

**Title** Reflecting His Image  
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There is one thing we have overlooked at this meeting. Someone has put in much effort. On behalf of all of us, let me say a hearty thank you for the local committees and meetings. A few years ago when meetings were at Tennessee-- a week of messages--the preacher said I could preach on the last night half a message. Perhaps that could not be such a bad assignment? Perhaps to preach the last half of the message will occur when we all go out these doors. Down in Virginia Beach, there was an old chicken house. There were a couple boys in there, and they like to imitate a preacher, and one boy preaching said, "Let's open the door and let some of that Light out!" Is it fair we enjoy this all together when people in this world have never heard a word of it? Moses, back in the first chapter of the Bible: God says, "Let us make man..." [reads verse]. I don't know all that was meant that God created man in His image, more than in His capacity to reason, as God said the day you eat of this tree you shall die. But they ate and their physical images continued on with their reason. There must be something deeper than that. The Bible said something died. This week is just a summary of the story of man in these messages. We heard how God created man and God gave consideration for that man. He said let us make. What all was that discussion like? I do not know. He created man in that image. Then man fell. What died that day was the image of God stamped in man's heart. There was a connection that man was alive in a dimension that he lost--his relationship to his God. Man found himself with a chasm between him and His maker. There was an uncrossable chasm. There was no way that man could travel to the other side. Then we heard the story of a rebirth, a new life that involved repentance, transformation. The other aspects in the Christian life--this restoration of man--is to have fellowship with God. What did He really have in mind? God created man so that man would praise Him. Also, that God had something He wanted to share with man--the thoughts God was thinking toward man. Jesus said it was the Father's pleasure to give him the Kingdom. God wanted to share something with man as well as receive something with man. Now we come to this moment where there is a means to be restored to God. Jesus did not come to earth to live with man then to take us to be with him. In the mean time, we are present with god through the holy Spirit. Ever since I received this assignment, I have been trying to comprehend God. How does finite man comprehend an infinite God? Perfect in holiness, love, immutable, omnipotent, omnipresent. Where is God now? As we sense this plan of man, what God sees when He looks on this sea of humanity? We meet people when we travel. Have you been somewhere where there are no people? Everywhere, this earth has been inhabited, and God is looking down on this

whole scene and has a purpose for everyone. Someone opened the door and let the Light in. I sensed that somebody was experiencing a burden in his heart on the program committee--that God would be honored and the deepest needs met. The Gospel is for the whole world.

On the committee's notes, I found this phrase. "We are called to reflect the character and nature of Almighty God." Think about it. We are called to reflect. Not just think about it, but to show off. To reflect the character and nature of God. Then, another word I had never seen put there. They followed this statement with a three letter word: "Wow!!!" Ever hear preachers talk like that? People talk about so many things being *awesome*, and we use that word too casually, but this is awesome, reflecting an Almighty God. He intends to make Himself known through the people He created in His image. When I saw that word, I went to Webster's dictionary for help: What does *wow* mean? It is an expression of hope, surprise, wonder, and pain. What a combination. How do you even conceive the thought of an infinite God with a finite mind? I went through a series of emotions and experiences. There were tears; there was awe; a sense of futility: It can't be done. There were no feelings at all sometimes. As I was thinking about this assignment, and of God, I thought of the story I read some time ago about a Sunday school teacher describing God to the children. Suddenly, one of the children called for attention and said, "I know that man, he leaves just down the road." Wouldn't that be a wonderful testimony for us: one of those people who reflect God? We talk about some profound things in these meetings. I could not expound on some things specifically. The bottom line is that we cannot conceive God. The relationship with God is not necessarily in the mind. He that cometh to God must believe that He is and is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. As I try to contemplate, how is God? How is heaven? Isaiah 6: his testimony... (by the way, it seems all the speakers took away my texts) Uzziah was the king and, I think, there was a certain air of sadness and despair in the land. As Isaiah was looking at the situation, their king had died: what was going to happen in these circumstances [reads verses]? Uzziah died, the hope of the nation was downward. Then all at once, the glory of the Lord filled the whole land. What would it be like if we heard the angels uttering the words, holy, holy, holy. I would like to hear them utter those words! But, would I really? The post of the door moved, the house was filled with smoke. Would you like to see a picture like that? The presence of God was there. I was imaging up there, beyond the blue, that there was an eternal God. But how do mortal eyes see, put God in a frame, that you can visualize it? Is it important? But it is important to see it in the eyes of faith. He plans our birth, our departure, our life's outline, and what He asks of us is that we give Him authority to direct our lives. When Isaiah saw this, he said, "Woe is me." He saw something else. Any time we see God in His reality, we are going to have a picture of something else, and that is of us. "Woe is me," said Isaiah, "for I am undone... [reads verse]." The story does not end there. [reads verse] "...and thy sin purged." [Reads verse]. I don't know how loud Isaiah's voice was. When we see God and we see ourselves, life takes a turn if we respond to God. Another word for reflecting is *mirroring*, to mirror God. We have in our store mirrors, nice mirrors. The real purpose is not to display the mirror, neither is it to display the frame around it, although it looks nice. That frame contributes nothing to its purpose. The job is in the mirror: the purpose is not to explain something. The purpose is not to imitate, but to reflect. It can only reflect what is before it. The message from Isaiah's experience is that I am never really in a condition to reflect God until I'm in His presence. As I stand before Him, He stands out. The entire purpose is to reveal what is before it. I wondered how the Early Christians felt about the meetings we have sometimes, when we have meetings to stimulate evangelism. Remember, they were put in prison for evangelizing.

