

## The Story of Jesus

### Part 13: How To Experience God

Mark 6:1-6 - [watch online](#)

#### Summary:

Most of us want to experience God in our lives. But when we start asking, “How?” we are usually only handed a set of beliefs, routines, and rules. There is a much better way to experience God and it’s something we can all discover each and every day.

#### Main Points:

In our search to experience God we are usually only handed a set of beliefs, routines, and rules.

When we reduce Jesus to a set of beliefs, routines, and rules we miss out on experiencing and knowing Jesus himself.

To experience the life Jesus offers we have to be willing to see who Jesus really is.

Jesus seems safe and easy to like until we actually pay attention to what he says.

If you've never been offended or challenged by Jesus you probably haven't been paying attention.

What we think we know about Jesus can blind us to who Jesus really is.

To actually experience the life Jesus offers we have to be willing to trust, follow, and experience the actual Jesus.

It's only when we accept Jesus for who he really is that he can remake us into who he made us to be.

#### Invitation:

To experience the actual Jesus in our actual lives...

Learn about the real Jesus: Read the accounts of his life and what he actually taught.

Invite the real Jesus into your real life: Practice the Art of Following Jesus

Choose to trust that Jesus is who he said he is and will do what he said he will do.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. In your opinion, what do you think it means to “experience God?”
2. Jon explained that reducing Jesus to a set of beliefs, routines, and rules creates a dry, stale, and lifeless religion and we miss out on experiencing and knowing Jesus himself. Have you ever seen or experienced this idea?
3. Have you ever been offended or challenged by Jesus (If not maybe peruse Matthew 5-7 for a couple of minutes)? What was it about and what happened?
4. What are some ways you can/will invite the real Jesus into your real life this week?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**IN:** There is a clear, achievable and life changing way to experience God in every part of our day and life. It's something you (whoever you are, however much you might know about God) can actually experience each and every day.

What is it? Well stick around for the next 20 min or so... and we'll talk about it together

**WE:** Most of us want to experience God in our lives... BUT-

**In our search to experience God we are usually only handed a set of beliefs, routines, and rules.**

The Christian version usually goes something like...

- Believe God exists... 7 day creation... Adam/Eve... Flood
- 10 Commandments
- God sent Jesus to die for our sins so we don't have to go to hell.
- Go to church, read the bible, pray, and be good.

Blech... dry/stale/lifeless... no wonder we get bored and/or burdened with church and religion.

No room for asking questions... imagination... exploring... actually experiencing God guiding, enjoying, living in and through us.

- No room for actually living a real life with the real and dynamic God.
- Might believe the right things but never enjoy a life of trusting Jesus.

**When we reduce Jesus to a set of beliefs, routines, and rules we miss out on experiencing and knowing Jesus himself.**

There's a better way. A better life that all of us are invited to.

- It's closer and more attainable than you might have imagined...

Whether you're new to the story of Jesus or you have years of experience under your belt...

- We're going to discover how to get away from the typical/stale way of trying to know God and how to take the journey into a life of truly knowing and experiencing God Himself.

What we'll discover... **To experience the life Jesus offers we have to be willing to see who Jesus really is.**

And we see this play out in a very personal and painful scene from Jesus' life...

**GOD:** Jesus has been teaching and healing, calming stormy seas, casting out demons, raising a girl from the dead...

- Getting famous... large crowds seem to always be around him...

He decides to change venues for a bit...

**V. 1** Nazareth small village... everyone knew everyone...

Where Jesus grew up, where he ran through the streets as a kid, scraped his knees...

- Childhood friends/family

Like visiting hometown after moving away/college for a while, or going to high school reunion...

News of what Jesus has been doing has been filtering back... (remember family coming to get him b/c thought he had lost it?).

Probably quite a buzz when this local boy/nor famous teacher comes back with his group of students... in fact he's invited to teach at the synagogue that Saturday...

**V. 2** Mark doesn't tell us what Jesus said... leaves us to assume that it's his main message from the beginning...

"The KoG is here... Repent and believe."

- God restoring everything... restoring hearts/minds... destroying the power of sin/death and it's happening through me... now."
- Maybe talks about how God isn't distant but is a loving Father to all of us
- Maybe talks about life in KoG... loving neighbors, forgiving enemies, turning other cheek when insulted, not judging...

Thanks to Luke we do know some of what he said... **Luke 4:17-21**.

And at first everyone is amazed at his insight and way of teaching.

- Probably like the other people from other towns... never heard anyone teach like this... such authority.

