

Portraits of Christ: The Approachable God (Luke 9:27-36; 10:38-39)

I. Being With Jesus

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

1. Something happened to Jesus' disciples as they sat in His circle and walked with Him in those years of ministry. They came out with a confidence, not in who they were, but in who He was.
2. There is tremendous value for us in sitting with Jesus' disciples as they walk with Him in the early years of His ministry, because they are facing the opposite challenge of what we so often face.
3. While we know Jesus as Lord and often struggle to relate to Him as a friend, they knew Jesus as a friend and the climax of their journey of knowing Him is discovering that He is Lord.
Matthew 16:15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.
4. They knew Jesus' personality long before they knew His titles. They weren't struggling to put a face on their Savior and Lord, wondering what He was like. They were being continually astonished as they began to see who this Man they knew so well was.

II. Jesus Was Also Invited

John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. 9 When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

1. Jesus' first miracle comes in a somewhat unusual setting – a wedding to which He was “also invited.”
2. Jesus wasn't invited to the wedding because He was the talk of the town, a great teacher and miracle worker (and possibly the Christ). He was invited because they were friends of the family. We tend so often to think of Jesus' life beginning at His ministry, and His friends/enemies are formed based on His message and miracles, but Jesus had friends who knew Him as a person and *then* had to deal with His ministry.

3. This comes after Jesus' baptism by John and His forty days in the wilderness. This is Jesus now "in the power of the Spirit" attending a social gathering. Were it not for the fact that He actually did it, it would be hard for us to picture Jesus in this setting or doing what He did – using the power of the Spirit to bring about a joyous wedding celebration.
4. Jesus then immediately turns around from this scene where He is just another guest at a wedding, and clears the temple as One with authority (**John 2:13-22**).

III. Sitting at Jesus' Feet

Luke 10:38 *Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

1. It takes a significant revelation for Mary to sit at Jesus' feet. According to society's conventions, she doesn't belong there.
2. For one, women were not allowed to be among the disciples of Jewish rabbis, in fact, Jewish rabbis would not address women at all. When Mary "also" sat at Jesus' feet, she is counting herself among His inner circle of disciples.
3. Perhaps more significantly, though, she was the host. Someone Who was clearly of greater significance than her, was staying in her home. And Mary, rather than serving her Guest, was sitting at His feet.
4. This is what Martha confronts her over, expecting Jesus to back her up, but instead Jesus vindicates Mary's choice. Despite playing host to the Lord, her primary responsibility was not to serve Him, but to hear Him.
5. Mary knew something about Jesus' love that emboldened her to come to Him, without feeling like she needed to bring something.
6. Jesus had come to Mary and Martha's home, not because He needed a place to stay or a hot meal, but because He loved them and wanted to be with them.

IV. Jesus Loved Martha

John 11:1 *Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." 4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

1. When we read "God so loved the world..." it leaves enough up to interpretation that we don't always hear it the way that we should.

2. There is room in “*God so loved the world...*” for the silent accusation in our hearts that God loves the world, but maybe not so much me.
3. There is room in “*God so loved the world...*” for a kind of love that, while very genuine, is not really all that personal.
4. What are we to do, though, with “*Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus?*”? There is very little question as to what kind of love this was, and how deeply personal it was.
5. God was not content to leave the understanding of His love up to mere words, but insisted on giving us a picture – letting us actually see it in Jesus.
John 11:28 ...[Martha] secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” 29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him... 32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34 And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”
6. It's a love that makes it perfectly ordinary for Mary and Martha to send the message “*the one You love is sick*” with every expectation that Jesus would drop everything and come.
7. It's a love that makes it perfectly reasonable for Jesus' disciples (who best knew His heart) to expect the loss of one man (of no particular importance) to devastate Him because he was His friend.
8. It's a love that allowed Mary to come to Jesus with all of her questions and wrestle with them there at His feet.
9. It's a love that brought Jesus to tears, despite the fact that He was fully aware that this pain was temporary. He genuinely felt the pain of the loss and shared in Mary and Martha's suffering.

V. It Is Good for Us to Be Here

Luke 9:28 Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. 30 And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. 33 Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” 36 When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

1. Peter, James and John encounter Jesus in His glory, and the first thing that comes to Peter's mind and spills out of his lips, “*not knowing what he said*” is “*it is good for us to be here.*”

2. This is a serious breach of glory encounter protocol! An appropriate response would be something like “*Woe is me, for I am undone*” or simply falling at His feet like a dead man.
3. Peter was on to something about the love of Jesus and what it means for us. It means we have an invitation to go places where we have absolutely no right going, because Jesus is there and He wants us with Him where He is.
Matthew 14:25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” 28 And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” 29 So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.
4. The disciples had a real lesson to learn about the fear of the Lord, hence the Father showing up in a cloud and thundering at them, but the issue wasn't in their confidence in their right to be there with Jesus in His glory. He had invited them there.
5. The lesson the Father wants them to learn is “*This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!*” Their confidence before the glorified Jesus on the mountain was right. It was their familiarity unto contempt with their daily walking with Jesus that needed addressing. They needed to see and know Who it was Who continually was with them and speaking with them, that they would rightly value each word.
6. The challenge of walking with Jesus is He is so approachable that we need to think it absolutely normal and right for us to hear from Him and to see His glory, and yet never to take lightly Who it is that dwells with us or a single thing that we see or hear.
John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory...”
7. Jesus is standing on the mountain, speaking with Moses and Elijah – two men who had seen His glory revealed on a mountaintop in a very different way – about how we was about to reveal His glory on a mountaintop in an even lowlier, more approachable way.
8. When Jesus revealed His glory in the cloud on the mountaintop in Moses' day, the people, terrified, had refused to go near it. Now a Galilean fisherman is standing before the glory of God in the flesh declaring “*it is good for us to be here.*”
Exodus 20:18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”
9. Soon the whole world would come boldly before the throne of grace as God displays His glory in the cross.
Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.