
GET READY

The Face of God

In 2023, what is the best and most appropriate way to greet another person?

Today, we are going to Get Ready, by focussing on two main topics, the face of God, and the hand of God seen in Mark chapter 4.

Fear In The Boat

“The Other Side” is a literal side of the Sea of Galilee, the eastern side towards the Decapolis (ten cities). But more than that it’s a place of unknowns, a place of people who don’t look like us, and people who are yet to believe in Jesus. And it’s a place that God wants to send us.

“Jonah ended up in a storm because of his disobedience, but the disciples got into a storm because of their obedience to the Lord.”

Warren Wiersbe

Have you ever found yourself yelling at Jesus “Don’t you care?”

Unbelief in the Heart

The greatest danger was not the storm itself, but the storm in the hearts of the disciples.

The wrestle of unbelief inside of the disciples is what Jesus is concerned about here and what He would now confront.

While these fishermen knew the sea of Galilee, these fishermen weren’t sea-ready to fish for men.

We need to seek the face of God more than the hand of God.

God's Face

- + His glorious Presence
- + Visible indication of inward emotion
- + Sum of His character and in a way, His whole being
- + Eg. Adam and Eve and Moses

God's Hand

- + To action the whole of His being
- + Eg. Jesus healing of the blind man (John 9)

Fixated on God's face, while holding God's hand.

Revealing God's Word

"Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure."
D L Moody

"God does nothing except in response to believing prayer."
John Wesley

The primary way of knowing who God is and finding His face, is through the Holy Bible!

RIVER Bible Study

The Bible is God's Word to humanity. It's the Church's primary means of knowing God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Being full of wisdom, history, poetry, theology and songs, the Bible is trustworthy and should be read in reverence. However, it also should change how we live our lives as the Holy Spirit illuminates verses and chapters to our souls.

R - READ

- + To begin, we should read some portion of the Bible. It could be a few verses, or perhaps a few chapters, but one chapter is reasonable. This reading may be listening to an audiobook, or having someone else read it to you, but whatever it is, start with some portion of the Bible.

- + While reading, we should ask the question “What one verse stands out to me today as I’m reading?”
- + After finding a verse, write it down.

I - INSIGHT

- + After finding a verse to reflect on and look at, ask for insight for the verse asking the question of God “What stood out to me in this verse?”
- + This could be a repetition of words, a particular name or phrase or perhaps even something that doesn’t make sense.
- + As you seek insight into the verse, ask God to illuminate the truth of the passage to you and write down anything that He reveals.

V - VOICE OF GOD

- + Next, we ask God to speak to us personally through this verse by asking “What are you saying to me through this verse?”
- + This might be a change in how we live, or a new concept that we need to apply, or it might be a reminder of who God is.
- + Write these things down.

E - ENCOUNTER

- + As we come to the Bible, we need to be sure not to merely seek theoretical information, but we should seek to encounter God with His living, and active Word. In this section, we stop asking questions and take a moment to stop, pray and receive afresh from God.
- + This could be a moment of silence, a sense of a new weight of His presence, a deep conviction in our spirits or even a gentle reminder.
- + Write these things down to remember what God did in your life.

R - RESPOND

- + Finally, we should find a way to respond to God’s Word.
- + This may simply look like responding with prayer or worship, or spending some time repenting, or asking God for new dreams and purposes for your life. During this time, find a phrase or title for today’s Bible Study as a way to recall and remember what God revealed.
- + Write these down as you respond to God.

Seeking God's Face

The story of God finishes, not with the hand of God destroying evil, or the hand of God establishing a new dwelling. No, it finishes with a face to face encounter with God and His people where "they will see His face" (Revelation 22:4).

God's hand is powerful, it is strong enough to part waters and deliver slaves.

God's hand is merciful, with scars in His palms that speak of grace and kindness.

But it is not solely the hand of God that we are seeking in 2023. Our primary focus is on the face of God, the person of Jesus, and His presence among us. May the beautiful face of Jesus be our beginning and end for 2023.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the biggest storm that you have journeyed through in your life?
2. Where did you see Jesus at work? Did He seem near or distanced?
3. Have you ever stopped to seek God's face? Where is it that you find God's face most clearly?
4. *"All Scripture is God-breathed"* (2 Timothy 3:16) and it is *"living and active"* (Hebrews 4:12). Has God ever spoken to you through His Word?
5. The RIVER Bible Study is one method of reading God's Word. Pick a passage and work through it now: R – Read, I – Insight, V – Voice of God, E – Encounter, R – Respond
6. John Wesley said *"God does nothing except in response to believing prayer."* Do you agree? How could you create space this week for prayer? (The Riverlife Prayer Room is open 7am-8pm Sunday to Friday).