



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | [believerschapeldallas.org](http://believerschapeldallas.org)

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 4: 6

Spring 2025

"The Face of Christ"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in 2 Corinthians, chapter 4; and we ended our passage last week on verse 6.

But I wanted to focus on that verse a little more carefully and broadly; and so we're going to look at it as our text for this morning. 2 Corinthians 4, verse 6;

<sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4: 6

One thing I've noticed, just in the last part of chapter 3 and the first part of chapter 4, is how the apostle Paul understood the Old Testament, and how he used it. He took the historical events of the Old Testament and saw them fulfilled, ultimately, in us —and applied to us. For example, in chapter 3, (vs13), he speaks of, 'the veil that Moses put over his face' to keep the unbelieving of Israel from seeing the glory of God. And Paul applied that to the present day synagogue, and how, 'the veil is over the hearts' of those unbelieving Jewish people there. (2Cor 3:15). And the only way it can be removed is by turning to Christ, trusting in Him.

And now he, (Paul), goes to the beginning of the Book of Genesis; Genesis chapter 1, verse 3, and the creation of light—and how the inanimate, dead universe,

filled with darkness, is transformed when God says, "Let there be light.", (ibid)...and it floods the universe.

And he applies that to us. And that's really where he finds the ultimate fulfillment of that is in how the lives that are transformed in every believer, that your life and your heart was like a dead, inert universe, and God, (apart from your worth), spoke 'Light', and it filled your heart with the truth of God and transformed you. And we see that here, as we will consider that in our text this morning.

Some people say we don't need to study the Old Testament; 'We're Christians; we have the New Testament; that's what we need.'

No, our faith is based on the Old Testament, and we need to know the Old Testament to understand the New Testament. Paul was a man of the Old Testament, and he used it brilliantly.

Well, that's our text, 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 6. Let's begin with a word of prayer.

Father, we do rejoice to be here, to be able to open our Bibles together and to study Your Word...to take one verse, which is so full of Your revelation, and consider it. And I speak for myself when I say, 'Who is sufficient for these things!?' —One verse that could be preached on week after week. What a wonderful text we have; and I pray that You'd bless us as we look at it, consider it, and how it applies—and how it applies to us *personally*.

So build us up in the faith, LORD. May this be a time of learning and of considering the great truths of the Word of God that You have revealed to us. There is no growth in the Christian life if we do not spend time, serious time, in Your Word, nourishing our souls on it. So bless us with an understanding of these things and build us up in the faith; and help us to apply this to our lives individually. So LORD, be glorified in it and may we be edified as a result.

And what a great privilege You've given us, LORD, not only to be here as Your church and to open the Word of God, read it and consider it, and be instructed by the Holy Spirit through our time together—but also to be priests, functioning as priests in this moment by coming before You, coming to the throne of grace. And while one, (*of us*), is speaking at this moment, and praying at this moment, hopefully all of us are joining in that prayer with our minds and our hearts and we're thinking about the things that are before us.

There are many, Father, who are in need of our prayer, have physical conditions that are difficult. There is the family, a dear family, in our church that needs prayer because they are grieving greatly at this time. I pray that You would give them comfort and strengthen them—and may Your Word be a strength to them along with Your great promises.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(*Message*) A few years ago, (two exactly, this month), I, with my daughter and my son-in-law, were in the Israel Museum, the home of many valuable artifacts. Things like the sarcophagus of King Herod, an ossuary with the name Caiaphas on it—and there are many other biblically relevant relics there. But what most fascinated me were two tiny silver scrolls found in Jerusalem, the oldest known texts from the Bible. They're dated around 600 BC, before the Babylonian captivity, and 400 years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Inscribed on them, in Paleo-Hebrew, is the *Aaronic Blessing* of Numbers chapter 6, verses 24 through 26;

"The LORD bless you, and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace." (Shalom)

This is the blessing the LORD instructed Moses to give to Aaron and instruct him, "Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel." (*verses 22&23*).

