

Facing the Face That We Seek

by David Bryant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's face and experiencing his presence, character, mood, intention, favor, and uniqueness in order to experience revival.

Duration: 57:27

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 5:39, Colossians 2:17

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of seeking God's face. He emphasizes the need to study God's face, comparing it to looking at pictures of someone before meeting them. The speaker also highlights the significance of pleading God's face, worshiping His face, and reporting His face. The sermon emphasizes that seeking God's face is crucial for revival and salvation, as seen in Psalm 80. The speaker also mentions how faces reveal uniqueness, character, and mood.

Transcript

Hello, this is David Bryant. I've spent many years working with the prayer movement in this nation and around the world. God is doing phenomenal things as he raises up literally millions of his people to pray for kingdom issues, to seek God's face.

That's how we often say it. In fact, that's how it's often phrased in the scriptures, that prayer is seeking God's face. But recently, I was asked to speak to a national convention of an organization known as the National Association of Local Church Prayer Leaders.

These were pastors and congregational leaders from all kinds of denominations, from one coast to the other, who gathered together this time in Colorado Springs at the World Prayer Center Auditorium in order to spend a week to be trained as prayer leaders and prayer mobilizers. They asked me to bring the opening plenary address, and they asked me to address a topic that I'd never really spoken on before. It wasn't seek God's face, but rather it was more the topic facing the face that we seek.

The point being, are we really serious about God revealing himself in Jesus Christ for all that he is, in all of his power and authority and glory, in a way that could be called true revival, in a way that could bring spiritual awakening to a whole nation? Is this really what we want? Is this really the face we want to see? Have we faced the face we say we're seeking? This is a message then, not so much about prayer, but this is a message about the answer to our prayers, and that answer is a person. Jesus Christ, who he is, is

really the answer to every prayer we could ever pray. So I invite you now to listen in and to think with me.

Am I really ready to face the face I seek? At the close of the message, you may want to contact me by going to my website, DavidBryantDirect.com. That's DavidBryantDirect.com. You'll find there many icons that will lead you to many different kinds of resources that can help you as you face the face that you seek. But now, Father, I pray for whoever's listening to this message right now, that you will open their hearts in a new way to the fullness of who your Son is as the answer to all of our prayers. And I ask it in his name.

Amen. One of my favorite stories, and some of you have heard this before because I know I've shared it at other times, but one of my favorite stories about Abraham Lincoln was during the Lincoln Douglas debates in Illinois when he was running for Congress. And there was one time in one of the debates when Stephen Douglas criticized Lincoln for being two-faced on a particular issue.

When Lincoln got up to give his rebuttal, he said this. He said, my good friend here, Stephen Douglas, has accused me of being two-faced. But I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, and then he pointed to his countenance, if I had another face, would I be showing you the face you're looking at right now? And in light of the topic that I was assigned to speak about tonight, I thought, in a sense, if the Lord Jesus was physically standing here tonight, he might say the very same thing to us.

He might say to us, if I had another face to show you, would I be showing you the face you're looking at right now? But the fact of the matter is, this is the only face I have, and it's the only face I will ever show you. You see, the climax of history, that moment when God brings all of creation to consummation under his son, the climax of history, when all things have been made right, and everything in heaven and earth has been reconciled back to God, in that hour and in that moment and from that point on for the rest of eternity, we read these words in the book of Revelation, and it tells me that the face of Christ is the center and the heart of it all. When I read, and the angels showed me a river of the water of life as clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it flowed down the very center of the great street of that city, and on either side of that river was a tree of life bearing its fruit every month of the year, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations, and there will be no curse there, for the throne of God and of the Lamb are there, and his servants will serve him, for they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads, and there will be no night there, there will be no need for the light of the lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever, and at the heart of that which is our destiny, in the midst of all of the rivers and all of the healing and all of the light and the glory, in the midst and in the center of it all are those words, and we will see his face, and he will see our face, he'll see his name written on our foreheads, and there we are face to face forever.

