

Communication With God

by Hans Peter Royer

To experience God, we must learn to communicate with Him through the language of intimacy and relationship, which involves expressing feelings and emotions.

Duration: 34:17

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 51:10, Matthew 6:33, John 1:1

Topics: "Experience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal encounter with a man named Daniel who claimed to have met an angel. The speaker reflects on the capacity of humans to feel emotions and compares it to the intellectual capabilities of computers. He emphasizes the importance of using language of intimacy and relationship, rather than solely relying on information and motivation. The speaker then discusses the need to not only understand theological truths, but also to experience and express them in our lives.

Transcript

For this evening, you know, my... the main theme I'd like to go into is how to experience God. You see, it's very important to understand the truth, the theological truth of the Gospel, of the cross, as we heard this morning, the resurrection, the fact that He's living in us and that we are sheltered in Him, that Christian life is a relationship, all these are theological truths and it's important to understand them. But, on the other hand, this truth then must be exercised.

It must be lived out, it must be experienced. You see, it may be totally true that I tell I love my wife. It's a statement which is true.

If I never express it to her, this theological statement, you know, it's not theological, but it's meaningless. You know, we may say we love the Lord Jesus, we enjoy His presence within us. Well, if we don't express it somehow, it's really meaningless.

So many Christians, you know, we say, Jesus Christ is number one in my life. Well, is that so? How is it expressed in your everyday walk? How can we live with Christ? So, for this evening, I chose the topic of communication. It is an interesting observation that God, from the beginning, for whatever reason, decided to use words to reveal Himself.

I use words now, and you absorb those words, more or less. He used words to communicate with mankind. I'm convinced that God could have chosen many other ways to communicate.

Why didn't He choose His holiness somehow, or love, you know? Somehow make love real, without words. It says in John 1,1, In the beginning was the Word. In the beginning was the Word.

The Word was with God, and the Word was God. It says in Genesis 1,1, In the beginning God created. And then it says, And God spoke.

Let there be light, and there was light. He spoke. He used words to bring this world into existence.

By the way, whatever God says, at the same time, is. When God speaks, it is. God is the only one who can create something out of nothing.

It says in Psalm 51, Create in me a clean heart. It's the Hebrew word para. It's meaning creating something out of nothing.

Creating something that has not been there before. By the way, did you know that God never renews your heart? He doesn't fix your heart. He only replaces your heart.

He gives you a new heart. Para. He creates a new one.

Without words, it is impossible to fully express our lives. Even our deepest emotions, they long to be expressed with words. That's why even musicians, they use words to express harmony and romance.

Two people, when they fall in love, sometimes, teenagers especially, they just look at each other. But it doesn't go forever. Sooner or later, they find out we need to talk as well.

And it's sometimes, it's funny, sometimes I sit at a train station or airport and you overhear conversations, because they don't know me, with a handy, you know, these telephones. And you overhear conversations and you can tell, you know, he loves her or whatever. It's amazing what they talk.

It's amazing how long they talk. They, for half an hour, really, talk nothing. If they wouldn't call each other, they wouldn't have any less information than they need.

They talk nothing. It's nonsense, really. And yet, for them, it's meaningful.

Apparently. But why do they do that? Because they share their lives with each other. The content may not be very impressive and yet, they want to communicate with the Beloved One.

If the Lord is your number one. How is your communication, by the way? I often heard from Christians, I've tried everything, but I cannot make my Christian life work. I cannot feel, I cannot experience God.

My prayer goes only as high as the ceiling. It doesn't matter, by the way, because God is below the ceiling. But I know what they mean.

But in this resignation, Christians gradually stop talking with God because there is no return. It's a monologue. It doesn't work.

There's a country song. By the way, country song is the best music. It's a theological statement.

Not really. There's a country song which says, How can it be wrong if it feels so right? Well, as far as prayer is concerned, I sometimes wonder, How can it be right if it feels so wrong? Now, to the question, How can it be right if it is so wrong? Why don't I experience anything? A quick answer to someone would be, that I have given this answer many times for the simple reason because Charles taught me so. But it's wrong.

I told them, when I said, I don't experience Christ, I said, Don't worry. It doesn't matter what you feel. It's important what you know.

I am convinced. I know whom I believe. That's important.

