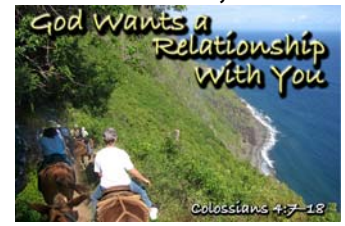


God Wants a Relationship With You

Every human being you have ever seen was made in the image of God. Every human being is one Jesus seeks out and offers salvation – and does so through us. If we experience God through people, how might this impact our interactions?

November 1, 2009



Colossians 4:7–18 (NRSV)

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow-servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts; he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, ‘See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.’ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Reflections

Isaiah called out to God one day, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down.” And one day God did. How could Isaiah have known, how can any of us know what coming down would cost God? The story of Jesus’ incarnation is the story of love.

Father Damien was a priest who became famous for his willingness to serve lepers. He moved to Kalawao, a village on the island of Molokai in Hawaii that had been quarantined to serve as a leper colony. For sixteen years he lived in their midst. He bandaged their wounds, embraced the bodies no one else would touch, and preached to hearts that would otherwise have been left alone. He built homes so that the lepers would have shelter. He built two thousand coffins so that they could be buried with dignity.

Kalawao became a place to live instead of a place to die because Father Damien offered hope.

However, Father Damien was not careful about keeping his distance. He did nothing to separate himself from the people. He shared his pipe. He did not

**How could Isaiah
have known, how
can any of us know
what coming down
would cost God?**

always wash his hands after bandaging open sores. He got close. For this the people loved him. Then one day he began his sermon with two words – “We lepers...” Now he wasn’t just helping them – he was one of

them. First he had chosen to live as they lived; now he would die as they died. Now they were in it together.

One day God came to earth and began His message – “We lepers...” Now He wasn’t just helping us. Now He was one of us. Now He was in our skin. Now we were in it together. When it was time for Him to leave the earth, Jesus said that His friends were lucky, because then the Holy Spirit could come and form a new community. Although His bodily presence was leaving the earth, this new community would become Jesus’ new body - “the body of Christ” – the community of His followers.

By coming to earth, God proved that He wants a relationship with YOU!

—Mickey Kibler

Series Resource:

God is Closer Than You Think,
John Ortberg, 2005.

Readings

Sunday, November 1

Colossians 4:7-18

Paul respected the people he disciplined. He saw God in them. If you looked for God in the people you work with, attend church with, etc., how would that change your relationships?

Monday, November 2

Isaiah 64:1-4

Isaiah called out to God one day, "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down." And one day God did. How could Isaiah have known, how can any of us know what coming down would cost God?

Tuesday, November 3

Philippians 2:5-8

What was Jesus willing to do in order to connect with us?

Wednesday, November 4

Hebrews 4:14-16

How well does Jesus understand what we go through in life, and what does he offer us?

Thursday, November 5

Matthew 25:35-40

When you serve others in need, how aware are you of the fact that you are actually serving Jesus? How might you serve differently if you viewed yourself as serving Jesus?

Friday, November 6

Matthew 22:34-44

What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? What was this so important to Jesus?

Saturday, November 7

1 John 4:7-21

In what ways might our day change if we remember that God actually lives in us when we love others?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.