What a wonderful contrast that is compared to what the words might say if we were left in Isaiah 59 where God says that our sins cause him to turn his face away from us, or if our destiny was what we read in Revelation chapter 6 where it says that the kings of the earth asked the mountains to fall on them and to cover them from the face of the lamb and from his wrath. No, instead we have the words of 2 Corinthians chapter 4 that the God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, where? In the face of Jesus Christ, and he only has one face, the face we'll see at the end is the face we're seeking even now, and that face is being declared in the gospel to the very ends of the earth, and it's in that face that God will give us the light of the knowledge of his glory, so that when we read in Habakkuk chapter 2 that there's coming a day when the whole earth will be covered with the knowledge of his glory, like the waters of the That tells me there's coming a day when every person who is populating planet earth in that hour will share in the same experience. We will all see

the same face, and in that face know what God's glory is really.

Faces are important. I mean there's some fellow that spent 60 years carving just four faces into a mountain. It's called Mount Rushmore.

Now people come from all over the world to look at those four faces. Faces are important. There's a movie with Jim Carey called The Man in the Moon where when he puts on another face, he can suddenly be the person he always wanted to be, and there's a musical called Phantom of the Opera, the turning point of which comes when the phantom removes his mask and shows his face for what it really looks like.

Faces can be pretty important. Think about Acts chapter 20 when Luke says that the the elders wept over Paul because he was leaving them. Luke says that the main reason they wept was because they would not see his face anymore.

They'd have his writings, they'd have all the wonderful discipling he had left behind, they'd have the church that he had founded, but there was something else that was so precious to them that the thought that they would never ever see his face again left these grown men in tears. Faces are important. I mean what about this recent fad of Botox where people want to get rid of the wrinkles in their face and they're shooting their faces full of botulism so they can remove the wrinkles for about three or four months at a stretch and it costs two thousand dollars a crack and women particularly are doing this all over the country.

Obviously faces are important. Why did God give us faces? Why do you have a face? Why does the person beside you have a face? Would you just look at someone sitting beside you for a minute? Just look at each other right now. Turn and look at each other.

Just look at that person. Look at that person while I ask, why does that person have a face? What good is that person's face? Well the answer to the question is already, you can look back here now, quit looking at each other. The answer to that question is already being answered by your reaction.

We feel sort of self-conscious because the primary reason God gave us a face was for revelation in a whole lot of different ways. In fact I meditate. This is all sort of new thinking for me.

I meditated on this. I mean to seek the face of the Lord. What's a face about? Why does God give us a face? And it finally came to me two or three weeks ago why it's our primary means of revelation and I thought about it in at least seven ways.

Number one, a face is the way getting attention. That's why everybody who's anybody wants to be in People Magazine and if you're not in People Magazine you want to read it to see whose face is in it because to get your face in People Magazine is to get special attention. So faces are there just to get your attention, which is what happened just a moment ago.

Faces are there to describe your uniqueness. You know if you have a police lineup and you line up six or seven people and the person looks through the one-way glass and can see and picks out the individual that they saw stealing something from the store, the reason a lineup can be so effective is everybody's face is unique and different and if the person can identify who stole the goods it's pretty sure that that's a good conclusion because every face is unique. It reveals our uniquenesses at least to some degree.

Third thing is face reveals character. I mean you think about Ebenezer Scrooge, how he's described in his face in the opening chapter of A Christmas Carol that all those years of greed and avarice and bitterness is written all over his face. Faces can reveal your mood.

Think of the faces of your children on Christmas day or even two weeks before Christmas. Boy, the excitement, the anticipation and we celebrate what it looks like on a child's face. Face can reveal your intention.

If I frown at you that means I'm not pleased with you. If I raise one eyebrow that means what you're saying to me may not. I need a little more proof.

Give me some more proof. My intention is for you to prove it to me. If I go like this my intention is get out of here.

I'm done with you. If all of you sitting out there would suddenly look up at the ceiling I know that your intention is that I should stop and sit down. The face reveals intentionalities.

The face reveals favor. You know a lawyer says that when the jury comes in after they've reached a verdict as they're filing in a good lawyer can look at the jury and tell you right away before the verdict's even read whether it was guilty or innocent just by looking at their faces because if it's innocent then many of the jurors will actually look at the defendant and smile and nod but if it's guilty they're all with steely looks just look straight ahead as they sit in the jury box. The face can reveal if that person has favor.

You know when you laughed at each other just a few what you're saying is you know I like you please like me here you know we're we're sort of looking at faces here don't jump to any conclusions let's be friend face a good smile a good smile says I welcome you I favor you and I suppose the ultimate revelation of the face and in a sense it sort of wraps all the others together is a face is the way of revealing that you are present. It's your presence. You know a couple weeks ago I took a walk through a Greek Orthodox cemetery.