Don't worry about your feelings. Just know. Well, it's not so wrong, by the way.

But perhaps a bit one-sided. Because we do have feelings. And if we claim that our relationship with Christ is a love relationship, and it has no feeling, I would say it's a pretty strange love relationship.

Wouldn't you? It's a strange love affair if there are no feelings involved. Now, today we talk a lot about the IQ, you know, intelligent quotient. But we do hear very little about the EQ, the emotional quotient.

But you know what? Actually, the EQ, the emotional one, can be a better indicator about a man's wisdom than the IQ. When a highly intelligent man has a very poor emotional life, he is not very wise in his whole being and very limited in many areas. You see, emotions are important, and emotions very often appeal to your reasoning.

We often say, our mind directs our emotions. Well, that's true, but not only. Sometimes our emotions direct our minds in a positive sense.

I'm sure you all know that. You know, there is a decision that is to make, and your mind says, yes, it's true, and yet your emotions say, don't jump into it too quickly. Sleep over it for a night before you come to a conclusion.

And we all know how healthy it is, how valuable it is to listen to our emotions in that sense. Our emotions are real, and God is very interested in our emotions. After all, He's the one who created them.

We are shocked, and rightly so, when, for whatever reason, a man or a woman becomes emotionless. When we, for example, hear that the 18-year-old Melissa Drexler, she accused herself when she left the dance floor, in a bar or whatever it was, and nobody knew where she was going. Minutes later, she came back, and she went to the band and asked for her favorite song.

Nobody in this room was aware that in those minutes she went to the bathroom, delivered her baby, put the baby in a plastic bag, threw it into the garbage bin with a little life suffocate. Then she came back and asked for her favorite song. Psychiatrists describe this woman as someone who has amputated her feelings from reality.

And society is shocked about such a report, and rightly so. Because if we amputate our feelings, we lose the very thing that makes us humans, humans. What a wonderful thing God has given us.

The capacity to feel. To feel pain. To feel joy.

To feel sorrow. Fun. You see, purely intellectually, computers are far smarter than all of us.

On the other hand, if you play chess with a computer, and if you lose the game, or you win the game, whatever, probably not, depends how you adjust the computer. If you lose the game, you won't invite the computer out for coffee. Even though it may have a human form.

They have those computers today. And the computer, if you invite him out for coffee, won't show much appreciation. Unless you tell him to show you that I appreciate it.

To tell you, I mean. If you then start falling in love with this man, write a letter to me, I'll pray for you. Because simply a high IQ does not make you a human.

By the way, Paul did write a lot about his feelings too. That's very often overlooked. Paul says in Philippians 1.7, It is right for me to feel this way about you, since I have you in my heart.

And there are many other passages. Now having said this, let me just make one comment on knowledge and feelings. It's interesting, in today's Christendom, in some circles, the pendulum has swung from knowledge only over to feelings only.

It seems like we never find the middle one. You see, the knowledge about the truth of Scripture in some Christian circles has become irrelevant. The all-important thing is to feel and to experience God.

Now that will leave you just as frustrated as when you focus only on knowledge. Just a few weeks ago, I was actually at Caponry Hall, Charles' principle, and I spoke in a church up in Carlisle. Actually, it's the church the pastor is Peter Maiden.

He's the director of OM. But after the service, a guy came up to me, his name is Daniel, and he said he would love to talk with me. And I said, I have another meeting, but I see you after the next meeting.

So he was waiting for me, and he was sitting there all by himself, and I went to him and said, well, hi Daniel, how can I help you? And he said, just be yourself. I said, well, that's what I usually am, but it's fine. So I sat there.

I was myself. And then he started just telling me a story. He said, he met an angel one day.

I said, that's interesting. Why not? And then he got married to this angel. I thought, that's very interesting.

And now he said, the angel is pregnant. So I said, perhaps it was a woman. And he said, yes, that's true, but for me, she's an angel.

And I asked him, how long they have been married? And he said, well, we really never got married, but we are married in spirit, and now she lives in Pennsylvania. But when I asked him, why don't you move your wife to Pennsylvania then? Oh, not his girlfriend actually, but he's married in spirit. He said, he will, but he must first get rid of some garbage, and he must get rid of knowledge.

He says, the only important thing that I'm after, Daniel said, is to find the unconditional love of Yah. He always said, Yah. I said, who is Yah? Oh, that's God.

