

# God can speak love through your eyes



## Deacon's Column

Christine Maddux

Even as a passionate wordsmith, I know that words are not the whole story in human communication. Some experts maintain that nonverbal communication conveys at least as much as spoken words, if not more. Renowned songwriter Hal David knew that, too, when he wrote the lyrics to "The Look of Love" in the 1960s.

That song became a hit in renditions by several artists, was nominated for an Academy Award, and was later inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. The lyrics begin, "The look of love is in your eyes, the look your heart can't disguise. The look of love is saying so much more than just words could ever say, and what my heart has heard, well, it takes my breath away." Ironically, the words of that song emphasize what words cannot convey: the powerful message transmitted through eye contact.

It comes as no surprise that Jesus exuded the look of love. In the gospel accounts of his earthly life, we see Jesus emanating pure love, not only in his words and actions, but even through eye contact.

In one instance, a young man approached Him and asked, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" When Jesus reminded him of the six commandments pertaining to loving people well, the young man said, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." That was a prideful overstatement (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8). But instead of challenging the young man about that, Jesus did something else: "Jesus looked at him, and loved him" (Mark 10:21).

Pause to imagine that moment, as Jesus peered into the eyes of that earnest but misguided young man, with the look of pure love. Jesus' loving look was not based on familiarity with the man, nor on emotions we commonly associate with love of family or friends. It was a look arising from God's deep and abiding love for every person, no matter our shortcomings and sins (John 3:16).

Jesus then followed up verbally to enlighten this young man about his idolatry toward worldly goods, inviting him to give them up and follow Him (Exodus 20:3; 1 John 15-17). The piercing truth and loving invitation were not well-received: "At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth" (Mark 10:22). But Jesus continued to bear the look of love, conveying his unwavering desire for the good of all.

Next, "Jesus looked around" at his disciples, and then warned them against the idol of wealth: "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." When they pressed Jesus for hope in what sounded like a hopeless situation, again "Jesus looked at them", then articulated the love behind the look, saying, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:23-27).

Jesus still transmits this penetrating look through

Christians who abide in his divine love and Holy Spirit (John 15:4-17, 26-27). This look of love is not romantic or sentimental. It is not reserved for close friends, family, and other readily lovable ones. It is also for strangers, people unlike us in some way, even for our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). It is for everyone, for all are made in God's image, and He yearns for every single one to repent, come to Him, and have eternal life (Genesis 1:27; 2 Peter 3:9).

Does God's love shine through your eyes when they meet another person's? What might their heart hear? When we see each person as God's loved one, even a wordless, passing encounter can convey God's love through mere eye contact. It may or may not be well-received; but do not underestimate its power. When someone perceives God's look of love for them, as the song goes, "well, it takes my breath away."

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