I don't know if you've ever done that but one of the unique things about a Greek Orthodox cemetery is that on every tombstone they have embedded a picture of the face of the person who's buried an actual photograph of the person who's buried there. Now why do they do that? Well if you know anything about Greek Orthodox theology and how they celebrate the resurrection and how there's a sense to a Greek Orthodox that that the communion of the saints in heaven with the saints on earth is very very real then what what they're really saying even in the in the graveyard is that I still have a real sense of the presence of that person that we're still in union with one another in Christ and I put their face on that tombstone because the face reminds me of how real and present that person is in the communion of the saints. And so when the Bible talks so much about the face of God I think that's what it's saying.

God gave us a face so we'd understand what he meant when he started talking about his face. To summarize his face is his way of getting our attention to start with. His face is how he shows us the uniquenesses of who he is.

He reveals his character. He shows us his mood. Hide us from the face of the lamb and his wrath.

He gives us his intention. He guides us with his eye upon us. His face shining.

His countenance upon us. That's all about his favor. But ultimately to seek the face of God.

To seek all of those things. To seek all of those things. But above everything else his presence.

So the psalmist says in Psalm 27 my heart says seek God's face and then he says and then I say oh Lord your face I will seek. And it's in that same psalm that the psalmist says how wonderful it is to dwell in the temple and to behold the beauty of the Lord. Now it may be character.

It may be mood. It may be intentionality. It may be favor.

But above everything else is the the beauty of who he is. His presence. Zechariah chapter 8. That wonderful text on on the great international prayer movement.

The text that begins and then one city will go to another and say come let us go at once. And then it says this and seek the Lord and entreat after him I myself am going. Now to seek the Lord is one thing but the phrase in the Hebrew to entreat after him literally in the Hebrew says to entreat his face.

Now the word entreat is the word travail like a woman giving birth. Which is to say this prayer movement that begins with one prayer leader going to somebody else and then one city to another and saying come. This prayer movement has as its primary agenda a travailing after God for this one thing above all things that he would show us his face.

And to see his face would be almost like starting life all over again. Like giving birth to a newborn baby. And then the passage goes on and says and then great nations and and mighty peoples will come to Jerusalem.

And then it switches the order and will entreat after the face of the Lord and seek him. And then it goes on and says for in those days ten men from every language and nation will take firm hold of the robe of one of the Jews that is one of the praying people and say to them take us with you because now we can see that God is with you. Do you understand what's happened in that prayer movement that begins with just one prayer leader going to another? Eventually God answers their prayer and reveals his face so thoroughly to his people that the unbelieving world looking at them begins to see the face of God in them as well.

And what they see is so attractive and so compelling that they lay a hold of the praying people and say would you tell us how we could get to know the one whose face we now see in you. Back in 1984 the first ever in the history of the church international prayer assembly for world evangelization took place about 3,000 people just like yourselves gathered from 70 nations in Seoul Korea to spend a week to talk about prayer mobilization and that text of Zechariah 8 was our theme text for that for that whole event. And we gave that event a subtitle and it was this seeking the face of God for a movement of prayer for the world.

Now that was 1984 and the wonders that God has done in the last 20 years is leading us now to have another one in 2004 the 20th anniversary another international prayer assembly to celebrate the movements of prayer throughout the nations that has emerged over the past 20 years. But you know if we were to do it again and use that same phrase I put it this way seeking God's face for a movement of prayer for the world that finds his face. Because that's what Zechariah 8 is saying or or we sang a little while ago that phrase from Ezekiel 22 that you know so well that says I look for someone to stand in the gap and to and to build up the broken places in the wall and to stand what does it say to stand before me on behalf of the land that I might not destroy it.

Do you know the first book I wrote came out in 1979 it was entitled In the Gap and it was based on that verse. It was about how to be a world Christian that is how to live your life every day for the sake of the

nations wherever you are and whoever you are. And I talked about prayer in there but I'm going to admit something to you tonight it was about three or four years later when one day I suddenly discovered I had left out the most important phrase when I wrote the book.

Stand in the gap before me. Now you all know that but did you also know that in the Hebrew it says literally for someone to stand in the gap to face my face. That's literally what it says.