And then gears start turning... "Wait a second?!... He's saying HE is actually bringing the kingdom... like he's God's promised king... where he is the kingdom is?"

And then they remember that time Jesus fell and skinned his knee and cried like a baby.

Remember those awkward years of BO, voice cracking, zits...

- "Hold on... you're what now?"

Jesus seems safe and easy to like until we actually pay attention to what he says.

**V. 3-4** They were expecting a nice safe Torah reading... maybe Moses parting the sea, David and Goliath, or some of the ritual law about washing hands or something...

Basically wanted Jesus to reinforce what they already knew and believed.

- They were God's chosen people, follow these rules and you're good, anyone who's not Jewish and doesn't follow these rules is bad.

But instead, once they paid attention to what Jesus was saying they started getting offended...

"Who do you think you are Jesus?"

"You think you're something special? You think you can tell us the truth of life... you want us to follow **YOU**?"

"We know who you are. You're just a day worker like the rest of us."

"We know you're family. They're nothing special... except for that whole thing about your mom getting pregnant while still engaged... (Son of Mary... normally son of father.)"

And we can do the same... we hear the things we want to hear about Jesus and he seems nice and safe until we start actually paying attention...

Let me ask you... When was the last time you were offended by Jesus?

If you've never been offended or challenged by Jesus you probably haven't been paying attention.

B/c what he actually says is huge...

He is God come to earth.

- And those people who have hurt you/taken advantage of you? If you really want to experience living in God's kingdom... love and forgive them.... Even the Romans.
- All that success and those accomplishments you've built your life on... they don't mean anything. Don't make you any better.
- All those things you've been fighting for/against? No purpose/fulfillment/happiness there, Forget about it and follow me.

And we say... "No no Jesus you're nice and you just want me to be happy and wealthy.... You're just supposed to make me feel good and just agree with what I already agree with and be mad about what I'm mad about."

What we think we know about Jesus can blind us to who Jesus really is.

And when we can't see who Jesus really is we miss out on experiencing the life he offers all of us...

**V. 5-6** Look at how Mark describes what happened... "Jesus didn't do very much. Just placed his hands on some people and healed them."

- Like no big deal.
- If I laid hands on 1 sick person and healed them right now... we would all be absolutely stunned and amazed
- But Mark says... "Yeah, it was kinda boring, he did just a few impossible miracles."

Shows a few things but most importantly for us... Shows us Jesus could have done so much more for them if they were willing... but they refused to see him for who he really was.

- Refused to believe and trust him

Their lives could've been completely changed... they could've been some of the first to truly experience the KoG coming to earth...

- Could have experienced the purpose, fulfillment, love, joy, peace, confidence, hope of the KoG

They missed it... They wanted a Jesus that fit their picture of a nice/safe/good teacher.

- Teach the safe things they were used to
  - How to keep the rules so we can convince God to keep liking us
- Tell the stories that made them feel good to be God's people... better than everyone else.

But when he claimed to be more... when he told them what God's true heart was (for all people)...

- When he talked about the condition of our heart and not just our outward religious routines...
- When they felt challenged

They rejected him and refused to see the real Jesus... and the real life he was offering.

And Jesus is amazed at their unbelief.

- They hear what he has to say... a few people believe and come to him to be healed... he does it... and the majority still refuse to believe in him/to trust him

So he leaves and goes and teaches in other villages.

Never see him return. Let's them have what they want. He leaves them alone.

**YOU:** We think... what idiots! How could they be so blind and stubborn and just dumb?

- How could they not see Jesus for who he really is?
- How could they see his miracles and hear his teaching and not believe and do what he says?

But before we judge too harshly... we have to ask ourselves, have we done the same thing?

We read what Jesus said life in the KoG is really like...

- It's harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the KoG/true life isn't measured by how much we have but by our relationship to God...
  - But we still strive and scratch to make more and more so we can feel secure and appear more wealthy to others
  - In our pride and greed we sacrifice our people in order to afford more possessions.
- The humble will inherit the earth/the first will be last and the last will be first...
  - But we fight for power, to be first, to be influential... often under the guise of doing it for Jesus?!
- Those who work for peace will be called children of God/if someone tries to take your jacket give them your shirt too...
  - But then we fight with anyone who disagrees with our views.
  - We fight in order to protect and change things for Jesus?!
- Love your enemies and do good to them-
  - That's a sweet ideal but it doesn't work in the real world, Jesus.
  - You don't actually know what you're talking about... go back to the nice stories that make me feel good about myself.
  - I get loving each other, but my enemies... that's just unrealistic in the real world
- Care for and protect and honor the weak, the different, the poor, the foreigner...
  - Ugh those people are such a drain on society... that's no way to run a country
  - I made it on my own... they can too!
  - Get a job, don't live near me, go back to where you came from.
- Don't hinder the little ones from coming to me/God so loved the WORLD
  - But they don't look like, act like, believe like, love like I think they should...