I said, why don't you say God? No, because Yah is a real name, whatever. I told him he's not, but it doesn't matter. Because that's knowledge.

Knowledge is bad. And he says, to love everyone unconditionally and not to make any moral judgment. That's what it means to live after the spirit.

Now, I gave him the example that knowledge sometimes is very helpful. I gave him the example of my children. You know, we have lots of cliffs in Austria.

I said, if my child goes to the cliff and is one meter in front of the cliff, I know something. If this child goes two steps further, it will fall down and be dead. I said, so my knowledge can actually save the life of this child when I scream over and say, go back, or I go and take it by the hand and take it back.

I said, so knowledge is very helpful. He said, you see, this is wrong. Because by you taking this child by the hand in front of the cliff, you hinder God, who wants the child there, to speak to the child himself.

And so you rob the child of an experience that it could have with God. And the interesting thing is also he often used stories from the Bible to make his point, but he had them always, without exception, wrong. Because he never read the Bible.

And although he said that my knowledge of the Bible is unimportant, he tried to make his point by the wrong stories that he said about the Bible. You see, this is the danger. Only feelings, only experience without the knowledge.

Now let me explain to you how knowledge and feelings work together. Let me say, I'm me, the main person, I'm the knowledge. And feeling, the other person, is walking next to me.

And feeling is the person walking next to me in the grip of knowledge. Now this feeling is important because feeling brings life, brings color, brings joy, pain, all the things of life, makes it life and real. It's so important to have feelings.

But it's dangerous when we swap place, when feeling becomes the main person and gets knowledge into its grip. This is where we then enter the problem. Now let me help you by talking about different kinds of languages in order to get a grip on this.

How can we communicate with God? How can feelings, experiences, be involved in our prayer life which may seem so dull and meaningless? And so we finally stopped praying or it's just become a ritual. We speak different languages. One of those languages we speak is the language of relationship and intimacy.

Actually, this is the very first language that each one of us learns in the cradle. The language of relationship and intimacy is not a written language. It's also not a very intelligent language.

It's a language that a baby speaks with his father. Now I use father because I'm male. You know, it doesn't mean mother, of course, too.

So the baby speaks with his father in baby language. Now it's very poor in content. Actually, it doesn't mean anything in content.

You don't know exactly what it means. And you know, I remember, maybe I'm more of a rational person by nature, but I remember before I had children, I saw some men, I know they are intelligent men. But when they talked with the children, I thought they go insane.

This is crazy. All these things. I said, why don't you talk normal with this little thing, you know? But I do the same thing.

Because this language is very poor in meaning, very poor in content, but very rich in meaning. It's a very important language. And this language, the language of intimacy and relationship develops trust between these two individuals.

Now, the second language that a little child learns very quickly is the so-called language of information. This little child, as it's growing up, learns that all these wonderful things that are around him actually have names. It's not moo, it's a cow, it's not mad, it's a sheep.

And there is actually a connection between clouds and water and cow and grass and milk. And it can name those things. There's a connection.

It's the so-called language of the school. Why do you send your children to school? So that it's getting informed about life, that it learns things that it needs for life. Language of information, language of school.

Another language that the child learns very quickly is the so-called language of motivation. We discover, and the little child discovers very quickly that with words, as meaningless as they may be, a little baby can move two adults doing things they never planned to do. That's language of motivation.

You see, like the centurion in the Bible, when he talks with Jesus, he says, I tell the servant, come, and he comes. I tell him, go, and he goes. I say, do this, and he does it.

You and I, we are moved by the language of motivation all day long. And you move others by the language of motivation. It's the language of the politicians, of course, and the language of advertisement.

You know, advertisement, they basically only use language of motivation. They want to motivate you to buy something you don't need. Now, our society is dominated by language number two and three.

We all, more or less, are trained to describe things, language of information, and we all have learned to motivate, to use words, to move people, and to make things happen. We are well trained in those two languages. But, and here comes the point, from the time we leave our cradle, we have less and less opportunity to use language number one, the language of intimacy and the language of relationship.

There are some short rediscoveries of this language. This is, as I mentioned before, when two people fall in love. They speak about nothing for hours, but it's very important because it establishes trust among these two individuals.