So the issue is here's a land that's about to be destroyed what's the most strategic thing God could ever ask any of us to do and that is what this conference has taken as its theme and that is to resolve to face his face and to seek him with all of our hearts. No wonder Psalm 80 that great revival psalm says Lord God Almighty restore us and make your face to shine upon us that we might be saved. It says it three different times in that psalm that tells me by the witness of two or three here that this might in fact be the key to revival and it says again oh Lord God Almighty restore us and make your face shine upon us that we may be saved.

That is the heart of revival. The revival for which we seek to face his face and then to find it. Now the question I want to ask you is do we really want to seek and find his face? He's only got one face.

He has no other face to show us. The face we're going to see at the end is the face he has to show us now and I want to say to us as prayer leaders do we really want to seek and find his face? I mean yes Jacob wrestled with the angel and he called it Peniel which means the face of God because he said I saw the face of God tonight and I'm still alive. Well that was a good conclusion that it's possible to see God's face and be struck down dead but the fact of the matter is he had only wrestled with an angel.

That was closer than he had ever gotten to seeing the face of God before but it was still just an angel. Do we really want to see the face that even Jacob back in Genesis understood if you see it you could die? In fact God in mercy understanding that in Exodus 33 you remember when Moses is pleading and saying send us up with your presence if your presence doesn't go with us how can we go forth because how will we distinguish before all the nations and then he said well please show me your glory and then God said I'm going to answer your prayer. I'm going to let all of my glory pass before you and I'm going to declare my name to you but Moses I love you too much not to also put you in a cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand so that you will not be able to see anything but the back part of my glory for no one can see my face and live.

Do we really we prayer leaders do we really want to lead our people to seek his face because he has no other face it's the only face he has it's the face on the mount of transfiguration where it says when he was transfigured it says his face showing like the sun in its brilliance and then the next thing it says is and those three disciples fell down before him and listen to the words terrified. It's the face that Paul saw on the Damascus road and it struck him to the ground and made him blind for three days and it might have even been longer if God hadn't sent Ananias to him to heal him. It's the face that John saw that John who rested on his breast.

John who wrote some of the most beautiful descriptions of Jesus we have in the new testament. John who spent decades serving Christ and planting churches and shepherding those churches. John who was so faithful that in his older years he was now a in prison on the island of Patmos.

This John zealous committed fervent holy godly this John when he turned to see the voice that was speaking to see voice wasn't enough he had to see and when he turned and he saw he said his face was

not only like the sun in its brilliance but his eyes were like a flame of fire and he said when I saw him not hurt him but when I saw him I fell at his feet like a dead man and he's got no other face. If he had another face maybe he'd let us down gently and show us another face but he's only got one face. Is this the face we really want to seek and find? If I were to give a title to this talk tonight it'd be a little different than the one that was assigned me almost the same.

I'd entitle it facing the face that we seek because before we start getting serious if we are serious enough to resolve to not only seek God's face but to bring others with us to seek his face in our churches. Maybe we as prayer leaders need to take a moment to face the face. Do we really really know who he is? The one we say we're resolved to seek.

In recent times as I've been traveling across the body of Christ I've raised this question in most of our churches how is Jesus perceived? Is he seen as our monarch or is he seen as our mascot? I grew up in a high school famous for football. Nearly 30 state championships, a number of national championships sent a lot of our players off to star in college and in the pros. Some of our coaches over the years have coached college and in the pros.

Had a stadium that seats 22,000 people for high school football with press boxes and artificial turf and the hole as they say nine yards and we had a mascot. We were the Massillon, Massillon, Ohio Tigers and the name of our mascot was actually Obi. I don't know where they ever came from that came from back almost at the turn of the century but the last century not this you know the 1900s.

But his name was Obi, Obi the Tiger and the mascot the student that was chosen to play the mascot he actually wore a real tiger skin from a tiger that had been shot in Africa.

