

Spending A Day With Jesus

Part 3

Being With Jesus

Have you ever found yourself reading in the New Testament about the life of Jesus – the things He said and the things he did – and wishing you could have been there? Wouldn't you have liked to be one of the crowd, when Jesus was sitting out in a boat on the lake, teaching all the people? Wouldn't you have wanted to be one of the 5000 people who got fed when Jesus broke up one little boys lunch, and fed everyone with it until they were all so full there were 12 baskets of food left over? Would you have wanted to be one of Jesus' close followers – one of the 12 Disciples who got time with Him away from the crowds? One of those, that He explained some of His stories to. One of those, who got to eat with Him, walk with Him, ask Him questions? What if you were one of his special friends like Peter and James and John who had this experience with him.

"After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus". (Matthew 17:1 -5)

What if Jesus said to you "I'll give you a day of my time. I'm yours for a whole day. Anywhere you go, I'll come too. You can talk to me all day, ask me any questions. I'll help you with any problems you have. You can ask my advice about anything. What say we have a fun day together?" Wouldn't that be great, to spend a day with Jesus like that? To be His disciple for a day? Wouldn't that make your day exciting?

The bible tells us that Jesus is always with us, but most of the time we don't live as if it's true. We sin as if he wasn't looking. We sing songs about coming into His presence as if he wasn't there with us, and we had to strive to meet with him. We pray prayers like "God do you understand what I'm going through?" as if He were not with us when things happen to us. What would happen to our day if we actually believed that Jesus was alongside us for every moment of the day? Wouldn't our prayer life change? Instead of having one prayer time first thing in the morning, and then forgetting about Jesus all through the day, we would find ourselves having conversations with Jesus all through the day. Over breakfast, while we are driving to work, while we are watching the news on TV, as we meet people, we are talking to Him. Here's how it works. As you are driving you see He's looking a little nervous, so you look at the speedo and you realise you are driving too fast for Him. When Jesus is with you when you are driving you find you don't salute other drivers and practise your vocabulary, because Jesus is looking and listening. Sometimes when you are watching a movie or reading a magazine or a book, you realise that he isn't too pleased with what you are watching or reading. So you talk to him about it, and he says "We can work on this together". Your level of gratitude and confidence and wonder and joy goes up, because you realise that Jesus wants to make you like him. The neat thing is you not only like being with Him, but you like who you are becoming in His presence.

Let's look at a few specifics of spending a day with Jesus.

Doing Relationships With Jesus.

Every person you encounter, Jesus is there too – right alongside you and right alongside them. So you watch and see how Jesus deals with people. The first thing you notice is that he loves them. It shows on his face. And you notice that he listens, he really listens to their every word. After a while you find yourself looking at people the way Jesus does, and listening to them the way He does. You find yourself seeing them the way he does, and responding to them the way He does.

As you walk through tomorrow with Jesus, you will encounter people. This is your opportunity to learn from Him about how to interact with people – how to love them. When you greet people, you have the opportunity to convey Gods love to them. The bible talks a lot about greeting people. The standard greeting in the Old Testament was "Shalom – Peace". It was like a prayer of blessing meaning "I hope you flourish in God's good order". In Paul's letters in the New Testament the standard greeting was "Grace and Peace" – God's Grace and Gods Peace". Jesus loved to touch people like lepers who didn't normally get touched. You can use appropriate touch – a handshake – an arm around the shoulders – to show people the love of Jesus. Jesus wants to show you how.

You need some spiritual friends who will encourage you and help you through the hard times. People who will ask you how you are doing, and who will not let you get away with superficial answers. People who will cry with you. People who love you enough to tell you the truth when you are making wrong choices. People who love you enough to tell you when to apologise to others. These are people who can be Jesus to you. Jesus can use these people to help make you more like himself. These are non draining relationships.

But you also need some difficult people in your life. Now be sensitive about this. Don't go up to someone and say that you have asked God to give you some difficult friends, and they are it! Jesus is quite emphatic about this He says "Love your enemies". Those, that are difficult for you to love. He says "If you only love those who love you back, where's the goodness in that?" Difficult people are absolutely necessary for your spiritual development. If you have some, be glad and express appreciation to them on a regular basis. If you don't have any, we could probably make up a list of them at the church office and assign you some. We might even put the Pastors names at the top of the list. Next time you encounter someone who is difficult for you to love, ask Jesus to teach you how to handle that person. Ask Him what He would do with that person. Ask Him to let you see them the way He sees them.

(Narration - "I Dreamt I Had an Interview with God.")

"Come in," God said. "So, you would like to interview Me?"

"If you have the time," I said.

God smiled and said: "My time is eternity and is enough to do everything; what questions do you have in mind to ask me?"

I asked *"What surprises you most about mankind?"*

God answered: "That they get bored of being children, are in a rush to grow up, and then long to be children again. That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health. That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future. That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived..."

God's hands took mine and we were silent for while and then I asked..

"As a parent, what are some of life's lessons you want your children to learn?"