- They don't fit in. I can't just go ahead and accept them... I'd be condoning their lifestyle!

We like the idea of Jesus when we think he already agrees w/ what we agree with and see the world/people as we do

But when we actually hear what he is saying... we refuse to do anything different than our preconceived prejudices and leanings... That's a huge problem.

To reject his teaching is to reject HIM... and to reject him is to reject his power to change lives.

- We can't see any miracles when we reject him.

Jesus offers us so much more than a nice idea... or a set of beliefs and routines and rules.

He offers us true, meaningful, purposeful life... here and now and forever... But...

To actually experience the life Jesus offers we have to be willing to trust, follow, and experience the actual Jesus.

Did you know that Jesus wasn't Rep or Dem.

- He didn't care anything about politics... his kingdom isn't of this world and is far greater and beyond anything in this world

Jesus doesn't care about race or nationality or gender. He doesn't care about position, education or social standing.

Jesus doesn't care about our made-up religious rules and routines... **he cares about people.**

- If we know who Jesus is... We know he doesn't want us to do anything for him until we are willing to do something for our neighbor.
- We know that to unconditionally accept and serve our neighbor is what it means to love God, know him and experience him.
- Whatever allows us to love our neighbor better he is for... Whatever gets in the way of loving our neighbor he's against.

We can assume we know who Jesus is and never discover who he really is...

- Good teacher/philosopher
- A man who exemplified love.
- Ticket to heaven
- He said he was so much more than that... and proved it.

We can become so familiar with Jesus that we can't see/hear the real Jesus anymore...

- "Oh I know Jesus. I know all that stuff already."
- You might know it...in your head... but do you DO it?

"I know Jesus. He agrees with me. It's all the others who are different from me that need to know him."

- The minute we think we have Jesus all figured is the moment we show we don't truly know Jesus.

So who are we trying to make Jesus be?

- What picture have we made up of Jesus that is blinding us to the real Jesus

- What are we afraid of losing that makes us keep Jesus in a safe box and keeps us from experiencing the true life he offers?

Have we made Jesus into a set of beliefs and routines and rules or have we allowed him to simply be who he is and taken him at his word?

How could we do that? What are some practical steps...to help us discover, trust, and follow the real Jesus...

### **To experience the actual Jesus in our actual lives...**

#### **Learn about the real Jesus:** Read the accounts of his life and what he actually taught.

- How did he interact with people?
- How is that different from how you would have acted/reacted?
- Read what we taught (Matt 5-7)... allow yourself to be offended/challenged and changed.
- What did he actually teach? How would the heart of that teaching be applied to our life now...
- And then do it... even if it goes against what your politics/culture/social values say you should do/be.

#### **Invite the real Jesus into your real life:** Practice the Art of Following Jesus

- Silence, solitude and prayer
- Hospitality / generosity / fellowship / worship / celebration / eating with others / blessing others
- Maybe it's journaling your thoughts, prayers, feelings as a way of telling Jesus
- Breath prayers
- Inviting him into everyday routines... Celtic Xianity.

#### **Choose to trust that Jesus is who he said he is and will do what he said he will do.**

- When we actually trust that he is who he said he is: we can trust that he sees us, knows us, loves us... and that he is in control and he is good.
- When we trust that he will do what he said he will do: we can trust that he will make us into who we were created to be. That he will never leave us. That he will give us a new/abundant/full life now and forever.

**WE:** It's never too late to discover and enjoy the real Jesus... in that list of names of Jesus' family two names stand out

- James and Judas (Jude)

James later become the leader of the first church in Jerusalem

- Believed to have written the book of James
- Become so devoted to his big brother that the High Priest had him killed in 62 AD.

Jude believed to have written the book of Jude.

"My crazy brother predicted to die and rise again... he did!"

"That's why I've devoted my life to following the real Jesus... not the one I thought I knew or the Jesus I first wanted him to be."

“He has completely transformed my life. They discovered their real brother and in the process discovered what life could truly be.”

And you and I can too...

**It's only when we accept Jesus for who he really is that he can remake us into who he made us to be**