And you know there'd be times when the team wasn't doing as well as it should have been doing and the coach would call a timeout and while he had the team on the side and he was going over some ideas with them and trying to get them back in the game well Obi the mascot would run out on the field and he'd lead 22,000 people in wonderful cheers t-i-g-e-r-s t-i-g-e-r-s and you know as that resounded across the field you know if you played football what happened inside the hearts of those young players why they began to really believe in themselves again we are the Tigers we're champions we can do it we're fierce we're just like Tigers and by the end of the timeout and the crowd was in a frenzy and and the team was back out on the field but then then Obi he didn't stay on the field you know

no they brought him tiger skin and all brought him back to sit over on the sidelines and it was the team that went ahead with the game it was the team that called the plays that that ran the plays that made the touchdown and in the end that got most of the glory now we went out of the stadium that night having won the game still saying we're the Tigers but you see the Tiger we're talking about doesn't really really make a difference in our lives the rest of the week before the next game he he's our mascot and I'm going to share something with you that may be shocking but would you just track with me for a moment it is my great fear inside the evangelical churches of this nation of all stripes and persuasions of all denominational labels that in more cases than not Jesus has become our

mascot and he's not really the Lord of all among us and so on Sunday morning we trot him out we celebrate him we sing his praises we rejoice in the victories that that he brings to his people and we walk out of those sanctuaries ready to take on another week but in the end when it comes down to it the way the church is run and the way our lives are run we've sort of put Jesus to the side it's all about him it's all for him we say but in the end it's really mostly about us and for us and what we look at is us and that's why

I raised the question do we really want to seek the face that we read about in this book because most of us myself included would probably be absolutely shocked tonight I mean we'd be just like John and worse we might not only be like dead men we might actually die if

we saw him for who he really is a few days ago we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the second well we didn't but across the Atlantic they did and it was on television you could watch it here on CNN if you had a chance and they had massive parades and millions of people turned out because everybody loves the Queen she's been steady and faithful she's endured a lot of heartache over the years she stayed the course they're proud of her and they celebrated her but there is no comparison between Queen Elizabeth the second and Queen Elizabeth the first or Queen Victoria because Queen Elizabeth the second is primarily just a figurehead one that they celebrate one that they honor one that they want to read about in the tabloids every chance they get she occupies a

lot of their attention but nobody would really even begin to shake in their boots if she suddenly scowled at them but if Queen Elizabeth the first scowled at you it might be the next step off with your head what her face told you when Queen Victoria looked at you her whole kingdom under her rule was behind that face and it was a kingdom that stretched all over the world she was no figurehead and so I I ponder with you tonight I just ask you this question is Jesus our figurehead is he really what we read about in Colossians 1 where it says Christ is the image of the image face that's what face Christ is the face of the invisible God he is the firstborn of all creations for through him all things were made things in heaven and earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or

rulers or powers all things were made through him and for him by him all things exist and in him all things are pulled together in him and then it goes on to say he is the head of the church he is the first born from the dead that in everything he might have the supremacy for it pleased God to have all of his fullness dwelling in Christ and through Christ to reconcile back to him everything in heaven and on earth by making peace through his blood that was shed on the cross now that's the face we're supposed to be seeking and so Paul goes on in that same chapter one of Colossians in verse 28 and says him we proclaim teaching everyone and warning everyone that we may present everyone complete in Christ you know what he's saying in that whole chapter essentially when he gets down to that

last verse and he says him we proclaim Paul say my chief mission is to find believers and to teach them more of who Jesus is and to warn them about any misunderstandings they may have about who he is so that I may bring them as fully as possible in this life into a face-to-face encounter with him that they might be complete in him face-to-face so tonight my brothers and sisters fellow prayer leaders I ask the question of us would there be any reason that Paul might need to warn any of us or is there more teaching that needs to be poured into our lives as prayer leaders about who Jesus is sufficiently to bring us to a completion in a face-to-face reality of who he really is so that then we can effectively call others to resolve to seek his face and more of his face with us it's true in

Revelation 3 he comes through the door and sits down and has supper with us and that's a nice wonderful face-to-face time isn't it but then in Revelation 5 and 7 we read that when he really shows his face in the fullness of who he is as the lamb on the throne that all the elders and all the angels in whom there is no sin who are dwelling in the very place of glory itself that all of them fall down on their faces you know we read that phrase an awful lot don't we in the scriptures people falling on their faces what does that mean have you ever heard anybody use the phrase that person's face betrays them what does that mean well that means that the person is trying to be one thing on the outside when they're really something else on the

