

Face-to-face with the Living God

I remember clearly when I first trusted Jesus Christ. It was the last night of a revival in our local church with evangelist Rev. Jay Budd. All week a fear of hell had been building in my 10-year-old mind, but I was too shy to go forward during the altar call. So when we arrived home after church on that Sunday night, April 10, 1960, I went into my parents' bedroom and told them I wanted to pray to become a Christian.

I still remember my burning desire not to lose the amazing new feeling that filled my heart.

But my deepest and most formative memory of that evening is my new awareness of the Living God. I had the sensation of Him standing right in front of me, looking straight into my eyes. The reality was stark and gripping. He filled my heart's vision. I could not ignore Him or look past Him. But His look was not threatening. He was not angry with me. His look was love...nothing but love.

I think of that when I read the account of Paul's conversion in Acts 9. Paul was making a career of trying to stamp out Christianity, and suddenly, in a moment in time, he turned around 180 degrees and became one of its most fervent advocates. Within a few days he was publicly contending for the truth he had violently opposed. The change did not happen through years of studying and thinking. Like me, he simply came face-to-face with the Living Christ. Few words were exchanged. The gripping reality of Jesus Christ transformed him completely in a moment in time, and he was never the same.

Like Paul, my life and ministry continue to be energized by the stark reality of Father God, revealed so vividly and personally in Jesus Christ. To my ears, so much of our Christian talk is about religion, and religion can be such a human thing. It pales before the Living God. He still fills my heart's vision, as He did on that evening over 60 years ago. He draws me. He drives me. My relationship with Him shapes every aspect of my life. When He speaks, all other voices are just background noise. When He commands, my path is clear, regardless of opposition. My heart has room for nothing and no one else.

As with Noah, Abraham, Isaiah, and Paul, God Himself, in His person, makes all other considerations irrelevant. He is the Source and Center of all reality. He is all wisdom, all power, and all love. He calls, I answer. What else matters but Him?

Listen and sing:
Hymn: *Present Lord*
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