

12. What Have They Seen in Your House? (2Q 2019—Family Seasons)

Biblical material: Isa. 38; 39; 58:6, 7, 10-12; 1 Cor. 7:12-15; Heb. 6:12; 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:9, 3:1, 2; 3 John 1:11.

Quotes

- In our play we reveal what kind of people we are. *Ovid*
- Do you not know that there comes a midnight hour when every one has to throw off his mask? Do you believe that life will always let itself be mocked? Do you think you can slip away a little before midnight in order to avoid this? Or are you not terrified by it? I have seen men in real life who so long deceived others that at last their true nature could not reveal itself;... In every man there is something which to a certain degree prevents him from becoming perfectly transparent to himself; and this may be the case in so high a degree, he may be so inexplicably woven into relationships of life which extend far beyond himself that he almost cannot reveal himself. But he who cannot reveal himself cannot love, and he who cannot love is the most unhappy man of all. *Soren Kierkegaard*

Questions

How do we reveal God to those around us? What do people see when they look at us and our lives? What is the line between promotion and presumption? When does witness become pride? How does one spouse “sanctify” the other unbelieving spouse? What is Peter’s point about wives? What is the best representation of our beliefs?

Bible summary

What was wrong in Hezekiah’s actions? Was he not proud of the blessings of God, and the opportunity to show these blessings to these pagan visitors? See how easy it is to justify our actions, and to rationalize what we do, especially in the privacy of our own homes.

In fact, many of the texts in this week’s lesson are open to much misinterpretation—how can a spouse sanctify the other, how does having one Christian parent prevent the children from being unclean, what kind of submission are we talking about when we tell wives to stay with unbelieving husbands etc.?

The main message here is one of practical demonstration of faith. What do others see in us? Particularly the onlooking universe! That’s the point we should examine through these different situations and stories. Hezekiah was criticized by Isaiah because after his “life extension” he should have been very humble and appreciative, and yet it appears he was “showing off” to his Babylonian visitors. All too often it’s an easy trap to fall into—to take the credit for ourselves, to forget to acknowledge God, to accept the praise and fame without directing it back to God.

Humility is a word rarely heard these days. Instead it’s all about doing your own thing, achieving your own dream, making a success of yourself. The odd thing is that as soon as we take the fame seriously, it goes to our heads, and we are changed. Pride means being absorbed with ourselves and our own needs/position. That is why it is so hard for God to break through such situations, and he often has to use desperate remedies. Isaiah’s confrontation with Hezekiah took courage, and Hezekiah was at least willing to accept

the blame. But his last comment reflects continued self-interest when he tells Isaiah that the message from the Lord is good, because the coming disaster won't affect him!

Thursday's lesson suggests that our homes and families should be "Centers for Contagious Friendliness." That's a good title, but how do we make it more than that? Putting into practice the example of Jesus who was friendly to each one in his society, especially the lowly and outcasts, takes serious commitment to rightly representing the God we know and love.

Comment

The disciples had a problem. If they were faced with God, they fell down like dead men—as did Peter, James and John at the Transfiguration. Overwhelmed and terrified, they were in no state to ask questions.

Then they spoke with Jesus. They kind of knew him. They *kind of* believed he was special—after all they'd seen enough amazing miracles. They *kind of* realized his divinity. Peter had called him the Christ of God. They had heard him speak of the Father, and of his mission to reveal God to the world. But it wasn't enough. They wanted the real *God*, not just this very human-looking Jesus who walked and talked and ate and slept just as they did.

As Jesus began his ministry, two of John's disciples came to him and asked where he was staying. In words that meant far more than they could ever have anticipated, Jesus simply says "Come and see." (John 1:39). They did. So should all who really want to know the truth, to find answers to their questions.

Who was this Jesus? As people began to follow him, what did they see? They saw the spirit descend upon him as a dove at his baptism by John, and his face shine with glory. Yet here he was, a peasant man among men, who despite his words and actions, did not fit their picture of the royal Messiah.

Some *were* convinced. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon Peter, and announced that "We have found the Messiah...the Christ." John too, was sure: "We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:41; 14 NIV.)

Most of all through his responses, and the way he lived his life, Jesus gives God's most complete answer. Jesus reveals God, and as we begin to understand this fundamental truth, we begin to reflect this truth to the world too.

Ellen White Comments

The God of providence still walks among us, though His footsteps are not seen, though His positive and direct workings are not recognized or understood. The world in its human wisdom knows not God. The Lord designs that through human beings His glory, not the glory of men, shall be manifested. It is His light that shines through His agencies. Providence and revelation work in divine harmony, revealing God as first, and last, and best in everything. {RC 198.3}

The Lord Jesus takes those whom He finds will be molded, and uses them for His name's glory, to meet His own spiritual conception. He uses material that others would pass by, and works all who will be worked. Through very simple means a door is opened in heaven, and the simplicity of the human agent is used by God to reveal God to man.

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