inside and it finally reaches the place where they

can't hide it any longer and you can see it in their face like with Ebenezer Scrooge his face betrays what's really down inside of his heart do you know that's what I think it means that even when the sinless elders in heaven fall down on their faces it's like saying when I see him for who he is the contrast between who he is and who I know myself to be is still so great even when I'm standing there in glory that I sort of want to get on my face I don't want to reveal any more than I have to who I am because he is so wonderful and yet we read in Romans 8 29 that the thing God is working for good is to conform us now watch these words to the image of his son that he may be the firstborn among many brethren do you know why they can stand there in Revelation 22 and look at his face and not

be on their face but be reigning forever because there's coming a day when God will so transform us in the inner being that who we are on the inside will look just like Jesus and there'll be nothing to hide anymore no discrepancies no shortfalls no contradictions we will have his image we will have his face and therefore they will see his face and his name written on their foreheads it says Revelation 22 which means that when God looks at us he sees the face of Jesus and when we look at him we see the same face because he's got no other face do we want to resolve to seek his face even if we know to see it means we die do we want to risk asking the people in our church to do the same thing and possibly see a massive reconversion of our people as they repent of all the years that they've

used Jesus as their mascot and finally see him for who he really is as their monarch and there will be great weeping in the land great weeping of repentance that's the great repentance that's waiting to take place so what does it mean to resolve to seek his face i end by giving you four practical suggestions if in fact you want to seek his face at all and i would suggest you go back and pray about that before you say yes don't ever say yes lightly about this matter but i i can think of at least from my own pilgrimage four ways that we could at least begin to resolve to seek God's face to to begin to move in that direction let me just give you the four little phrases and i'll go back and explain them briefly and then we'll be through the first is to study his face second to plead his face

third to worship his face fourth to report his face and if you walk through those four areas i believe you will have a wonderful experience in seeking more of his face if in fact you even want to do so first of all we need to study his face have you ever anticipated seeing somebody you'd never met before and someone brought you a picture album and you could look at pictures photographs of that individual and it wasn't the same as when you met the person but it began to get you familiar enough with the person so when you saw them you felt like maybe you knew them a little better have you ever done that well the bible this bible is is a photo album it's not the same as seeing christ remember jesus said to to the people in his day he said you search the scriptures because you believe that in

them you have eternal life and it is these that speak of me but he said you're not willing to come to me that you may have life this is not the end this this helps us to get to him but we someday at some way have to set aside the album when by the spirit of god he reveals the reality behind the words it's like paul says in colossians chapter 2 about the old testament he said that was the shadow but christ is the reality this book is is filled with pictures of jesus in one sense compared to actually seeing him it's like a shadow but it's a wonderful place to begin i'm doing an experiment right now have been for the last few months i've taken a yellow highlighting pen i'm working from genesis to revelation i'm skipping back and forth i'm working in different books not just straight through

but i intend to finish the whole bible and i'm underlining in yellow any passage or any section of a verse that that to me seems to show me more of who jesus is sort of like philip with the ethiopian eunuch remember the eunuch was reading about the face of jesus as the suffering servant in isaiah 53 and he said to philip you know who's he talking about himself or somebody else and we read in acts that philip it says that philip beginning with that text preached to him jesus so what i'm trying to do is find every text where i could say beginning from this verse or this phrase or this paragraph i could tell somebody else more about jesus even a fellow christian and i'm underlining it in yellow and already i'm telling you i've just just about finished the new testament i mean it is just

yellow all over the place and if you were to say to me david well what are you learning about jesus i've learned that i the things i'm discovering i can put them down into seven little phrases actually seven prepositions i'm learning about who christ is to me his character his being his nature i'm learning about who he is for me his incarnation his his righteous life his crucifixion his resurrection his ascension his intercession i'm learning about who he is over us over lord over the nations and and head of the church i'm learning about who he is within us as he lives out his life in us producing the fruits of the spirit and the gifts of the spirit i'm learning about who he is through us as he ministers in and through his people to reach out to the nations i'm learning about who he is

before us as he goes ahead of his people to break open new ground to open doors that were closed to push back the powers of darkness and i'm learning about who he wants to be upon us when he visits us in revival power and intensifies and accelerates and deepen all that we already knew about his face and shows us that there was so much more and one day when he comes upon the whole creation and the clouds are ripped apart and his glory is revealed from sea to shining sea friends that's what the scriptures has to teach us who he is to us and for us over us and within us through us and before us and upon us and it'll take you the rest of your life to learn what this picture album has to say as it paints the portrait of jesus in just those seven areas alone i'm not sure there's really anything