God replied with a smile: "To learn that they cannot make anyone love them. What they can do is to let themselves be loved. To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives. To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others. All will be judged individually on their own merits, not as a group on a comparison basis! To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but is one who needs the least. To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons we love, and that it takes many years to heal them. To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness. To learn that there are persons that love them dearly, but simply do not know how to express or

show their feelings. To learn that money can buy everything but happiness. To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it totally differently. To learn that a true friend is someone who knows everything about them...and likes them anyway. To learn that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others, but that they have to forgive themselves."

I sat there for a while enjoying the moment. I thanked Him for his time and for all that He has done for me and my family, and He replied, "Anytime. I'm here 24 hours a day. All you have to do is ask for me, and I'll answer."

Doing Leisure Time and Recreational Activities With Jesus.

God didn't make us to work all the time. That's clear from the account of God creating in Genesis. God took time off from work to rest. He expects us to rest as well. He would like to spend time with you in your recreation and leisure activities too. But it's hard for him to do that if the only thing you do for recreation is watch TV. Robert Putnam did a study on the loss of community. This is what he said.

"Dependence on TV is a significant predictor in the loss of community in our lives. Nothing else in our lives has the same impact on the loss of community in our lives than TV. Not long times spent commuting, low education, full time work, poverty, financial distress – none of these has as much impact as TV. People who rely on TV for entertainment are least likely to volunteer, least likely to stay in touch with friends, least likely to attend church. TV is habit forming and may be mildly addictive. It is the cheapest and least demanding way to avert boredom." In 1977 the Detroit Free Press did an experiment to see what would happen when families gave up TV. They offered 120 families \$500 to give up TV for a month. Only 5 families took up the offer. Those that did give up TV reported experiencing boredom, anxiety, and depression. One woman said "It was terrible. We did nothing. My husband and I talked." Some of you need to take control over your TV. You need to turn it off occasionally. Decide some limits as a family.

What are the activities that God uses to breathe new life into you? What brings gratitude, joy, renewal and strength? For some of you it's getting out into nature. For some of you it's gardening. For some of you it might be riding a motorcycle, or running, or mountain climbing or exploring. For some of you it's cooking. You can do all those things with Jesus. Maybe you will pray, or praise Him, or sing during that activity. But whatever you do, take Jesus with you.

Doing Your Day With Jesus At His Pace.

Jesus did life at walking pace, and look how much he got done that lasted for eternity. We do life at Jet pace, and look how little we get done that lasts for eternity. Satan tries to get us to be really busy. We just try and pack more and more things in. We try and cram two lifetimes into one. John Ortberg tells the story of being in Germany and having a hectic schedule. He did 4 talks, a Q & A session, a magazine interview and two radio broadcasts in 48 hours. There was one interview left to do and there was no time left as they had to catch the plane, so as they were being driven to the airport, they did the interview in the car. John says that as he was in the back seat saying into the tape recorder "Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life", he looked up at the speedometer to see they were doing 230 kilometres an hour!

What's the pace of life that you can live at and still be intimately connected with God? You have to determine what that is, then you are going to have to arrange your life around that. It will be different for each one of us, No one else can do that for you. But if you don't, you will live with a chronic sense of anxiety. It's the hurry sickness disease. Jesus says "Look at the birds". They don't have palm pilots, blackberry's, iphones and high blood pressure. They don't suffer from colitis or break out in rashes through worry. Can't you trust Him like the birds do?

Doing Your Shopping With Jesus.

We live in a consumer culture. Holidays were originally for rest and worship. They are now excuses to shop and consume. Can you think of a single holiday that is not linked with sales in the newspaper and on TV? Malls have replaced town squares and churches as the public gathering places. Recently a Mall built in the USA was deliberately patterned after a Cathedral, to give people a sense that this is what will bring meaning and transcendence to their lives. Take Jesus shopping with you, and ask him what to buy and what to spend. That doesn't mean

you don't buy fashion, or not have an appreciation for things of beauty. But it does mean you ask Jesus what he thinks as you go shopping. Ask Him for wisdom.

Every time you have to make a decision, you can talk to Jesus about it. And if you are going to say yes to Jesus it may mean you have to say no to some other things, so start thinking about the things you need to say no to. Maybe you need to say no to debt, or to the use of a Credit Card. Maybe it's time commitments. Perhaps you or your kids are involved in an activity that is not a bad thing in itself, but it's contributing to an overall pace of life that is leading you away from Jesus.

In a book called "Receive the Day" there is a story about a poet named Jane Kenyon. Jane Kenyon was diagnosed with cancer in January 1994 and died in April of 1995. She wrote a poem about receiving the day as a gift from God.

*"I got out of bed today on two strong legs - it might have been otherwise.
I ate cereal. Sweet milk. Ripe Peach. - it might have been otherwise.
I took the dog uphill to the birch wood. All morning I did the work I love. At noon I lay down
with my mate - it might have been otherwise.
We ate dinner together at a table with silver candlesticks - it might have been otherwise.
I slept in a bed with paintings on the walls, and planned another day, just like this day.
But one day I know, it will be otherwise."*

Before this day ends for you, and before this day starts for Him, thank Him for the day, and tell Him you would like to spend tomorrow with Him.

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