that plodding humble lowly creature that pulls the plow. Yoke to a plow and pulling it through a muddy field.

Getting it ready for a harvest. Pulling one foot out down into the mud again. The other foot out down into the mud again.

Bringing out the back one. Bringing out the back one. Moving forward slowly progressively getting ready for a harvest but getting dirtier with every step.

But the outcome is going to be harvest. But by the time the field is plowed you're going to have a sweaty smelly stinky beast on your hands that will not be pure with its little feet off the ground. All white and glistening.

That one can look up and say oh a holy cow. No. You'll be aware that every time you're around it there's a bit of a smell.

Just a bit of a smell. Sweat. Dirt.

But the prelude to harvest. And Mark's gospel is showing that Christ is the servant. Matthew takes time to give you his genealogy because you're not going to bow to anybody that claims to be a king unless his descendancy warrants the right to have a crown on his head.

And it traces his ancestry right back down through David and right away back down through time. You'll find that in Mark's gospel it's not in the slightest bit interested in descendancy because a slave's there to get the job done. It's written to show you the Lord at work.

The servant getting the job done that he came into this earth to do. To plow it up and prepare it for a great harvest. And if you read that gospel at one go and it's a very quick gospel to read by the time you've got him nailed to a cross he's pretty dirtied.

Despised and rejected. He's just like a stinky old ox. All sorts of things about him that he didn't particularly like.

Things that made people get their back teeth up at him. Just a dirty ox but getting the job done. And it was prelude to blessing.

You find that Luke's gospel it's symbol is the face of the man. Just as Matthew had a lion and Mark had an ox. Luke has the face of a man because that's proving that this king who serves is man.

Very real man. He's a person that's down on this earth and he has not had any claim to heaven to be exempted from any of the humanities that you and I find ourselves plagued with. Feel hurt.

He had to learn that. Feel tired. He experienced that.

He knew what that was like. To always tell the truth and to be completely misunderstood. You lonely? So was he.

He was so lonely that when he was nailed to the cross he looked down for his disciples. There was just John and some women left. But the very two that fought with each other about who should sit in the right hand and the left hand in the kingdom.

They weren't even there. That great idea had already gone. He was a dead loss.

He's dead on a cross. They weren't there. Even though they'd asked mummy to go and speak to him about them.

They weren't there. He looked at the people that one day waved palms and shouted blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. They were just watching him die.

They'd shouted crucify him. He could take that because you see he never expected their friendship or their commitment. That's why when they tried to make him a king we read that he would not commit himself to them because he knew what was in man.

He knew how fickle they were. He knew that as long as he was giving them what they wanted temporarily in time. And you watch that in your reading of Mark.

The minute he dealt with a demon on his first day of ministry all the demon possessed people were coming for him. To hear his eternal message. To get to know the living God.

To repent of the sin. No to get rid of a demon. Give me what I want and I want it now.

He then healed Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. And what do you read next? Everybody that was demon possessed and had fevers were cramming to get to him. To come to the truth.

To repent of sin. To get their life put right. To get to know the living God.

To prepare for eternity. No. To get healed.

Give me my miracle. But he knew that. He saw through that.

On one occasion on healing ten of them. Eight of them got what they wanted and never came back to even say thank you. So he wasn't upset when he hung on the cross and saw that they'd gone.

But can you imagine looking up into the face that should have been there and it wasn't there? And shouting my God. My God why have you left me all alone? Lonely. And he was neither in heaven nor on the earth but hanging between the two.

A loneliness that you and I will never experience. Because even in a place like Caponry if within days you find yourself lonely because people don't even know you're there. And it's quite possible for that to happen.

There are people who are so exceedingly shy you can walk around them from now until March and never see them. And yet they'll be there every day. But there's one thing they'll never experience is the loneliness that Jesus experienced as a man on the earth.

Because he's so hurt and he so knew the depth of that loneliness that he has guaranteed you as a Christian his presence within you forever never to leave you or forsake you. So that though all others leave you he will not leave you. And you'll be able to survive even in a crowd like this though lonely because you'll suddenly discover the reality of the one that understood what it was like to hurt because they were lonely.

Because you'll be right there being your sufficiency. Oh he was very real man. And when they nailed him to a tree he didn't have a trainer on the sideline like a football game that ran on and shook a pressurized can of anesthetic and sprayed it on the wound so that you could finish the game without pain.

He even refused the drug. They lifted up before him vinegar mixed with gall, a narcotic, a painkiller and he wouldn't take it. He knew what it was to be a real man.

He was entitled to that face. He was entitled to the face of a man because he'd gone through everything. That's why when he said to his disciples would you like to follow me? Because whoever follows me him will my father honor.

And if you lay down your life and lose it you'll find it. If I try to hang on to it you'll lose it. But who wants to follow me? And just before you all rush and say me me may I remind you where I'm going? Into trouble.

Coming? Well I like to consider it a little bit. I mean if that's in the bargain. I prefer my church.

It's a nice time down there. We get singing and doing nice things. Social circle.

We've got our own restaurant and a basketball court for Sunday afternoon and we've got all sorts of different little fellowships and societies and we can have a pretty good time. But at least there's none of that trouble there. You mean to follow you might mean trouble? Yes.

