

him face-to-face. They share life with him, talk daily with him, listen to him, come to know his love for them, and wonderfully grow in living loved; no strings attached.

Jesus crucifixion puts to death any false notions we have of God, of how we might use God to get what we want, what we feel we deserve, what we need. Jesus isn't at all interested in being manipulated and used; he's passionate about loving you, for no other reason that he loves you; it's his nature. That is what Jesus invites you to trust; and in trusting Jesus as he has revealed himself, wonderfully we'll find ourselves living face-to-face with God.

No shame agenda.
No fear agenda.

They died on the cross, and Jesus has raised us to know him for who he really is, no strings attached. Jesus has loved us, simply because that's who he is, and he now invites us to trust him. To trust him with our lives; because we know his love, because we know him. We've seen it on the cross. In the Spirit we get to experience it in our lives. We can trust this guy; he truly has our best interests at heart, because that's what is on his heart.

So Jesus is inviting you to reach out and touch him, to be intimate with him as you daily live, through the Spirit, in a relationship which is open and honest, based on trust, the trust he has created by taking the initiative

and being open and honest with us, with you.

Let us pray. Jesus we invite you to send the Spirit so that we might know you for who you really are. That we might live face-to-face with you, trusting you for who you are. Jesus reach out and touch our heart and soul that we know you personally, that you're not just words on the pages of a book, but the person we share intimately with daily. Jesus we invite you to send the Spirit that we live in that wonderful intimate conversational relationship of love and affection that you have created. Daily grow us in knowing you, so we trust you simply for who you are. Amen.

3 March 2019

FACE TO FACE

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2



When you first meet a person what do you encounter?

We all have our protective barriers up when we first meet someone. That's natural. We come without a sense of trust, for the simple reality is we don't live in a world of trust.

Adam and Eve started in a world of trust, which was pictured this way: "Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame." (Gen. 2:25) Here we have pictured an open and honest relationship; no fear, nothing to hide, able to trust the other person with your deepest thoughts and feelings.

Sadly that was lost and replaced with a world of hiding and

fear. No sooner had Adam and Eve turned their back on God than we read; "suddenly they felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves." (Gen. 3:7) Notice they are motivated by a fear; shame. Trust has evaporated and is replaced by fear; they have both betrayed trust.

When God comes, he comes into a world of fear. "When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees." (Gen. 3:8) They hide out of fear; will they be punished, they feel ashamed, they don't want to face the music, they

don't want to come face to face with the one they've let down.

Adam and Eve betrayed trust; their trust in God. And for what?

How do you go about rebuilding trust? I guess that's God's dilemma. How does he rebuild our trust in him, and stay true to himself?

God's desire is to live face to face with us, in an open and honest relationship, marked by love and affection.

If God were to pretend our betrayal didn't matter, then it wouldn't be an open and honest relationship, but one built on pretence. God is not a pretender. God didn't seek to hide, his goal is to be open and

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

honest. Open and honest about his disappointment at Adam and Eve's betrayal. It hurt, it shattered their relationship.

So I love reading the Message Paraphrase from Paul's second letter to the people of Corinth. Let's hear it again; "God removes the veil and there they are – face-to-face! They suddenly recognize that God is a living, personal presence, not a piece of chiselled stone. And when God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is recognised as obsolete. We're free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face." (2 Cor. 3:17,18)

In Jesus God has come face to face with us. In Jesus God removes the veil that

obscures our view of him.

I think it is a veil we've put there because of our sense of fear and shame, because of our sense of insecurity and need to feel important, to feel wanted, and valued. We impose on God something that he

In Jesus God removes the veil that obscures our view of him.

isn't.

Adam and Eve imposed on God the face of terror. But God is love; why did they paint him as frightening? Why does religion have us needing to offer sacrifices to an angry god in the hope of pacifying him. It's everywhere; if you do the right thing you'll be re-incarnated to a better life, but if you're bad you'll go backwards. If you're born into a lower 'cast' you must have

done something terribly wrong in a past life, so you deserve it.

Even in the 'sophisticated' west we have our 'cast' system; the haves and the have nots. We have those who have worked hard and deserve what they get. We give people titles after their name to give them status; they're better than the rest of us.

Why all this division? Why all this sense of worthlessness, needing to find value in what we do? Why are people manipulated by fear and shame?

How does God break through? You don't break through by pretending it's not there, or it doesn't matter, or by simply saying we're all equal and then no-one lives it, always seeking to out-do each other, seeking to be labelled special.

Jesus comes to create genuine trust. A trust based on love and affection; his love and affection for us.

Being worth it, or not worth it, totally misses the point. Actually nobody is worth love. For love to be love it always has to be a free gift; a gift we could never deserve.

Jesus comes to create genuine trust, so that we might live face to face with him, and not disfigure his true nature because of our fears and insecurities.

I think this is why God so hates idolatry, for it robs us of an open and honest relationship with him. It robs us of living face-to-face with God, because we totally miss him for who he is. God's passion is for us to love him for who he is, no other reason.

God's doesn't want us loving him because we really want prosperity. I think that's why Jesus told people to be quiet about a healing. He knew that they would impose on him the image of the healer. Any hope of knowing the real person, long gone.

Jesus comes to create genuine trust.

If someone only hangs around you for what they can get; how would you describe that relationship? I wouldn't describe it as open and honest, built on love and affection. Someone using you to get what they want doesn't appeal to me. And I don't think it appeals at all to God, for then we've lost him, the real person, and replaced him with our imaginings.

So in Jesus, God dies to anything other than being true to himself. He doesn't fit any religious ideas; a crucified God, doesn't fit with any religious notions humanity might dream up.

A God who destroys our enemies and gives us the good life, now that fits with our dreams. Have you ever noticed how most times we're the right people, the people God should fight for and it's the other guys who need to cop it sweet! We seek to impress an angry God so he won't be angry with us, but let his wrath tear our enemies to pieces.

I don't think God is interested in any form of prosperity religion. I think God wants us to love him simply for who he is.

So he comes as Jesus; no airs and graces, just Jesus. His disciples talk to