It's a magnificent blessing; but what I find especially interesting is the emphasis, in this blessing, on the LORD's face, that it "shine" on them—and His face, (or countenance), 'give them peace'. God is Spirit; Jesus reminded 'the woman at the well' of that in John chapter 4, (vs24). He doesn't have a face, not literally, not as we have a face. And I wonder, (as I considered that text in Numbers), how the Israelites took that—because they had just come out of Egypt where they saw over their lifetime, lots of idols. They were all over the country, representations of the gods of Egypt with faces. There was the Sphinx, with the face of a man and the body of a lion. And the god Mut, and had the face of a woman. (You'd think it had the face of a dog, *[Laughter]* but this Mut had the face of a woman.) Others had the bodies of men, but the heads of animals—birds, or a ram, or a jackal—and one with the head of a hippopotamus. All grotesque deities.

And now, not long after Israel left Egypt, the LORD is described as having a face—it's how He described Himself. This, of course, is an *anthropomorphism*, a non-literal description of God in human terms with human features—like a hand or an eye, a nose or a face. And they're there to make a point. More specifically, the 19th century German scholar, Franz Delitzsch explains, "The face of God is a reference to God's personality."

That makes sense; a smiling face expresses warmth, joy, love. A frowning face suggests anger or disappointment. We can read a person from his or her face and know something about them, know what they might be thinking or feeling. We can identify a person by their face, their features, and learn about them personally from their facial expression.

But also, '*beings*' have faces. Animals and people have faces. I was on a ranch just a few days ago and got out there with the cows. And they look at you, and you think, 'There's a face.' And they '*low*' at you—and some of them look at you and they back up ...and they have faces. *[Laughter]* 'Beings' have faces.

And so this is a way of affirming that God is a person. He's not some abstract 'influence' or 'power' filling the universe. He's not 'the universe'. He is a person—and

One who is personal, and whose face, whose person and personality, is directed toward mankind.

We read in the Bible of the LORD 'setting His face' against those who break the Law, or worship false gods, or teach others error. We read of fire coming forth from Him, and consuming rebels. It's a dangerous thing when the face of God is against one, or He's turned His back on a people.

But here, in Numbers 6, it is all goodness and favor that comes out of, or radiates from, the face of God. It begins, "The LORD bless you." That's a very general expression of God's favor. Only the Lord God can do that. Only the Lord God can bless us, because He alone is sovereign over nature and mankind, sovereign over time and events. He creates time at every moment; every second that ticks off...is His creation. —He creates it. So only He can make it rain, and cause the crops to grow, give nourishment and health. Only He can protect us from disaster, and save us from harm, and satisfy our longings. He gives *blessing*.

Then Aaron prayed, The LORD "keep you." That's protection—preservation from the world, from their enemies. He is our defender. He was that for Israel; and the nation witnessed that in Egypt. He delivered them, and defended them when He rescued them from slavery; when He brought ten powerful plagues on the land and caused the Egyptians to fear Israel and wish for their Exodus. He did that when He drowned Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. He is the only true and effective LORD protector of Israel—and all of His people through the ages.

In the next verse, the *Blessing* becomes more specific: "The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you."

How does God's face *shine*? It doesn't literally. The sun 'shines'; it gives light to the world...and that's the picture that's given here. As sunshine causes life to flourish on the planet, (there's no life without light), so too, the LORD gives life, and wellness, and joy to this world.

But this is specifically for His people. In fact, it's restricted to His people and expresses His desire and His plan for Israel, (and us), that we flourish—that we have, what is called in John chapter 10, verse 10, "the abundant life" ...that we have the very best life, the life that will cultivate us and cause us to grow. It is *truth* captured in the wonderful image of a radiant sun, shining out to scatter the darkness in order to give sight and reveal the color and the beauty that's all around us. That's the picture we have...it's a way of describing the LORD's *pleasure* with His people.

The opposite is 'God hiding His face' from His people because of sin—'withdrawing His blessing' as you read, for example, in Isaiah 57, verse 17, where He 'turns His face from them', or Jeremiah 18, verse 17, where He 'turns His back to them'. That's a day of calamity, judgment, discipline. It's God's work, and it's a necessary work because of sin.

But what He *delights* in is not judgment, but *blessing*. He delights in life: Producing life, promoting life, saving the lost, nurturing and nourishing His people. And that's clearly indicated here in this blessing;

"The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you."

