

## Seeing Jesus

Everyone close your eyes. Clear your mind. Picture a loved one – someone that may or may not be living – but see them with your mind. What are they wearing, what color is their hair, how about their eyes?

Now let's clear our minds again – and picture Jesus. What is he wearing? What color are his eyes?

We all see Jesus in different ways. Some of us picture a blonde-haired, blue-eyed surfer wearing a robe. Others picture Him as having a beard, dark hair and brown eyes. But this is how we picture the man.

In our Call to Worship today, we shared 3 different ways we can see Jesus in the world. We can see him through the hearts of others, by looking at beautiful sunsets or the way the sky gives a backdrop to the mountains, or in the way we come together and join in Christian songs of praise.

Seeing Jesus is more than just imagining what He looked like with our minds. I think the writers of the New Testament realized that Jesus was so much more than just His physical appearance, and that might be why there isn't a physical description of Him anywhere in the Bible.

The best insight about Jesus' appearance isn't even from the New Testament, but from the Old Testament. We find it in a prophecy about the Christ before Jesus was born – it comes from the Prophet Isaiah – Chapter 53 - which, by the way, is one of the most prophetic chapters, foretelling the coming of Jesus.

The part that foretells what Jesus will look like reads, “He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”

Now this doesn't mean that he was ugly, but on the contrary, the prophet was simply saying that the Messiah will look like everyone else, nothing extraordinary in appearance.

But does his appearance really matter? Does it matter if we know what he looks like or not? On Easter we heard how His appearance changed right after the resurrection and Mary thought he was the gardener. It didn't matter what Jesus looked like, He was still Jesus.

In our first reading today we heard how three thousand people came to believe in Jesus – not by seeing him, but by hearing about him. Now granted, some of these people had heard about him before, some of them probably had even seen Jesus, but at this point, when they truly came to believe in Jesus, he already had died and had risen.

So they could close their eyes and picture the man, but they saw Jesus through the words, and through the stories, and through the hearts of others.

Then the reading goes on to say that they were baptized that day. I am so happy they got baptized that day because I think baptism is so important.

I don't believe our salvation comes through baptism, but I believe it is a life-changing event. When we are baptized as a child, we become one that is marked as being with Christ, and the parents or Godparents make a covenant to raise that child in a Christian household.

When adults get baptized, we see them make a commitment for themselves that they accept Christ, and they promise to grow in their faith as a Christian.

I think that during the sacrament of the Baptismal Covenant, we see can Jesus present, whether it is a child or an adult being baptized.

While observing a child being baptized, we can see God at work in the hearts of the parents as they take the Baptismal vows for that child. I have seen the faces of parents and Godparents after the pouring of the water.

They might not be able to tell you exactly what had happened, but something in them changes. They know that through the sacrament of Baptism, something wonderful is happening right before them.

And when someone who has never been baptized before makes the decision as an adult that they want to be baptized, it almost brings a tear to my eye.

What a great sign of faith, what a great testimony that is to others. You can really see Jesus at work in their lives and see how it affects the lives of others. Obviously something wonderful is happening there as well.

So another place we can see Jesus is through the sacrament of the Baptismal Covenant.

Our other scripture reading today is one of my favorite New Testament stories. We call it the Walk to Emmaus story.

So here were two of Jesus' disciples – leaving town after Jesus was crucified. Walking down the road to Emmaus.

So through the breaking of the bread their eyes were opened and they saw him.

Through the Sacrament of Holy Communion we have another opportunity to experience and see Jesus.

We believe in an open table which means that anyone can take part in Holy Communion. You don't have to be a member of this church or any church. And we do this because it is an opportunity to see and experience Jesus. We believe that Christ's gift was for everyone, not just those who join a certain church.

There are several ways to experience Jesus through Holy Communion.

For some people they like to think that when they take that bread and wine, or in our case grape juice, they are accepting and receiving the gift of Christ into their bodies, into their lives.

Other people like to think how there is only one loaf of bread as there is only one Christ. As we all share from the same loaf, we are reminded that we are all part of the same Christian Community and through this Community we can share in Christ's love.

For others yet, they think about how the broken bread represents the body of Jesus that was broken for our transgressions and how the wine or grape juice reminds us of how his blood was shed for us – for the forgiveness of our sins. So, Holy Communion can be a time of remembrance of a great sacrifice for us - so we can have everlasting life.

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No matter what perspective you have during Holy Communion, it is a time for us to truly experience and see Christ in our lives today.

Through the sacraments, through each other, or by looking at the beauty in the world, we need to ask ourselves, how do we see Jesus in our lives?

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