

Time with Jesus

*The Son is the exact radiance of God's glory and
the exact representation of his being.*

Hebrews 1:3

We need to see Jesus. We need to read the gospels and other New Testament writers' descriptions of him so that we can get a clear picture of who he is. The image of a frowning God ready to throw a quiver full of lightning bolts at helpless, unsuspecting people has got to go. God is a God of love (I John 4:16). He is an ever-present help in time of trouble (Psalm 46:1). We need him. We don't need to feel his wrath, but his love, so that we will approach him. And not just once a day when we have our personal time of prayer and bible reading. He wants to be with us.

In Matthew an angel tells Joseph that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means God with us. I know that Christians for centuries have wrestled with this concept. Why would God want to walk with me? But it is his biggest desire. He wants to be with you all day. Do you want to be with him? John tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel (good message) that the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Wow! Why would God do that? Why did he send his Son to dwell on earth with people like John, Peter and James? They were a bunch of crazy young adults that had a fishing business and all three of them were a bit rowdy. Jesus loved them for who they were and he also saw huge potential in them which they themselves didn't see, "I will make you fishers of men." What do you think the Lord wants to make *you*? I think if we allowed him more room in our daily lives, we would find out and we would like it because it would be already encoded in our spiritual DNA.

Sometimes I think people don't want to have Jesus hang out with them because he wants to make them more religious. This week I went fishing with my brother-in-law. We went out on a 100-foot boat with about 30 other guys. We got a good spot at the back and started talking to the guys around us. As usual my brother-in-law told everybody that I was a preacher. My, how the language changed and the guys started explaining why they were drinking beer at eight o'clock in the morning and why they were divorced and living with their girlfriend and on and on. I just listened and laughed and felt compassion for them. They were sheep without a shepherd and here I was just wanting to get by all the religious stuff (they could just be themselves without all the pretense) and fish and talk about life. I finally got into somewhat of a meaningful conversation with one guy when he saw that I wasn't there to change him, but relate to him. This all got me thinking. Do I do this to Jesus? I know I do in church sometimes and when I go to him in prayer, sometimes I'm all wordy with righteous sounding lingo. I get all religious on him. I think he gets tired of it. "Hey Gene, I know who you are. Cut the pretense and let's hang out." Does that sound like God to you? Cut all the religious pretense and let's just hang out?

I find that we depersonalize God by making him the God of heaven and not also the God of our everyday life. He is still Immanuel. He wants to be with us and has given us his Spirit to both be in us and with us (John 14:15-19). Let me encourage you today to walk with him. Believe me, the disciples found themselves very different men after just three years of being with Jesus. To walk with him is to talk with him. He also talks to you, in your thoughts. Let's take advantage of God's great gift, he gave his only begotten Son.