else and that's the face i'm to seek and this is no mascot this is lord of all so the first step we got to study how often in your bible study do you come away how often from a sermon and if there are pastors here i was a pastor for many years so please i understand all that it takes to put a sermon together week after week after week but the question and i've challenged literally tens of thousands of pastors on this over the last few years and i challenge all of us in this room whether we preach or lead bible studies or in family devotions the question is when people walk out of our time of teaching or preaching or or devotions when they walk away do they take with them a better understanding of who jesus is than they had when they walked in and sat down when i come out of my quiet time

every morning what do i come out with with a great principle to help me overcome a certain obstacle i'm facing today or do i come away with fresh revelation of who jesus is because that's what this book is about martin luther put it very simply he said the bible is christ study the face second plead the face which is to simply say that i challenge you to re-examine your praying and ask yourself the question is every prayer you pray or lead others to pray can it be justified on this fact in your mind that if god answers this prayer it will show more of his face this is the great qualifier because if you were to say to me david if you take all the prayers that you see in the scriptures or all the prayers that i've ever prayed my entire life is there any way you could sum them up i would say

to you 10 000 different prayers on 10 000 different issues all the prayers are really one prayer lord show me more of your face and any prayer that god has ever answered or ever will answer there's only one

reason only one reason ultimately why god answers any prayer and that's because he sees in answering that prayer he has an opportunity to reveal more of his face so whether i'm praying for my children or praying for revival in my city or praying for the nurturing of my pastor or praying for the reaching of unreached peoples or praying for a national spiritual awakening the fact is i must plead the face because the face is the reason i pray and the face is the answer to my prayers and i challenge you even for a week not to end a single prayer that you pray for this next week without

adding this phrase and i pray this father so that i or the person i'm praying for might see more of the face of your son and see how that begins to change even the content of your prayers so that you're sure what you prayed matches the qualifier you plead the face how do we resolve to seek the face we study it we plead it and we worship it now when you plead the face you're asking for him to show more of his face when you worship the face you're celebrating what you already have i think of the you know when you study the song of solomon the two lovers are studying each other so carefully and verse after verse after verse just describes all the minute details of the other person and many of the verses describing the face of the other person i love that one phrase where where the the

beloved or the lover says to his beloved he says your eyes are so dark like pools like the pools of siloam i mean he's taken time just to study the face of the one he loves to study the eyes and to talk about the eyes so that means maybe i need to take into my quiet time a thesaurus and i need to start looking in fact dick eastman has written years ago a wonderful book on worship where basically he just goes through a whole series of adjectives just to go through a thesaurus or or some other means to find the words what is it that hosea says let us take words and come before the lord sometimes the most difficult thing i have in worshipping him is just not to say the same old same old i want to be creative i want to say something new and fresh and just to find the words or to take some of

the great hymns of the church you know there's lots of wonderful worship music that the lord has given us in recent years but we must not lose the great hymns of the church because so many of those hymns are just verse after verse after verse describing the face of the one whom we're praising turn your eyes upon jesus and look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace and the hymns are designed to do that for us think of all the great hymns maybe many of us don't even know some of the great hymns written by fanny crosby who all of her life was blind and yet she wrote such glory one of her hymns was face to face with christ my savior face to face beyond the starry skies face the face i shall behold him here she was

knowing that blind all of her life the first face she was ever to see would be the face of her lord about whom she had written in literally hundreds and thousands of hymns many of which are still sung today we need to worship the face throughout all of the history of the church there's been two kinds of praying prophetic praying where you ask and bring into being things that were not there before that's pleading the face may i see more of who you are than i now see but the other stream of prayer all through the church for 2 000 years is what's called contemplative prayer prophetic prayer is about what needs to happen contemplative prayer is dwelling upon what already is and maybe some of us need to carve out you might want to try it in your quiet time at the same time you're doing a

little experiment here reading for the new face of jesus in the scriptures pleading that face in your prayers work in five minutes of just sitting and meditating and dwelling on what you already know about his face and just letting it soak into your soul study the face plead the face worship the face finally report the face you go into the post office ten most wanted they don't put up their thumbprints they don't put up their shoe

