

# "Spending A Day With Jesus"

## Part 2

What if you were given a gift of an amazing voice, like that of Kiri Te Kanawa, and you were offered the opportunity to be the student of the best voice teacher in the world. What if you had this talent to be able to play violin, and Nigel Kennedy said to you – "Come with me and I'll teach you how to develop this talent so that you can play as well as me". Or Joe Satriani said to you "Spend time with me, and I'll show you how to play guitar in a way that will make you one of the best in the world." What if Dizzie Gillespie or Louis Armstrong had said to you "Travel with me, and I'll develop your talent for Jazz in such a way that when you blow that trumpet, it will seem as though you are at one with the music, and people will be so moved they will be in tears when you play." You golfers, what if Tiger Woods offered you six months of his time for free to develop your game? Wouldn't that be the chance of a lifetime? What would it be saying if you had that sort of talent, and got an offer like that, and you said "No". "No thanks". To refuse an offer like that would be criminal.

### **A Lifetime Offer From Jesus.**

What if Jesus invited you to be His disciple, His student? What if he said to you, "I'll teach you about relationships." I'll give you time and will help you develop your talent, if you want to be my student. Be my apprentice, and I'll teach you everything you need to know about life". To say no to an offer like that would be to turn down the offer of a lifetime. Yet that's what Jesus does. He invites us to sit at His feet and master the art of life. He invites us to be His apprentices, His disciples, His students.

How can you tell if you are a disciple of Jesus? There are plenty of "how to" books out there on the shelves of the bookstores. "How to know if you are in good health", "How to know if you are financially secure". There is a joke that has done the rounds in New Zealand. It goes like this. Do you know how to tell if you are a Westie? (For the uninitiated, a Westie is a person who comes from the Western suburbs of Auckland city)

1. If your front porch collapses and it kills more than three dogs – You're a Westie.
2. If your car has more curtains than your house - You're a Westie.
3. If you stare at a bottle of orange juice because it says "concentrate" - You're a Westie.
4. If you are mowing your front lawn and you find a car- You're a Westie.

So how do you know if you are a disciple of Jesus? People don't often ask that question. They usually ask "How do I know if I'm a Christian?" which usually means "How do I know if I'm going to heaven?" The response is usually to give the minimal entrance requirements to ensure you will get into heaven after you die. But Jesus never talked about minimums. He called people to follow Him and become His disciples, His apprentices, His students.

A disciple is a person whose ultimate goal is to live as Jesus would live if He were in my place. It's believing that in Jesus Christ, God has revealed what life can be like. To follow Jesus, and to learn how to live that kind of life is the chance of a lifetime. I have to learn how to do that one day at a time. If I can learn to live that way for one day, I can learn to live that way every day.

A disciple is a person who seeks every day to be with Jesus, to learn from Jesus in order to become like Jesus. It's entering into a way of life. It's not learning to do different things, it's learning how to do the things we do in a different way – with Jesus. So let's look at some of the things we do, and see how we could do them with Jesus.

### **Washing.**

That's something you can do with God. How many of you cleanse yourself on a daily basis? Those of you that don't, don't raise your hand, because I don't want to know, and the person next to you knows already! Daily cleansing was an important part of daily life in scripture. It wasn't something people took for granted. Priests had to go through a very elaborate process of being cleansed before they were allowed to go into the temple. It was a reminder of the need for our souls to be cleansed. Baptism, which is a physical act of being washed by water, reminds us that we have been spiritually cleansed by Christ. After he committed adultery with

another mans wife, King David wrote **"Wash me and I will be whiter than snow". (Psalm 51:7)** In his letter to the Ephesian Christians Paul says that Jesus will make His bride radiantly cleansed by the washing of water of the Word.

Tomorrow morning, when you are washing your face or taking a shower, ask the Lord to wash your mind and your heart with his Word and by His Sprit. Wash away any impurities. Wrong intentions, destructive desires, thoughts that would lead you away from being like Jesus. Remember that you have been cleansed by God and your sin has been washed away forever. You don't need to live with any guilt or shame or condemnation. You can enter the day with a clean conscience – clean before God. His Sprit will be at work purifying your mind and heart all day. Wash with God. You can do that. You can do it tomorrow morning. It doesn't involve doing anything different to what you normally do. It just involves doing it with God.

