

Spending A Day With Jesus

Part 1

If I were a preacher one hundred years ago, or maybe even 50 years ago, I would begin my sermon like this; "Our text for today comes from Genesis Chapter 39 verses 2 and 23. **"The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master."** **"The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did."**

"The Lord was **with** Joseph." It's a phrase that we can easily skip over in the Bible. It appears all over the place in the Bible when you start looking. Enoch walked **with** God. Noah walked **with** God. God was **with** Ishmael. What did that look like? God was **with** Moses, David, Ruth. A fundamental promise of scripture is that God promises to be **with** us. Do you know what the greatest fear was for most of the characters mentioned in the Bible? It was that God would leave them. That he would forsake them. That He wouldn't be with them when they needed him. So when the Bible says the Lord was with Joseph, or Abraham or Moses or David, that promise enabled Gods people to live without fear. When God commanded Moses to meet with Pharaoh, and demand that he let the Israelites go, Moses was absolutely terrified. What was it that God said to Moses to overcome his fear? I will be **with** you. That made all the difference to Moses.

What If Jesus Was With You?

Now, if God was with those Old Testament characters, what would it look like if God was with you? Imagine you wake up tomorrow morning, and there is Jesus sitting right next to your bed. You expected to see your husband, but he doesn't look at all like Jesus first thing in the morning! Jesus says "I've been here all night, watching you as you sleep and thinking about how much I love you. I'd like to spend the day with you today – giving you strength, and wisdom, guiding you, helping you. You mean so much to me I want to be with you. Is that OK with you?"

You're so excited you can hardly believe it. It's the best offer you've ever had. So you and Jesus start your day together. No one else can see Him. It's a secret thing between the two of you. But it makes all the difference in the world to you, because you are doing your day with Jesus. It changes your whole mindset. You are not troubled or anxious about anything. You go to work and your boss is all wound up tight. He calls you into his office and gives you 30 minutes of high intensity pressure, then looks at you and says, "This is your responsibility. What are you going to do about this?" and you reply "God knows what I'm going to do about it!" Jesus whispers to you "I do know." And Jesus helps you. He gives wisdom and energy and guidance for your work. He sometimes stands back to let you puzzle things out on your own to stretch and grow your mind. But he's with you. Your day becomes a partnership between you and Jesus.

You end the day just the way you started it. In your bed. Talking to Jesus. Together the two of you look back on this day, and talk about what went well and what went wrong and what you learned. Then, just before you go to sleep, just like a little kid, you ask Him "Could you stay with me a while?" And He says "Well, I planned to sit up all night watching you while you sleep. It's one of the things I love doing. And tomorrow, if you want, we could do it all over again."

Do Your Day With Jesus.

Imagine tomorrow when you open your eyes, Jesus is right there with you by the side of your bed. He will be. The same Lord who was with Joseph, and Noah and Enoch, and Abraham and Moses and Ruth and David – he will be with you if you want Him to. Jesus promised it would be so. This is what he said. **"Behold I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20)**. On another occasion he said **"I will give you another Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, to be with you forever" (John 14:6)**. He also said **"I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13: 5)**

It is possible for ordinary people like you and me, to do what Moses and Noah and Abraham and Enoch and David and Joseph did – to be with God. To walk with Him. We could have these words written on our tombstone “And the Lord was with Him”. Being with God is like the manna that God supplied to the children of Israel when they spent 40 years in the desert. You have to learn to receive it one day at a time. You can’t get it for tomorrow. We have to learn how to live with Jesus one day at a time. But the great thing is, if you can learn to spend one day with Jesus, you can learn to spend every day with Him.

When Does The Day Start?

Here’s a multi choice question like they have on “Who wants to be a millionaire?”

According to the Old Testament, when does the day start?

1. When the alarm clock goes off? (Why is it an alarm clock? – so we can start the day alarmed?)
2. When the alarm goes off 4 times? - because I can hit the snooze button 4 times without getting fired.
3. When the shower water runs over your face? – for some of us that’s when we really wake up.
4. At night?

From a scriptural perspective, the day actually begins at night. Have you ever noticed how the creation story reads in Genesis 1:5 “ **There was evening and there was morning – the first day**” Did it ever strike you as odd that they put it backwards – evening then morning? In Jewish life the Sabbath begins at sunset. The bible is trying to get us to see that everything doesn’t depend on us. I go to sleep and God goes to work. It’s the rhythm of Gods grace. While my body is resting, God is at work healing all the damaged cells, the tears in the skin, the grazes and cuts. He’s resting my mind and restoring my body. While I’m resting He’s causing crops to grow and animals to grow. Me, I’m not doing anything. I’m asleep. It’s nothing of my doing. It’s all of Gods grace. And when I wake up, I join God in His work. He started it.

Go to sleep with God.

The Bible says sleep is an act of trust. Listen to these verses from the Psalmist who had it all worked out “**I lie down in sleep. I awake again for the Lord sustains me**” (**Psalm 3:5**). Sleep is a gift from God. “**In vain you rise early and stay up late toiling for food to eat.**” (**Psalm 127:2**) – doesn’t that sound like our day? That verse goes on to say that God grants sleep to those He loves.