Do you think they needed stimulation meetings? It is a condition of the heart. Wouldn't you like to see that kind of environment today? It's a possibility. Anytime the people of God have met the conditions of God, they experience the blessing of God. He promised He will do. When Isaiah saw what brought him to his face before God, that's where you see the people of God when they encounter God--on their face, but God can also pick them up. The purpose of the mirror is to reflect.

1 Peter 2, "You are a chosen generation" [reads verses]. We have been chosen; it is God's purpose. One purpose is that He be reflected across the world. In 2 Timothy 1:8 [reads verses]. Today we are looking for ways to make life simple, but here is the calling the people of God. Here is the testimony of Timothy [reads verses]. The afflictions of the Gospel. Sometimes our young people may not be challenged. Last week, we were in Paraguay. Someone said that you folks aren't working like you used to. It wasn't the biggest condemnation I've heard, but he sees nowadays we are trying to make life so easy for the missionaries. There is no sense of commitment. He said what you see out there is a way to soothe your conscientious. The Gospel is the gospel of the Christ. Christianity without a cross won't do the job. It won't reflect the eternal God. Jesus was the express image of God. When you look at Jesus, He did not have a place to lay His head. It was His meat, His food, to do the will of Him that sent Him. That was a reflection of God. Those disciples ventured a question: if we do not leave everything, are we worthy of Him? Can we be His disciples? It's a blessing when you can go to other places and find people who serve the same living God. You have inherited families. When dear brothers and sisters across the world sense that was part of the reward, they don't forsake it. You do not have to do it in another country.

Three things I'd like to think about, how we can reflect the image and character of God? The Scripture is clear. We need to reflect. Romans 10. People talk today: let's lay down doctrine and have fellowship. If we lay down doctrine, we will have fellowship but not with the right group. The character of God is manifest in his Word--it's what we need to know. A little child who says that I know that man. The theology of what he was saying was a demonstration of God working in that man. I remember the night I was converted; if you asked me what all took place at that time, I would have been at a loss, even why I went through the fears I had, the things that were happening. It happened on a Saturday night and I fell asleep on the couch. I woke up and something was different. I came to the place where that blind man was when he was healed and they were asking what kind of man Jesus was: "but one thing I know; I was blind and now I see." We do well to learn theology, and it's okay to have stimulation meetings; we have to do something to get off our seats. It's going to take more than that. We do well to have our doctrine in place. Romans 10[reads verses]. Is doctrine important when it comes to reflecting Jesus? Are people going to believe something they do not know about? [Reads two sets of unspecified verses]. Doctrine sets the foundation for the redemption of mankind. If we are filled with that Holy Spirit, I believe the doctrine will go out. It's part of this message: holding fast the faithful word that by sound doctrine you can convince the gainsayer. There's some room for some difference. We may not all agree where that line is. There's a concern about doctrine when there is a mixed expression of doctrine. Is it any wonder people ask which is the right religion? I do not blame them. The criteria in Scripture is not to study the lines so we can see how far apart we are, but rather study the Scripture, look at the doctrine, and if we are not together, should we not be concerned?. Father, may they all be one as we are one. It does not all have to be my way, but

it should be our concern if we are sending a mixed message. Who is accountable if people do not come to Christ because the message is confusing?

A second point, beyond doctrine: teaching... the Anabaptists had a time when they were not relating so well together. They sat together, looked at the Word of God, and they disputed. Evidently they were not on the same page. They had different views, but their heart was united. They wanted to present, believe, and be one. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost. Besides doctrine, by their fruits shall ye know them. Not everyone that says Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom. Doctrine is good, but there is more than teaching. Note everyone that says Lord, Lord. You shall have love toward one another, reflecting Jesus Christ. Another thing in John 15: herein is my Father glorified. We come back to this saying: we used repeatedly, that is, obedience. For the most part, we have it fairly clear with doctrine and obedience. We do well to remember the way we believe and behave reflects on our Lord. It's what gives people a concept of the God we profess to serve.

Third, we can see well what others see wrong or do not believe, or who is doing it right. We say we believe all things, when we talk about believing all things of the Bible, getting only as far as nonresistance and nonconformity--but we must believe the whole counsel of God. About reflecting Jesus, we do it more than anything by what we are, what we say, what we do. But did you think about it-- that we can say a lot of things for the wrong reason. People do that. What can you do that is better than praying? Jesus said, you're praying to be seen of men. Did it help? Not that we should be careless about doctrine. Adin said many times, "Away with this dead correctness." He was not saying away with the correctness, but away with the deadness. There must be a relationship with Jesus, or the rest won't cut it. Jesus said you will receive power. My question is: When I think of us as having doctrine and obedience, may I ask where is the power? I am not insinuating there is nothing. Fifty years ago when these meetings started, there were no mission outreaches. You would never hear what God was doing in another area. I thank God for these efforts, but we are in danger of apathy and lukewarmness. When we preach, do people say, "What shall we do?" I'm reading about a Gospel Paul said he is not embarrassed of. It has transforming power. In the Scripture, Acts says, you shall receive power to forgiveness--repent. When you see folks walking down the aisle in an altar call, looking around and laughing, that's not the power that changes life.

I'd like to talk about John the first chapter. When Jesus came on the scene, someone said that we found Him of whom the Scriptures have spoken. Then Jesus arrived and saw Nathaniel there and said, "Behold an Isrealite indeed in whom there is no guile." Jesus singled out this man and said those words. On the other hand, I hope it can be a challenge, that we do like the songwriter: Is He satisfied with you? What do you see nowadays in the Church? It's important to get the doctrine okay and insist of obedience, but it is imperative that we look at our Lord and reflect His image--which we do not do by turning on our own light.