### **Eating.**

Food is a gift from God. We are told to pray for daily bread, that God will provide. Psalm 104 tells us that God brings forth food from the earth, and feeds all of his creatures, including you and me. Eat with God. Now when you sit down to eat with God, you may find that changes what you eat. If you sit down with two big Macs, large fries, a chocolate pie, cream, and enough salt and fat to clog every artery in your body, and then you ask the Lord to bless this food to your body, you're asking for more than a blessing – you're asking for a miracle!

The bible tells us that our bodies are Gods creation and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Part of our discipleship is regulating what food we put in our bodies – not to be obsessive about it – but realising that we are spending this part of our day with Jesus. Ecclesiastes 9:7 tells us **"Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favours what you do"**. Are you thankful for what God gives you to eat? When we took our mission teams to Romania, part of the training was to pray the Missionary prayer "Lord I'll get it down if you keep it down" It was put to the test for me when Lyn and I got served a whole big bowl of cucumber and tomatoes for breakfast, followed by cake and ice-cream. I had to pray the cucumber down.

God intends that our meal times be times of celebration and joy. We need to slow down and be grateful for the food God provides. Take time. Sit down. Chew. Eat with God. That might determine who you eat with. When you break bread with someone that's an act of community – it's communion. The thing that got Jesus into trouble the most was who he ate with. He ate with people that the religious leaders rejected. We are losing our sense of connectedness as families because we are not eating together – or if we are eating together we are eating in front of the TV. So there is no sense of communication and community with one another. All through history in all sorts of cultures, the thing that has bound families together is the family meal. We have lost that sense of community in one generation. It's time to declare some intentional values.

Some of the meals Jesus ate were with people who were far from God. We need to do that. We also need to eat with other disciples of Jesus. Jesus did lots of that. Eat with friends who are life giving. There are some relationships that are draining relationships, and there are some that are life giving and replenishing. Some people just leave you feeling invigorated. Seek those people out for meals.

### **Feeding on the Word.**

Here's another quote from Jesus. **"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)** Your spirit is fed by words. We are flooded by words. We need to feed our mind every day from the Word of God. Take a thought from scripture and feed on it all through the day. Here's an example of the way you can do that. Take the words of Paul **"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38 & 39)** Take that scripture for a walk all day. Feed on it. As you walk through the day with the Lord, ask Him about it. Talk it over with Him. Ask Him to explain it to you. Ask him to show you through the day how it works. Or take a verse like **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength"( Philippians 4:13)** Take a whole day to talk to the Lord about that truth. Ask him

to help you live it out through the day. You can do that. It's not too difficult for you to do. Try it tomorrow and see what happens.

### **Interruptions.**

How well do you handle interruptions? They are part of our day every day. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said "We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God". God will constantly be crossing our paths and cancelling our plans by sending us people with claims and requests. When we bypass people God has put in our way, like the Priest who bypassed the man in need in Jesus story of the Good Samaritan, we are bypassing the visible sign of the Cross that's been put on our way to show us that not our way but Gods way must be done.

Tomorrow, God is going to interrupt you. It may be a phone call, a knock at your door, a person with a flat tyre, a young mother struggling with a preschooler, an old person in the supermarket, a client at work, a person of another culture who can't speak English very well, or maybe one of your own family. Watch for it, for just maybe that's a Divine appointment for you.

That doesn't mean that anytime anyone interrupts me I have to stop what I'm doing and do whatever they want. It doesn't mean that attention deficit disorder is a deep form of spirituality and I ought to be interrupted all the time. But it does mean that if I am spending the day with Jesus, I will expect that he will direct me to some people that I might have missed. It means holding my own agenda for the day with open hands, and allowing Him to write the agenda for me.