That's God's choice, being gracious. He makes it happen, and He rejoices to do it. The fact is the *grace* He makes shine on us, on His people, suggests in that very word, '*hanan*', '*grace*' ...guilt. Grace is '*undeserved favor*'; it's what one writer called "condescending love and mercy." It's undeserved; and so it is His choice to give, first and foremost. We have no claim on grace. God graciously gives it. And by it, only by it, we *respond* to Him. As the grass or flowers, *respond* to the light of the sun to have life and give growth, so it is with us.

The third part of the blessing, verse 26, is the grand conclusion;

"The LORD lift up His countenance," (again, 'His face'), "on you, And give you peace." "Shalom."

Peace has been called the most important thing in life. It is not only the cessation of war, (that's generally how we understand peace), but for the Hebrew, '*shalom*', (peace), is positive. —It's not just the absence of something, it's the *fullness* of something. It's prosperity; it is the full development of life; it is unhindered growth...It's *prosperity*.

And here it is largely the product of God's providence: Keeping safe and allowing Israel to grow and to experience the blessings of the covenant that He has entered into with them—to be the leader of the nations and to prosper. But spiritually, (and ultimately the significance is spiritual and eternal), it is peace with God. There's where we begin. Mark, (*Newman*), in his exposition of Luke this morning made the point that 'There is no peace on earth until there is with men and God. '

And so peace is first with God, (we have that peace with God), and then it is the peace of God, the peace that we have as His children in the midst of strife, in the midst of difficulty. And even in that we can have contentment and joy because of our perspective on life...what He's done for us and what He's doing for us.

But it begins peace *with* God, '*justification*'...and then the peace *of* God, (which is the product of *sanctification*). God enjoys turning His face, His person, to His people to bless them, to defend them, and to prosper them.

Three times the name of the LORD, *Yahweh*, is repeated. The early church fathers saw this as an expression of the Trinity, (and that's possible). I think it's more likely that this is a way of giving *assurance*...a 'Triple Blessing' expresses that thought in the strongest possible way. Assurance. It states the *unconditional* nature of this blessing that is pronounced...and is all to say that 'God's Word is reliable'.

Now, there's no promise here of a life of peace, and joy, and happiness without any difficulties in life. Difficulties come to all of us, and they will. The question is, 'Do we trust God to do the things that He promises in this blessing?' Do we trust His Word, in the midst of strife, and difficulty, and tragedy...because His Word is *certain*, and He is

*for us*, always, His people and *never forsakes us*; a *triple* assurance of that in this blessing.

If you are one of God's people, you have the assurance that He is for you completely, and that He wants to give you all of the blessings that He has in store for you—all of the riches and the wisdom that He has in store for you. And that is reflected in this prayer; His face 'will shine on you' every day for blessings as you look to Him.— Even when you don't look to Him, He is facing you and blessing you.

From eternity, God is Spirit. The Triune God did not have a physical face, (as we have been considering), did not have a physical face until 4 BC, and the incarnation, when the *Logos*, the second Person of the Trinity, God's Son, entered this world as a man. Now He has a face; men saw it. Isaiah described it for us, (prophesied it), in Isaiah 53, verse 2. He was, "...like a root out of parched ground...", not what we would call a handsome person for a face—plain at best.

Now, it's different—John saw it as he had never seen it before while he was on the Isle of Patmos. He described a moment in Revelation chapter 1, verse 14: He heard a sound; he turned and he saw Christ. And he saw His hair 'white like snow,' and His eyes, "...like a flame of fire". The sight was so overwhelming that when John saw Him he, "...fell at His feet like a dead man". (vs17). And you and I would do the same if we were to see Him in His glory right now—His glory is overwhelming. And so, when He came the first time as an infant who grew up, as we all do, to become an adult, His glory was all 'veiled in flesh'—and that was very common, very plain.

But even in His humility, in the days of His incarnation and ministry in this fallen world, there was something special in that face, in those eyes, probably plain, brown eyes. But, (and this brings us to our passage), Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 6, that, "God...has shown in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge...of God in the face of Christ."



How did He do that? Especially in what must have been a very plain face. How did God make known the knowledge of Himself in Christ's face? There are occurrences in the Gospels that suggest that on occasion, probably many occasions, those eyes could flash with fire, and His face, the plain face of Jesus, would *radiate* warmth and kindness.

