

SERMON

1John 1:1-3

Face to Face with the Father

Nunawading and Waverley, 1-11-20

Dear friends in Christ,

After all these online activities, we realise more than ever how deeply fulfilling being together really is. It is emotionally fulfilling as we are with our family, friends and church community. As we love each other and receive love, we also sense something deeply spiritual, too, that we are united as one in our humanity. Just as God has designed us for fellowship with others; he also made us for himself. We are his children and as our Father he longs to bring us into his eternal realm to be forever close to us and to delight in each one of us.

Moses wanted **to see the glory of God** but the Lord said that **if he saw his face, he would die**. God is going to have to remake us in a dramatic way at the resurrection so that we can tolerate his immense power. What is within the Father is expressed in his face, a metaphor for all the beauty, goodness, holiness, power and grace that are in the Lord shining from him. The Father wants his glory to shine on us, smile on us in such a way that our bodies and minds are transformed and made ready for him.

He watches how we suffer, grow old, become diseased or get mangled in war or in car accidents. These evils grieve the Father because he loves his children. He longs to make us new beings, to give to us what he has so that we can be immortal, without decay and a true reflection of him. Having loved us in Christ, having established a route from earth and into his presence, having conquered death in his Son and abolished the wall of sin separating us from him, he is excited about revealing that **love** towards us in a direct way, without any filters. **See what kind of love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God** John says. And now we can add, yes, the Father wants us to actually see and feel his love in his eternal presence.

When we are face to face with our Father, **we shall be like the Father because we shall see him as he is**. How does that work? Each time we look at ourselves in the mirror, what do we see? Our appearance is very important to us and we spend a lot of time grooming and preening ourselves, exercising and dieting. No amount of looking makes any difference. But the Father's looking does. What is in him goes out of him

to us and renews us. He is the faithful God and will make us people of faith. He is the living God who will make us alive. He is the loving Father who will make us **the beloved** and the Lord Almighty who make us invincible. His image is an image for us and so in his glory, the Spirit will create us to be like him. The glory of the Lord operates in such a way that what is in him has to come out of him, has to radiate from him toward us.

This transformation is hidden within us by faith in Christ. **What we will be has not yet been revealed.** We must become more aware of our face to face meeting with our Father and impending transformation because our world sometimes wants to fashion us into something else, perhaps a technological person always using gadgets and gizmos, or a material person with money and property, or a political person who requires power, status, and forever protesting. The world cannot recognize what we are in Christ. We belong to a new community in Fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit to remind us of our true identity. We have this **hope within us**, unseen, that purifies us and keeps us entirely for our Father. Together, our fellow believers in Christ can keep reminding us of this.

We are longing to see his face as people long to see their interstate family and friends. A face tells us everything unless we are being particularly poker faced. The Father's face does much more; it makes us into glorified persons who stand together with all the saints before him.