

## A Smile and Outstretched Hands

### Scripture Reading — 1 John 4:7-11

*God ... sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.  
1 John 4:9 —*

John Calvin noted that we are moved to repentance not by the threat of God's law but by the promise of his grace. The threat of the law will only make us run from God, unless we know that he will receive us when we turn back to him in repentance.

I'll never forget a story told by Dr. Robert Schuller. He was invited on a mission trip to the wilds of the Amazon. A missionary had been working with a tribe that had a great fear of white people, having had little positive contact with them. Schuller and the missionary trekked further and further into the jungle with no sighting of this reclusive tribe. "Where are they?" Schuller asked. The missionary replied, "They're all around us, but they won't come out until they know it's safe."

Finally, the travelers arrived at a clearing. The missionary said, "Here's what you have to do. Sit on the ground, stretch out your hands, and smile." So that's what Schuller did. For what seemed hours, he sat and smiled with outstretched hands. At last, a single native crept silently out of the jungle and shyly touched Schuller's hand.

On the cross, God, in effect, stretched out his hands and smiled, showing that he loves us. Only the cross has the power to draw sinners out of the darkness of sin into the light of life.

### Prayer

*O Lord, thank you for the invitation, through Jesus, to come out of the darkness into the light of your love. Help me to believe that your love is utterly trustworthy. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [The Cross](#), [Seasons](#), [Lent](#)

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Written by Stanley Mast — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/stanley-mast>

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*Printed on October 25, 2020*