When Jesus cleared the Temple of the merchants and the money changers—He did it the first time in John 2, and then we read about it in Luke 19 this morning of a second time. The first time He took a whip; the second time there was no scourge...He just *looked* at these merchants. He looked at them and the money changers, and the flash in His eyes sent them running. He drove them out by the very power of His presence. I think, (I'm speculating, and I think my speculation's good here), it was something in His face.

I don't usually appeal to movies for an illustration, but this one came to me, really from my youth. The Blockbuster movie, *Ben Hur*, came out in 1959; and it had an unusual way of presenting Christ. The title of the book, I guess the movie too is, *Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ*. In other words, this is a fictitious story about Christ, (who's not fictitious), but He appears in the movie. His character is not seen very often, but whenever He is, His face isn't seen...and He never speaks—a very discrete way of presenting Christ.

One of the most memorable scenes in that movie is when Judah Ben Hur passes through Nazareth and passes by a carpenter's shop, (and you see him going through the town from the carpenter's shop). He's chained to a group of condemned men, sent off to be galley slaves on Roman warships. When they enter the town of Nazareth they're thirsty...they're very thirsty. They haven't had any water, yet the Romans begin drinking it for themselves and then giving it to their horses—and these men are dying for some water.

And so these villagers begin to give them water—and someone tried to give Judah water, but the centurion snatched it away and said, "No water for him!" In despair, Judah falls to the ground, and he prays, "God help me."

Then a carpenter knelt down and put a pitcher to his mouth. When the Roman saw it, he took his whip and he yelled, "You! I said no water for him." The character of Christ stood quietly...and looked at him. (All you see is His back, but you see the Roman from the front...and his face.) And the Roman froze; he couldn't look into His face. He looked ashamed. He looked down, he looked away—and backed off.

In the book, the author, Lew Wallace, was not so dramatic. He did state that Judah Ben Hur, "Saw a face he never forgot". "It was a face," he wrote, "with dark blue eyes." [I think they were brown. *[Laughter]*] The movie is better. Sometimes even Hollywood gets it right—or at least close to it.

I think Simon, (*the Pharisee*), also got a good look into those eyes. It's in that magnificent passage of Luke 7. (I think I refer to this probably frequently. I'm enamored of this chapter and this incident.) To me it's one of the pinnacles of the New Testament, when Simon, a Pharisee invited Jesus to dine at his house. That seems like a nice thing to do...but he didn't have good intentions at all. He was there to examine Him and figure out, 'Who is this rabbi?'

So He's there, when this meal is interrupted by a woman from the town who's described as, "a sinner". (Luk 7:37). It's very simply described in that way, but apparently from that description, what's implied there is, 'a notorious sinner', who entered uninvited and made a scene. She came to anoint Jesus with perfume.

Jesus was reclining at the table; and as was the custom, His feet were behind Him. They were dusty. Simon had not showed Him the usual courtesy of washing His feet, so she did— with her tears. Luke wrote, "...she began to wet His feet with her tears...", (and that word 'wet' means, '*send down rain*'...so, 'a lot of tears'), "...and kept wiping them with the hair of her head and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume." (vs38).

Simon was appalled. He didn't say anything, but he thought to himself, 'Jesus is no prophet. If He were, He would know who this woman was, and what kind of woman she was, and He would push her away.' (vs39).

That's when Jesus spoke to him, and showed Simon that He was much more than a prophet. "Simon," He said, "I have something to say to you." (vs40). Then He told a brief parable about two men whose debts were forgiven. One debt was small and the other was large, and He asked Simon, 'Who will love the man who forgave the most?' (vs42). And Simon answered, 'The man who was forgiven the most.' (vs43).

Then Jesus applied that to the woman. She loved Him much. She loved the Lord much. She worshiped Him because she had been forgiven much—while Simon felt no need for forgiveness, and had only contempt for Christ. All of this was a way of saying to Simon, 'No, Simon. I know who she is. I know everything about her...just as I know everything about you—and it is, 'You are a great sinner.'

Simon didn't respond, but I'm sure he understood clearly. He must have seen something in the Lord's face—in those eyes, a flash of fire that unsettled him. Maybe he felt shame; maybe he feared judgment. But as we think about that, 'Where in that is, "the glory of God in the face of Christ?"'