It's when a man becomes a father or a woman becomes a mother. And you know, there is one category of people who exclusively speak this language until they die. I mean, on this earth.

It's handicapped people. This is why handicapped people are so important in our society because they are the few left who can teach us this language. Now, prayer, talking to God, communication with God is language number one.

You see, you don't need to inform God, I have news for you, He knows more than you. You also don't need to motivate God, I have news for you, He is better than you. What is left? Language number one.

The language of intimacy and language of relationship. Praying means to be in a love relationship with God, to talk with Him, not just about Him. But we have a very hard time doing this, and this is why so many Christians are totally frustrated in prayer.

You know why? Because they have never learned or unlearned language number one. And that's the language of prayer. If it is the task of preaching to introduce people to the Lord and Savior, it is the task of teaching to teach Christians how to pray.

We need to learn to talk to God because this is what He created us for, for communication. This is the outworking of Christ living in me and me being in Christ. This is the exercise of that relationship.

Remember what the Lord Jesus says? Children, they speak this language. Lord Jesus says, if you do not become like one of these little children, you will never enter. You will never understand.

And we need to rediscover that language. Last October, a few months ago, me and my wife went on holidays to Spain, actually. It was our first holidays without the kids since ten years.

And so we were really looking forward to that, especially my wife. I did too, of course. But my wife, you know, she's home, and it's harder for her than for me because I'm meeting new people and so on.

She was really looking forward to just have me for her for this time. No children, nothing. And you know what's interesting? At home, we are never short of things to talk.

We talk about our kids. We talk about... We live... Where I live is where I grew up, and my wife grew up there. It's our home.

I know we have 2,000 people living in my village. I know everybody. We can talk about these people.

I'm in the mountain rescuing, cave rescuing. We talk about these people. We have town hall.

We have our staff members. We talk about them. We talk about the students.

We have tons of things to talk about. Now, we went to Spain, and there was nothing. There was no town hall, no kids, no relatives, no house, no nothing.

So the first night we went there, we slept with a great sleep because we were quite tired. Next morning we get up. We had a nice breakfast.

After breakfast, I said, I said, So, wife, what do we do? And she said, What do you want to do? I said, Well, we need to do something. I mean, I can't just sit there and look at you all day long. You're not ugly, but that's not my holidays.

And she said, We're on holidays. You always want to do something. And I'll tell you something.

The first three days, they were awful. I gave in. I just did nothing, but I didn't know what to do.

And we didn't know what to talk. It came to a point where it was really tough, but we had a long night, a good night out in a restaurant, under tears and everything, but we learned how to talk again. I wonder how many couples are in here who never talk with each other.

We talk about things, of course. Have you ever asked your spouse, How are you doing, actually? How do you feel? That's talking with each other. We have unlearned the language.

This is why we have such a hard time in prayer. Jesus Christ, He knew that language when He said, Abba, Father, my Daddy. He knew that.

Now, how can you and I, how can we practically learn to pray, to talk with God? I want to read you some portions of a diary of a man called Frank Laubach. He was a pastor and a missionary. He died in 1970.

But he wrote a diary in 1930. And some Christian paper I read is about two months ago, and I want to share it with you. 20th of January, 1930.

Submission is the most important exercise of man. I needed exactly that in my life as a Christian. A deep discontentment about two years ago brought me to the point where I tried every 15 to 30 minutes to bring my will into conformity with the will of God.

The people I shared this with all told me that such a thing is impossible. I conclude, therefore, that not many people have tried it. This year now, I will try to listen to the tender voice of God every moment, and to ask without ceasing, Lord, what do you want me to say? What exactly do you want me to do this minute? 26th of January, a week later.

In these last days, I have tried to surrender my life to God more than ever. Consciously, I take out enough time every hour to think of God. Yesterday and today, I tried a new adventure which is hard to explain.

I feel God every moment by a conscious act of my will. I will that He guides my fingers when I type on my typing machine. I will that He directs my steps when I walk.

I will that He guides my words when I speak, my chin when I eat. Probably you have your concerns about such introspection. Don't try it, as long as you're not as completely desperate in your relationship with God as I am.

But at least, given the benefit of the doubt, that I seek God's guidance wherever I can. I have had enough of all the mediocrity and uselessness of me that resists to be used and guided by God. If the way out of it is not a deeper abandonment to God, what then? I try to be free of all man, free of myself, and controlled by the will of my Father every moment.