What would Jesus' ministry have looked like if he had never allowed himself to be interrupted? So much of his ministry was interruptions. Some of his greatest miracles are the result of interruptions. Blind Bartimaeus. The woman who had been haemorrhaging for 12 years. The leper who interrupted him and Jesus healed him. His interruption over a meal at a Pharisees home when a sinful woman started weeping and washing his feet with her tears and drying his feet with her hair. He stopped what he was doing and forgave her. Imagine the miracles that would have been missed if Jesus hadn't been available to be interrupted.

The Cross looked like the ultimate interruption to his ministry. His disciples thought it was. But in fact the Cross was the greatest work His Father had for him to do. Jesus didn't see these as interruptions at all. He was working to a different timetable. His clock was not an earthly clock. He said "I only do what I see the Father doing". Jesus was walking through His day asking the Father "What's next?" Don't you find that an exciting way to live? Imagine walking through a whole day asking the Lord "What's next?" Is this person one you have picked out for me? Is this an act of service you want me to do Lord? Do you want me to change direction here Lord? Don't you see how your whole day could be this amazing adventure with God? Some days your day will go just as you planned, but some days it will be full of new twists and turns as Jesus walks with you.

### **Working With Jesus.**

The largest block of our waking moments is spent working. Apart from genetics, the single biggest indicator of how long you will live is your work satisfaction. Now that you have heard that, some of you are thinking you might die at any moment!

In the last few centuries we have come to equate work with having a job or getting a pay cheque. Because of that, retired people, or the disabled or the unemployed are regarded as not working. You try telling that to mothers with preschoolers. Work is essential to us, because we are made in the image of a God who works. From a biblical viewpoint, work is the creation of value. As I serve God, and seek to care for His world, and benefit the lives of other people, I'm working. That includes paid employment, household chores, study, schoolwork, and volunteer work.

So how do you work with Jesus? Ask yourself this. If Jesus were to show up at my work tomorrow, and work alongside me all through the day, would I do things any differently? He is willing to teach us how to do our job as He would. Jesus spent much of his life working as a carpenter, and He was just as much doing His fathers will working as a carpenter as when he was a teacher. What do you think Jesus was like as a carpenter? Do you think his

workmanship was shoddy, that he slunk off the job when Joseph wasn't looking? Did he complain a lot in the workshop? When Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae, he said to them **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart – it's the Lord Christ you are serving"**.

When we are working with Jesus, we routinely sacrifice our comfort and pleasure for the quality of our work. When the statue of Liberty was built, it was long before the days of helicopters. But the person who did all the sculpture on the lady with the torch took great care over her hairdo, even though as far as he knew, no one would ever see it. It doesn't matter if we are teaching pupils, working in finance, fixing cars, working for a large corporation, painting houses, or working on a word processor, we do it well because we know that's what Jesus would like, and because that's what He would do.

Here are some questions to ask ourselves as we work with Jesus tomorrow.

- 1. Do I worship my work?** Am I making an idol of my work?
- 2. Is my life balanced?** Do I sacrifice time and energy that ought to go to my family, friendships, rest, or prayer?
- 3. How do I treat my co-workers?**
- 4. How do I treat my employees?** If I'm in a position of authority, am I treating those who report to me the way Jesus would? Am I truthful and fair, or do I try to manipulate them? Do I work for their growth and development?
- 5. Do I ask for Gods help?** Do I ask God for help and guidance in my work, or am I trying to do it in my own way and in my own power?
- 6. Am I honest?** Am I scrupulously honest in my work? Am I careful with other peoples money and property? Do I use company equipment for my personal use?
- 7. Am I using my God given gifts?** Is my work in line with my sense of how God has gifted me?

Work is one of the best learning opportunities we will ever have to discover the truth about ourselves. Performance reviews and feedback from superiors can be very revealing of issues that we need to attend to as part of following Jesus. Asking for and learning from honest feedback is one of the greatest opportunities you will ever have to hone up your issues of discipleship. It's your chance to learn from Jesus.

It can be like this for you, if you are willing to be relentlessly obedient to Jesus, and take up the opportunities as they come. These are all things you can do. Take a day with Jesus tomorrow, and see what the day brings.

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