It was in the direct encounter that the Lord had with Simon that unmasked him, and showed him his guilt, which he could not escape. Christ's words, and direct look, revealed divine justice to him. That's glory—the glory of God, and the purity of God in His holiness. And maybe it led to conviction, and maybe led to Simon's salvation. (We don't know...it's quiet after this about Simon.)

But Jesus' purpose here was not first to expose the hypocrisy of this self-righteous Pharisee, but to defend the woman. This is the blessing of Numbers chapter 6, verse 24, "The LORD bless you and keep you." "Keep you", 'Guard you'. The LORD is our *keeper*, our *defender*, our *LORD protector*. And He defended and protected that despised woman kneeling at His feet from the hostile gaze of a room full of judgmental, arrogant men. And that's what He does for His people; that's what He does for us; that's what He does for you.

He lives the Aaronic blessing for us *every day, every moment of the day*, to stand with us against the world, and to forgive us, great sinners that we are—every one of us. And defends us *always*. When He spoke to the woman he exonerated her. He said, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luk 7:50). And so in that, 'He lifted up His countenance on her, and gave her *shalom, peace*.' That's '*the glory of God*'...and God's *grace in the face of Jesus Christ*.

In the next chapter of the Gospel of Luke, chapter 8, there's another woman who was desperate...(as you begin to read through the Gospel of Luke and you realize why it is called, 'The Gospel of Women'; they play a very important part in this Gospel.) And so there's another woman who is desperate. She's not defined by her sin but by her sickness; it was terrible. It was debilitating and humiliating.

Luke 8, verse 43 through 48, Luke writes that she, "had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone." (vs43). She'd gone to all the physicians...they could not help her. In addition she had spent all of her money on them, trying to gain relief from this condition that weakened her body and estranged her from friends. She was at the end of her resources. She was destitute and desperate—but she knew about Jesus and the miracles He had done. That gave her hope, and He was her last hope.

She was timid. She would not approach Him directly. (She was evidently afraid He would reject her.) According to the Law, Leviticus chapter 15, verses 25 through 33, she was "*unclean*". Her bed was unclean; her clothes were unclean. And anyone who touched them, or touched her, would be unclean. And so for twelve long years she had been a social, and religious pariah...an outcast. People avoided her and she was cut off from the Temple and its ceremonies. She was cut off from the synagogue and its fellowship. You can imagine the rabbis with their strict rules, (and concern to be ceremonially, ritually clean), would warn her off. 'Stay away! Don't come close—you're unclean, and untouchable...like a leper!' She was at the end of herself; (and sometimes God must bring us to that point in our life.)

But with the coming of Christ she had hope, she saw an opportunity of being healed. But fearing that He might be like the other rabbis and be angry with her for coming near, she thought she would hide among the crowd, come secretly to Him and steal some of His grace. So using the crowd for cover, like the woman of chapter 7 she came up from behind—not seeing His face, coming up from behind and touched the fringe of His cloak, probably one of the tassels that the Jewish men wore on the four corners of their outer garment.

[In fact, they do it today, and you can see it in the neighborhood. I was not far from here yesterday, and there were some young Jewish boys, looked like they were 13 or 14, walking along wearing their yarmulkes, and they had the fringe, these tassels hanging from their shirt.]

So this may be what she sought to touch. It says, "the fringe of His cloak." (vs44). Now, it could have been the hem of the cloak, but I like this idea of her grabbing one of those tassels and knowing that, 'I just do that...I'll be healed!' Mark's Gospel records she thought that if, 'She would touch that garment, just touch His garment, she would be healed!' (Mar 5:28).

Now that was faith. You can look at it as weak faith, even superstitious faith—but in all of that this woman had faith...and it's genuine faith. Small, but genuine; that's all that's necessary.

She believed Christ could heal; so she touched the tassel and Luke wrote, "...immediately her hemorrhage stopped." (Luk 8:44). She felt it. —She felt Christ's power; she felt His life go through her body, and she knew immediately she was well—whole, and strong, and clean.

But at the same moment, Jesus knew power had gone out of Him, and He stopped this procession of people. He stopped and He said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" (Luk 8:45). Of course He knew who it was, and so after drawing attention to this incident, to this miracle, He turned and He *looked* at her. It was a moment of terror for her. Would He call her a thief and take back the cure, and power, and life that filled her body and soul, as though the Lord is a hard master, like the rabbis, and stingy

about His blessing? No; He looked at her He called her, "Daughter"...and I imagine He did it with a smile. He praised her faith, small and weak as it was, and then, like the great High Priest of God, He blessed her with 'shalom', "...go in peace." (Luk 8:48).