29th of January, 1930. I feel like I'm carried along every single hour, that I can play a role in a plan that is so far greater than my own perceptions. It is a feeling to work together with God, even in the smallest details, which overwhelms me.

It looks as if I only need to do this one thing and all else just happens, or what is closer to the truth than God Himself cares about the rest. It is my own duty to abide in God, on direct, immediately and without question to God's will. It seems like this is all I need to do.

1st of March, 1930. From day to day I feel like I'm led by an invisible hand, while another hand reaches forward to prepare the way. I don't have to look for opportunities.

It is an act of will to be led by God. I force my mind to center on God and to be open for Him. I wait and listen to be available for His move.

I give God my total attention and at times it takes much willpower to do so. Now, how practical is this for a normal Christian? I think that even a farmer can do that. His eyes on the field, his hands on the rain, his thoughts with God.

Even the millions in factories could experience wonderful hours of fellowshiping with God. 15th of March, 1930. Every conscious moment this past week I looked at Him, with the exception of maybe one or two hours.

How exceedingly more rich is this longing for God compared with all the old methods that I practiced myself and recommended to others like the endless reading of devotional books. It almost seems to me that not even reading the Bible is a legitimate substitute for this intimate fellowship with God. And last one, 22nd of April, 1930.

Oh, how wonderful it is to be in constant contact with God, to make Him the substance of my thinking, to the other person in all my talks. It is the most astonishing thing that I have experienced and it works. I have not succeeded half an hour.

Not yet. But I believe I will be able to do it for a whole day, one day. The whole point is to renew our mind, our thinking altogether.

I'm so excited about the presence of God that I feel that I have lost something very precious if I don't think of Him half an hour or so. Now perhaps some of you think that's a little extreme, exaggerated, introspective or unrealistic. But you know why? Because in our westernized Christian world this way of life has removed so far the total abandonment to God.

It has become such a strange thing in our teaching and living that we call something like this immediately unrealistic or legalistic of an act. And this is where we need God to transform our minds. As it says in Hebrew, train yourself to be Godly.

This is not a method. I'm not offering a method. It's a help.

I hope it's something that helped me. And by the way, I'm practicing this since two months. Some weeks are pretty bad, some weeks are very good.

That's not the point. I'm not looking at the hour every 15 minutes. That's not the point.

The point is just to have a practical help. How can I experience Christ? Any method is good if it points you to Christ. Any method is bad if it substitutes Christ.

And to close with a sentence that this man said, which I love, he said, I want to learn to live in such a way that seeing a man for me is the same as praying for that man. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Whenever you see a person, it's the same thing as praying for that person. And we can't do that.

It takes Christ. That's why we need Him so desperately. That's why we wake up every morning and say, Christ, I can't live this life.

He says, congratulations. At least you found out something. That's why you need me.

To depend upon Christ every single day, every minute of our life. That's Christian walk. Nothing more, nothing less.

I think it was Augustine, I'm not sure who said, to stand in need of Christ is the greatest perfection you can come to. That's perfection. To stand in need of Christ.

When you confess, I need you, Christ, you're perfect. Because then you surrender. You live a life that Christ has made.

Lived an example for us as He depended on the Father. Every minute of His life, we can depend on God. You see, a verse like 1 Thessalonians 5, it says, pray without ceasing.

Never made any sense to me. I tried to explain it, it must mean something else, it must mean this. You know what it means? It means what it means.

It means to pray without ceasing. That's what it means. Let's pray.

Father, it is so wonderful to know that it's not us who has to make the Christian life work. It is your hand leading us, reaching out for us, and reaching out to us. And Father, in this complete dependence upon you, is the only way to live a life which is worth living.

To live a life which brings glory to you. To live a life which becomes a blessing for other people. Father, I thank you for men like Frank Laubach, who had made an experience, who wrote it down.

Thank you, Father. A life with you is not a method. And yet we are thankful for those methods that help us to come closer to you.

To experience you. Father, I thank you for the great privilege of belonging to you. Totally undeserved.

But you were pleased to. And all we can do, Lord, is to say thank you. Thank you, Lord, for your great love.

And I pray this in the name of our loving, precious Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.

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