



# Just As...I Am

## *Life Sunday 2024 Children's Message*

Good morning, and welcome! We've been expecting you. Each one of you is a special and precious gift to us from God our Heavenly Father.

Have you ever wondered what Jesus looks like? Do you think He's tall? Do you think He's thin? Do you think He's tan? Do you think He has big muscles or a lot of hair? What do you suppose Jesus looks like? *[Await responses.]*

Well, the Bible's book of Revelation says Jesus looks something like this: "The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength" (Revelation 1:14-16). And then it tells us Jesus looks like "a Lamb standing as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes" (Revelation 5:6). Don't you think that all sounds funny-looking? Jesus doesn't look like we would think, does He? In fact, the prophet Isaiah talks about how "he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him" but "as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised" (Isaiah 52:3)! It almost seems Jesus might look kind of ugly.

Some things about human beings can be kind of ugly, can't they? We have all these gross brains and guts and blood on the inside. Our feet and armpits and butts smell bad. We've got a bunch of holes in our heads, and they get full of wax and spit and snot. And the Word of the Lord our God warns us that the worst of it all lives in our hearts. "From within," Jesus says, "out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21-22). Sinfulness makes us pretty ugly, doesn't it? Even the word "sin" is ugly. Our wrongs against God's commandments make us think ugly and talk ugly and act ugly and treat each other ugly and feel ugly.

But our Old Testament reading today has something more for us. It goes on to talk about how “God made man in His own image” (Genesis 9:6). That means that the Creator designed us all to look like He does. Jesus became ugly so that God would live among us and we would belong with Him. He became ugly to show how much He still cares for each of you. Jesus became a human baby squirming around inside His mother’s belly. He became sweaty and spit on and bruised and bloodied and broken open on a cross. “God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). God’s Son Jesus takes all of the ugly for Himself so that we can look just like Almighty God. And He calls this delightful things like grace and mercy, and He gives it magnificent words like compassion and forgiveness. It means nothing can keep you or anybody else from receiving His blessings and enjoying them.

You want to know what we look like to our Heavenly Father? He finds us beautiful in Christ our Savior, each one of us as lovely and good-looking as His only-begotten Son. He calls human beings “the apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10; Zechariah 2:8). That means He can’t stop staring at us, thinking about us, and following us around. He doesn’t ever want to look at anything else or even take a blink. It doesn’t matter what you or anyone else says about it. So whenever you feel ugly or weak or weird or unwanted, remember what a special gift your Heavenly Father has made you. And the next time you think somebody looks too ugly, small, or smelly, you need to know what a precious treasure your Heavenly Father has made them. We don’t have to think and talk and act ugly. We are living forever in heaven with Jesus, just as wonderful as He is!