In that moment, when He looked at her, 'He lifted up His countenance upon her,' she saw "the glory of God in the face of Christ." She saw in His face—the face of God.

*The glory of God*, is, *all of the attributes* of God. We see it in Christ's being, in His personality, in His person. He revealed God's wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, sovereign grace, unconditional love... Christ revealed it all in His life, His words and actions, because He is God Almighty—distinct from the Father and Spirit, but One in essence with them. Not three Gods, but One God in three Persons. And as that person, that second Person of the Trinity, Christ revealed, in a tangible, personal way, *the glory of God*.

But it was all 'veiled in flesh' in the Lord's human nature when He came in the incarnation—His first coming. Now, that's what the world sees; it sees one who is like, "...a root out of dry ground". (Isa 53:2). Not attractive, just a man, maybe a good man, but nothing more than that. So the world doesn't believe in Him.

And we, who do believe, do so only because of the sovereign grace of God, only because, as Paul wrote, 'God enlightened us'. That's distinguishing grace. We are no different from anyone else; but for some reason, God smiled on you, He extended grace to you. He, "...has shown in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God..." (vs6). That's God's grace.

Just as God spoke Light into the original creation, when it was full of darkness, inanimate, and dead; He spoke *spiritual* Light into your heart and life with understanding, when you were unable. And the only way anyone can understand, 'the glory of God that radiates from the face of Christ', is if God *enlightens* our dark and dead hearts.

If you understand what I'm saying, if you believe what I'm saying...it's what He did for you. He gave you the mind to understand; He has enlightened you.

Why you? Why me? Why any of us? Well, that must have been the question the woman of Luke 7 asked herself, 'Why me, a sinful woman?' Why would He care so much about me, who is so undeserving?

The answer is, 'Because He loves you.' The Triune God loves you from all eternity; and from that love the Son came into this world to redeem you, ransom you, buy you out of slavery and darkness, to be His for all eternity.

That realization, at least to the degree that she realized it, filled this sinful woman with such awe that she cast aside all concern for herself, entered Simon's hostile house, and worshiped Jesus openly, unashamedly, and indifferent to the despising looks all around her. She would have agreed with the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 1, verse 16. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." Even to, 'the chief of sinners'. (1Tim 15).

Do you ever feel "ashamed of the gospel", of being a Christian, of being identified with Christ, rather than being identified with the world? Perhaps Paul saw some of that in the church, and that's why he wrote, "I am not ashamed."

None of us should be. We should marvel at God's grace...that He chose you, unworthy you, to 'shine into your heart', life giving Light, giving revelation, truth, that changed you and gave you eternal life.

Now the, 'cure to fear', and, 'spur to courage', is not self-reproach and self-motivation. It is found right here; it is looking deeply into "the face of Christ" —into His person and work. It is understanding who He is and what He has done for you...is presently doing for you, and will do for you *for all eternity*—and knowing He loves you with an infinite, unconditional love. He, the eternal almighty God of the universe, the King of kings, is not ashamed of you, and will never let you go.

On Patmos, when John saw the Lord and, "fell at His feet as a dead man", (Rev 1:12), he didn't die—in fact Jesus said, "Do not be afraid." (ibid.) Those "flaming" eyes were eyes of grace—and burning love for John.

They're that for all who put their faith in Christ as God's eternal Son...and man's only Savior who became a man to bear our sin and die in our place in order to save us.

If you are not a believer in Him, He invites you to *come*. Maybe you feel unworthy; or maybe you feel completely indifferent. Shake all of that off...Come! Know that you are a sinner...guilty and doomed. Christ receives all who *come* to Him, forgives them, *whoever* they are, and gives them eternal life—and in the present He will, "...bless you and keep you and make His face shine on you and give you peace."

We should all *rejoice* in that.

*(Closing prayer)* Our Father, that's a good prayer, 'Glorify Your name in each and every one of us.' May we glorify You in our attitude and our actions; may we reflect the joy of our salvation.

Glorify Your name through us, we pray, for all Your good, glorious grace that You poured out upon us.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace.

In Christ's name, Amen.

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