

## **If Only We Could See Him**

1John 1:1-3

All Saints' Sunday, November 4, 2018  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

I think that life would be easier if we could see Jesus.

If we could see Jesus, we would not have to go through the trouble of trying to prove Him to the world. He would be right there. If we could see Jesus, we would not have to go through the trouble of telling others about Jesus. He would be right there. He could tell others about Himself, Himself. We would not have to do it. We would not have synodical and district bureaucrats cranking out new evangelism materials for us to implement in our local congregations. Pastors would not have to do evangelism training with their congregations so that they would go out and tell others about Jesus. If Jesus were here in all of His glory, He would be right there. There would be nothing to witness to, nothing to confess. He could take care of all of it Himself.

If we could see Jesus in all of His glory, there would be no persecution of Christians anywhere. If the unbelievers and the believers could see Jesus, persecution would end. There would be no Christians in India having their hands cut off for the sake of Christ. There would be no Pakistani or Iraqi Christians accused of blasphemy and imprisoned and later put to death. There would be no kidnapping of Christians in Africa. The bombing of churches would cease. If everyone could see Jesus, no one would dare bother the Christians. No one would dare lay a hand on them. If they could see Jesus in all of His glory they would join us. They would believe in Him too. They would put their faith in this exalted, glorious Lord.

If we could see Jesus, then the world politics and societies would be ordered as they should. The world governments would bow before Him and bring Him homage. They would do as He commands. Governments of the world would not overstep their bounds or do things that they were not called to do. They would fear Him properly as they should and not seize power for themselves. In this way wars would cease and we would all finally live in peace. This would be true if only we could see Jesus.

If we could see Jesus, we would take more comfort from Him. If we could see Jesus in His exalted glory, we would be able to tell that He was taking care of us. It would remove all of the guesswork with which we live our lives right now. We would not have to guess whether or not He was active in this or that happenstance of our lives. We would know because He would be right there and we could see Him. We would know when He was active and we would know when He was passive and we would know in what way He was active and we would not have to guess what He meant by this or that circumstance in our lives. We could see His daily care and providence in our lives. We could see Him providing the job, the new vocations. We could see Him select our spouse and grant us our children. We could see the direction that He wanted our children to go. He would give indication on how we should live our lives. We would see all of the disasters in our lives that He averted because we would be able to see Him avert them.

We would be able to see all of the harm and danger from which He has spared us because we could see Him take the action to spare us. All of life would be easier.

If we could see Jesus, we could see how we are supposed to live. We could follow His example in all circumstances. We could observe how He handles things and then handle them in the same way. It would be easier to be pure, if we could see Jesus.

If we could see Jesus in His glory, we could also see His wrath. If we could see His displeasure instead of guess about it, then it would be easier to lead a pure life. It would be easier to avoid impurity, if we could see His reaction to our impurity. If we could see the displeasure on His face, the wrath in His eyes, then we would more easily avoid impure things. We would more easily avoid the things of death. We would more easily avoid the sin. It is like how it is when we were young. When we were young it was easy to lead a pure life because we were living with our father and mother. And then we moved out of the house either to college or university or a vocation and then they were not there and because we did not see them every day it became harder to be pure.

But that is not how things are. That is not how the exalted Lord has chosen to deal with us. He knows that if He dealt with us in His glory, He would have to deal with us in His wrath. He knows that to deal with us in His wrath is to damn us and so He does not deal with us in His glory. He deals with us in His means.

Can we see Jesus? Sure you can. He is in, with, and under the bread and the wine in the Sacrament of the Altar. You have seen Him. You will see Him. You will continue to see Him. If you have trouble seeing Him in the Sacrament of the Altar, watch the acolytes whom you can see. They will bow to Him to show Him reverence and you will know that He is there. Watch your fellow communicants kneel before Him. It will help your faith understand that He is there.

Can we see Jesus? Sure you can see Jesus. You can see what He does and listen to what He says. You can see Him in the Gospels. You can hear Him in the Scriptures. He is there. He is speaking. He is showing Himself.

Do you desire that pure life that can only be had when you see Jesus, then read the Gospels and you will see Him. Do you want to follow His example and wonder what Jesus would do? Then read the Gospels. His example is there. Follow it. Imitate Him. If you find imitating Him to difficult read the book of Acts and imitate the apostles even as they command you to do in His glorious name.

Can you listen to Jesus? Sure you can listen to Jesus. You hear Him in the words of Scripture. You hear Him in the preaching of an orthodox pastor. You hear Him. He tells you enough that you can discern the calling that He has for your life. He tells you enough that you can figure out what kind of spouse He has in mind for you. He tells you enough that you can figure the life that you should lead and what the meaning and purpose of your life is. You may not like what He has to say. You may desire something different. That is where the confusion lies, but tell you He does. He just doesn't do it with all of His glory.

And because He does not do it with all of His glory the persecutions continue. Christians still have their hands cut off. They are still imprisoned and executed. They are still

kidnapped. Churches are still bombed. And your neighbor still needs you to tell him about Jesus or your neighbor will never see Him much less believe in Him and be saved.

So that is the way that it is right now. Do you desire the pure life? Then look at Jesus. Come to the Sacrament of the Altar and behold your Lord. Understand the humility of the exalted Lord that He would humble Himself to be placed into your hand and into your mouth for you to eat and drink.

You want to lead that pure life, then listen to Him now. Listen to the Gospels and the preaching. Read them to yourselves aloud at home with your children and by yourself. Listen to the Bible app or CD in your car on the way to work. He will tell you His example and His way of doing things. He will also tell you His strength for you, how He supports you and goes with you each and every day, how He protects you from all harm and danger, how He is blessing you each and every day, where He is calling you, and how He forgives you of all of your impurity.

If that is the way to see Him, then that is the way to see Him.

With this method of revelation the world will not know Him. The world will not listen to Him. The world will not follow Him. The world will not recognize Him. The world considers such ceremonies as a sacrament or such things as reading the Bible irrelevant to its life, a relic of the past of this interesting religion that is called Christianity that some people still choose to follow, but it is by no means a necessity. The reason that they think that it is not a necessity is because they cannot see Jesus. Since they cannot see Jesus they do not know Him. If they do not know Him, they do not know you either.

This is why persecution is such a comfort to Christians. If the world knew you, it would accept you as its own. Because the world does not know Him, it does not know you. If it does not know you, then it will persecute you because the world fears those things that are not its own. Persecution when it happens, and I do not want it to happen, but when it happens is a comfort. It simply gives the proof that the world does not know you because it does not know Him, which you means that you belong to Him.

And we will see Him.

Job longs for it in the Old Testament. He suffered and He knew. He knew that his redeemer lives. He knew that his redeemer lives and that he would see his redeemer. Job predicted that his own eyes would see his redeemer.

And so it is with you. Your own eyes will see Jesus. Your eyes will see Him when He comes again in glory. Your eyes will see Him when He raises you from the dead. And even before then in whatever way that you will see without eyes, you will see Him when you die. There are those who say that the soul is shot to the end of time to the resurrection upon death. That may be for God exists outside of time. Or the soul may continue with Jesus until the resurrection. That may be. It certainly also fulfills the biblical data. Either way the saints see Jesus. They see Him in His glory. They are not persecuted. And because they finally see Him, they lead a pure life.

We struggle to lead a pure life because of the manner in which we see Jesus, but take heart, like the saints that have gone before you, you will see Jesus also and then the purity with which you are purifying yourselves now will finally be complete.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.