One world authority on sleep recently testified to the American Congress that the USA has a sleep debt that is more dangerous to the economy than the national debt. There are a huge number of accidents that are caused by sleep deprivation. Accidents on the highways, accidents at work. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was a huge environmental disaster costing millions to clean up. It was caused by the third mate on the bridge of an oil tanker who had slept only six of the previous 48 hours, and was severely disabled in doing his job through lack of sleep. The Three Mile Island nuclear plant nearly had a nuclear meltdown because of sleep deprivation. 24,000 people in the USA die in car accidents every year either because they fall asleep, or someone else falls asleep at the wheel. Lack of sleep causes families to argue with each other, study less, be less loving, have poor health. It’s hard to live like Jesus, and be your best for him, if you haven’t had enough sleep. But we just put up with this. We just keep living like this and then wonder why we are not displaying the characteristics of Jesus.

If we did a survey of everyone here and asked the question “If you had an extra hour in the day and you could do anything you wanted with it – go skydiving, read a great book, have a great conversation with a friend, travel to exciting places?” – I suspect the number one answer would be that you would use that hour to sleep.

Dallas Willard, who wrote “The Sprit Of The Disciplines” says that when you get serious about being a follower of Jesus, you begin to do the things you always knew you should do – like get enough sleep. For some of you, the most spiritual thing you could do today is turn off the TV and get a really good night sleep. When people go on spiritual retreats to spend time in prayer with God, the number one barrier is they fall asleep. The Disciples were supposed to praying

with Jesus in the garden, but they fell asleep. The irony is that when they were with Jesus in the boat in the storm, they were wide awake when Jesus was asleep, but when He wanted them awake, they were asleep.

How Can We Spend A Day With Jesus?

Here's some advice from the experts.

1. Arrange to get enough sleep. Go to bed at the same time each night.
2. Avoid coffee, food or exercise just before you go to bed. Don't watch TV till late into the night.
3. If you're married make love each night at bedtime. (Actually I don't know if the experts say that – I just made that up!)

Here is some advice from Scripture

4. **Resolve any household conflicts.** The Apostle Paul says ***"In your anger do not sin" : Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."* (Ephesians 4:26 & 27)** If you go to bed with unresolved conflict, you are training yourself that that's normal. If you go to bed with anxiety, or fear, you are training yourself that that's normal. If you go to bed with God's peace, you are training yourself that that's normal. The way you go to sleep at night sets the tone for how you live the next day.
5. **Review your day with Jesus.** Just the two of you. If some sin comes to mind, confess it and ask for forgiveness. If He has blessed you – thank Him. If some concerns have arisen – give them to Him. He is going to be up all night anyway, so ask Him to handle them while you sleep. End the day by telling Him that you would like to spend tomorrow with Him. Invite Him. Give Him the last word of your day.

You can do this. You don't have to be a spiritual giant to do this. This is an ordinary person like you and me spending an ordinary day, with an extraordinary God.

Waking Up With God.

There are two kinds of people. People who love to get up in the morning, and people who hate people who love to get up in the morning. As close as possible to the time you wake up, arrange to have a few minutes alone with Jesus. It doesn't have to be a long time, because you are going to spend the whole day together, but a few private minutes is good, where you can tell Him some of the things you don't want to tell Him in front of anyone else. The person on earth that I am closest to is my wife. One of the things we enjoy, and in fact what we need, are lots of private moments together, because we have things to say to each other that we don't want anyone else to hear. That's the nature of intimacy.

If we are going to develop this intimate relationship with Jesus, we need some private moments where we can talk about the deep stuff. So make a few of those moments during the day, where you can talk to Him and listen to Him. Start first thing in the morning.

What do you need to tell Him?

1. **Acknowledge your dependence on Him.** Tell Him you are not going to try and cope with all the things of this day on your own, but that you are going to rely on Him.
2. **Tell Him about your concerns of the day.** Walk through the events that you know are coming up, and tell Him about your concerns and challenges, your hopes and fears of the day ahead. Ask Him to identify and remove any fear from you. In the Psalms we read ***"In the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."*(Psalms 5:3)**
3. **Renew your invitation for Him to spend the day with you.** Enter the day with great confidence. Give Him the first thought and the first word of the day. Here's what Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in his book "Life Together". "For Christians the beginning of the day should not be burdened by the various concerns they face during the working day. The Lord's day is above the new day, for the Lord has made it. All restlessness, all impurity, all worry and anxiety flee before you. Therefore in the early morning hours of the day, may our many thoughts and our many idle words be silent. And may our first thoughts and first words belong to the One to whom our whole life belongs".

Wake up with Jesus. You can do that. You can do it tomorrow morning. Ask him to be with you, and see what happens. Next week I'm going to talk about how you can spend your day with Jesus in some of the mundane things of life such as eating, washing, when you are meeting people and when you are at work. Then the following week I'll talk about spending time with Jesus in your leisure time, your lifestyle choices and your relationships.

Your day with Jesus can begin as soon as you leave this building. He's right here with each one of us. Let's enjoy His company.

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