But of course it's only for men. And I have the right says Jesus to demand that because I came down as God to the earth and became a man and went through all before you. Even to the death and the cross.

And you'll never have to do that. Coming? Yes. In the face of an eagle.

That's John's gospel. That's his natural dwelling place up in the blue. The highest craggiest point in the mountain where the nest is.

You don't get bald eagles walking around Caponry's rubbish bin out there. You don't see them just walking around the path. I can look out this window right now and see two black crows and three doves walking on the grass.

That's quite common here. But no eagles. They are soaring high up in the heavens.

That's the divinity of Christ. That's my natural habitat. High in the heavens.

God above everything. That's my real face. Because I had an eagle face and it became a man's face and through the face of an ox serving got my king's face and became king of kings and lord of lords.

That's how he manifest himself in this world. The eagle face. God himself flew down and became a man with a man's face.

And for 33 years pulled the plough and prepared the harvest. An ox face. To what end? That he could get his king's face.

That he could have the biggest crown be on his throne and have all the elders and all of these creatures worshipping him. And you know that's the program he has for you. The only thing is it starts with you in a different way.

You see you're born with your man's face. You're born a natural person in a natural world with your earthly human face. The face of a man.

And that you know. You're all too aware of your own humanity. But he has in mind for all men to give them a new face.

A divine face. He wants to give you your god face. Your eagle like face.

But how do you change a man's face to an eagle face? How do you change a sinful person into looking like the divine by the miracle of rebirth? By being born again. And as you thank Jesus Christ for dying for you on the cross and receive him as your personal savior into your heart and life, you are given a spiritual birth. He gives you your new face.

Your eagle like aspect. Your divine nature. God in you.

And grab that from the first day of school. That if you're a person here this morning that has received Christ as your personal savior into your heart and life, you possess this morning where you're sitting total God. Jesus said it.

When I go to the Father, I'll send you the Holy Spirit who will come to live in you. When the Holy Spirit comes to live in you, that is me coming to live in you. And when the Spirit comes within you to bring me within you, I and my Father will be in you.

In actual fact, you'll possess Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, total God in your life. Grab that if you can in an opening morning. That if you're a believer here this morning, you possess in this room total God.

The big eagle in your life. I don't feel like that. Never asked you if you felt it.

It's a biblical fact. Not a feeling. He is in you.

And what's his aim? Well, we're told in the very first chapter of the Revelation to make us kings and priests unto our God. Yes, he's aiming to give you a crown as well. He wants you to be kings.

He wants to give you your king face, your lion face. Because you're going to get all the faces he had, but in a different order. You start with the man's.

He gives you the new life, the eagle face, and he aims at giving you one day your lion's face, making you a king and priest unto God. But you'll notice that the journey will entail also the ox face. And that's usually where the crunch comes in.

We like the divine life. We like the idea of getting a crown. But the idea of just working, plodding, serving, getting dirty, sweaty, smelly, being misunderstood as we just prepare a harvest.

We don't like that. Too often Christianity is an escapism from the reality of serving in a community, out in the field. And in one of his parables of the kingdom, he said, the field is the world.

The field is the world. You don't plough up the church floor. The janitor would be most upset because he's just cleaned it.

No, you plough out in the dirt. And maybe the biggest discovery you have to make in these months here at Caponry is it's time to earn your crown. Not by being conscious that you're a spirit person with your eagle face attached to your human face, but by discovering the royal route to an ox face.

How to begin to serve. How to begin to plough. How to break away from the sterility of being imprisoned inside a little social clean place called church.

To get in touch with the dirt and prepare a harvest. One proverb in closing. Proverbs 14.

And we're going to continue this tonight to see it in the life of the Lord himself. But in Proverbs 14 and verse four, Proverbs comes after the Psalms. It states there where no oxen are, the stable is clean.

But much increase comes by the strength of the ox. Where no servants are, the stable is clean. What kind of stable did you leave to come here? The stable of your church.

The stable of your fellowship. The stable of your home. Nice and clean.

Lovely place. Eat your dinner off the floor. No danger of disease.

It's so pure and so holy. Well, I'll tell you something. There was no ox.

Because the minute an ox comes back into the church from being out there in the world, it brings the smell in, shakes mud all over your floor, leaves its dirt everywhere, and it's not very nice anymore. But my, we're on the way to a harvest. And where there are no oxen, no servants, everything is sterile and pure.

But where there's an ox, get ready, for by the strength of the ox, there is a tremendous increase, a harvest. And I would like to think that by the end of this year, oh Lord, if it's even just one out of this year's intake, may we please have one ox from this year. Someone prepared in this school to throw aside the dignity of their purity to serve and head for their crown.

And where did it all start? One man, a prisoner in an island, looking, getting a message. Another man, a prisoner by a river, looking, getting a message. While all the rest were so wrapped up in how hard things were, they missed it.

Hey, don't miss it. Look, hear, see, live, and set yourself the task from day one in this school to aim at leaving with all four faces, with all four aspects that he had manifest in your earthly life, if you want to be a blessing and see a harvest in your future. Let's sing our closing hymn together.

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