size they put up their face they're reporting to everybody these are the ones you've got to be watching for i i'm talking to a friend they want to know about my family i pull out my wallet and show them a picture of my family my kids i mean i don't have to do that i could try to just but oh if i could just pull it out and and show it to that means so much more i

want to suggest to you dear friends that there is a key to how our churches in the next year can enter into a massive foretaste of true revival revival something god gives but i believe there's something we can be doing in our churches right now that could literally and i use this carefully change the face of our churches and it's simply this if everyone in our church would commit themselves every sunday that you're going to find one other person in that church on sunday morning and share with them in a couple of minutes something new and fresh that you've learned about who jesus is during this past week i challenge you to stand out in the hallway of your church some sunday off in a corner and just listen to the people's conversations and ask yourself two questions number one how often do

i even hear the name of jesus mentioned and secondly if i hear him mentioned have i heard anything about him that is fresh and new you see we whine about how the churches in this nation we're not out sharing christ with our neighbors brothers and sisters in most of our churches we're not even sharing christ with each other now if faith comes by hearing and hearing by the message of christ the message of christ the face of christ if that's how faith is stirred in the hearts of people that's not just for somebody on the mission field that's true for us every day of our lives and if we're to become men and women bold in faith and in hope in god who move out and really see victory through our lives in our communities and to the ends of the earth then we have got to stir each other up and how

are we going to do that we're going to do that when we take the initiative one on one on one on one on one sunday after sunday after sunday and say i'm going to plant inside that other person someone i love a brother and sister in christ i'm going to plant in them a fresh picture of who jesus is so the holy spirit will have something new and fresh to work with in their lives this coming week that he would not have had to work with otherwise and if every one of us made it our commitment in the intervening week to be looking for a jesus sighting to be looking for a place where i'm in the scriptures or just out walking in nature wherever that god suddenly by his spirit and it's always by his spirit reveals something new and fresh and wonderful about who he is to me and for me and over me and so on

and that's fresh to me and then i share with my children at dinner that could happen any day but i'm going to share it with one other believer at church and if we were all doing that for each other dear friends i am absolutely convinced and say here to you tonight i would stake my life on it a year of doing that together in any church or body of christ and we would see an utter revolution taking place and it may not be yet full revival but it will certainly look a lot like it we need to report the face like paul said him we proclaim that ought to be the motto of all of our lives all of the time with every one study the face plead the face worship the face but don't stop there report what you see to somebody else now what does it mean to be a local church prayer leader certainly this

conference is saying above everything else it means to resolve to seek the face of god and to lead others to do the same so i would suggest you in a very practical way as a local church prayer leader that you first of all set yourself to this task in your own life for at least a short time and make it your own that is to study to plead to worship and to report and then with whatever prayer group god gives you and others that will eventually come along you begin to lead them to do the same four things that's called discipling you do it first then do it with others back when we were praying before coming here i had an unusual experience

and so i decided i wanted to end by sharing this with you um the first person began to pray we had about 10 or 15 minutes praying for this meeting tonight

the first person began to pray and uh before their first sentence was finished god told me very clearly i just i mean i sensed it that he was saying go to luke 15 and so while people were praying i went to luke 15 and i read that little section of the parable about the prodigal son where the father says you know kill the fatted calf bring the robe and the ring let's have a feast and celebrate for this son of mine who was lost is found he was dead but now he's alive and when i read that people still praying and when i read that i began to weep and for a while i could not stop weeping because god reinforced something he's been showing me for quite some time and it's not far off there's coming a humongous celebration in our churches unlike anything any of us have ever known you can call it

revival you can call it awakening you can call it a feast you can call it a celebration but it's going to come that celebration is going to come when the father looks into his churches and he's able to say this son of mine who was lost to them they've now found him this son of mine who compared to what he wanted to be for them was as if he was dead among them has now been allowed to come alive because you see revelation chapter 22 is not far off this ultimate celebration like every celebration that the father ever gives always comes back to this his people are seeing his face i hope that the holy spirit has been able to minister to you in a very personal way as you've listened to this message on facing the face that we seek i'd like to be further involved with you through some of the many

ministries that are a part of concerts of prayer international and america's national prayer committee may i encourage you to go to david bryant direct dot com that's david bryant direct dot com or you can dial our toll-free number at 1-877-NOW-HOPE that's 877-NOW-HOPE thank you for listening and may god help all of us to not only seek and face but find the face of christ and all that he brings with him

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