

# "WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE JESUS?"

An interesting study was done a few years back. Two dogs were given the command "shake." Both raised their paw to shake hands; however, one dog was given a treat while the other wasn't. After two or three rounds of this treatment, the dog without a treat quit obeying. The dog knew he was being treated unfairly, and he didn't like it.<sup>1</sup>

If dogs, as uncomplicated as they are, can understand when something isn't fair, how much more will people know when they're being treated unfairly? While none of us would intentionally treat others unfairly, it can be an easy thing to fall into without even realizing it.

We offer a smile and a kind word for a friend, but a cold shoulder to that annoying classmate.

We lend a helping hand to a buddy when he needs it, but then become "busy" when the request comes from someone we struggle to get along with.

While there are numerous (and sometimes valid) reasons why giving or helping or treating others fairly isn't always possible in every situation, I think we have to be careful not to make excuses for partiality. Instead of asking ourselves, "Why should I help this person?" or "Why should I show kindness to this person?" we should be asking, "Why not?"



Isn't that how Jesus treated people? While He may have had a closer relationship with some folks than with others, He was completely impartial, completely loving, and completely fair to each person He came in contact with. What's more impressive (and a million times more difficult) is that His fairness and kindness extended even to those who treated Him poorly—those who abused and mocked Him, and those who killed Him.

Mother Teresa worked with the poorest of the poor—people who had nothing to offer her in exchange for all she did for them. She also entertained celebrities and heads of state. What I find stunning about her life is that she treated each one with the same respect and love. She didn't reserve better treatment for those that the world deemed more "important."

One day she was visited by a bishop who had come to observe her works of compassion and love. She asked him, "Would you like to see Jesus?" She then took him to see a man lying on a black pallet. The man was sick and naked; his body was crawling with vermin. As the bishop stood there, stunned, Mother Teresa knelt down and wrapped her arms around the poor man. She held him close and said, "Here He is."



“Who?” the bishop asked, puzzled.

“Jesus,” replied Mother Teresa. “Didn’t He say you’d find Him in the least person on earth? Isn’t this Jesus challenging us to reach out and love?”<sup>2</sup>

She considered everyone to be equally deserving of love, because she saw Jesus in each one. Mother Teresa said something beautiful that I think will always stick with me: “[Jesus] makes Himself the hungry one, the naked one, the homeless one, the sick one, the one in prison, the lonely one, the unwanted one, and He says: ‘You did it to Me.’”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus has told us that whatever we do (or fail to do) for even the “least of these,” we have done (or failed to do) those things to Him.<sup>4</sup> It’s rare that one will be called upon to love in such extreme physical conditions as Mother Teresa faced; more often, we are faced with the unkindness of others, or our own prejudices or indifference. No matter what challenges we face, unconditional love should be our aim so that when Jesus tells us, “You did it to Me,” He is happy about it.

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#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Dogs Understand Unfairness, Get Jealous, Study finds, *NPR*.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wright-house.com/religions/christianity/mother-teresa.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1979/teresa-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1979/teresa-lecture.html)

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 25:45.

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