

# Tangible Jesus

2019-11-03 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on 1 John 1:1-4

**Mingle Questions:** Share about a time when you felt connected to God.

**GIVING INTENTIONS REPORT:** Update from our 2020 Vision Gathering from a few weeks ago!

- Total increased giving intentions for 2020: +\$2,500/mo! (AMEN! that's +\$700/mo more than the +1,800/mo we needed to balance the budget!)
- 19 intentions received
- 5 who weren't giving will begin giving in 2020 (totaling +\$1,300/mo)
- 8 who were giving are increasing their giving for 2020 (totaling +\$1,200/mo)
- 6 others committed to same giving levels for 2020 (also valuable info, totaling ~\$3,100/mo)
- We're proud of how people have responded and are feeling much better about heading into 2020. But there's still need to give as there's been a significant deficit to make up. Still plenty of room for you to give. Here's how you give: online or at the black box.
- Gratitude and pride.

**Leadership Transformation Grant with the Kansas Leadership Center**

- The Kansas Leadership Center is committed to fostering leadership for stronger, healthier and more prosperous Kansas communities. They invest in all spheres of Kansas civic life; non-profits, faith-based organizations like ours, education, government, and business.
- Specific leadership, challenges, help others grow, influence our organization.
- Core Team—Me, Maris, David, and Dave! The Core Team was taken from our pool of LIFE Group leaders and based on availability. We had an awesome time learning about the grant we've been awarded this past Tuesday and are already registered for the 2020 programs.
- The Leadership Transformation Grant is not just for Core Team but also for other key leaders and potential for others too down the road.
- Leadership is an activity, not a position.

## ***The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo***

- Does anyone know what this painting is?
- Perhaps the most famous painting of all time behind the Mona Lisa.
- The **Sistine Chapel ceiling**, painted by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512 (500 years ago).
- Detail from The Creation of Adam, portraying the creation of mankind by God. The two index fingers are separated by a small gap [3/4 inch (1.9 cm)]: some scholars think that it represents the unattainability of divine perfection by man.

## Human longing to be with our Creator

- St. Augustine (354-435 AD) – 1500 years ago: Because God has made us for Himself, our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.
- King David (1010-970 BC) – 3000 years ago
  - Psalm 27:4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.
- Adam and Eve – however long before that
  - **Genesis 3:8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
- The core longing of the human soul remains the same today, November 3, 2019 around the world. We long to close the distance between us and the Divine, for connection with our Creator.
- **John 1:14a** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...
- Jesus is the answer to the deepest longing of the human soul. Many of us know that conceptually but get so distracted, distracted by lesser joys and seemingly more pressing problems.
- A week and a half ago Dave Geldart and I were talking about the upcoming weeks and what we should focus on here at Central Gathering. Do we keep stringing along the Relating series until Advent, is it too early to jump into the book of Acts which we plan to do in the spring. We asked, “What do Tallgrassians need to hear? What needs to be priority in the midst of busyness (at least perceived busyness), sickness, competing priorities, marriage difficulties, job searches, parenting problems, and so on?”
- We think that our church most needs to connect with the Tangible Jesus!

## Tangible Jesus

- tan·gi·ble—perceptible by touch.
- Synonyms: perceptible, palpable, material, real, substantial, sensible, touchable, verifiable, physical, solid, concrete, visible, stable, graspable, incarnated, embodied, factual, objective, tactile, actual
- Antonyms: spiritual, ethereal, intangible.

**1 John 1:1-4** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— <sup>2</sup>the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— <sup>3</sup>that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

## PRAY

- The disciples walked with Jesus.
- They heard Jesus...with their own two ears. They saw Jesus...with their own two eyes. They touched Jesus...with their own two hands.
- which we have heard—TONIGHT
- which we have seen with our eyes—NEXT WEEK
- which we have touched with our hands—TWO WEEKS
- Now Jesus has been physically resurrected...and He left.
- And now they have fellowship, not only with Jesus but also with the Father.
- What is the impact of physical distance between us and Jesus on our relationship with Jesus?

## Israel Trip

- I traveled to Israel in 2016. There was something moving about walking in the places Jesus walked. There was a stirring and longing deep in my soul to be with Jesus.
  - I was walking the paths that He walked but I longed for more...I longed to hear him speak with my two ears, to see Him with my two eyes, and to give Him a hug with my two arms.
- Synagogue Jesus Taught In—near Peter's house
- Church of the Beatitudes—Matthew 5-7
  - Church of the Beatitudes was built by Antonio Barlutsi. He also built the church in the Garden of Gethsemane (Church of Agony).
- The Sea of Galilee
  - Sermon on the Mount including the Beatitudes
    - Luke has Jesus preaching from the lake up whereas Matthew has Jesus speaking from the top down.
    - It all depends on the direction of the wind. Your voice can be amplified either way. The acoustics are amazing here. That makes sense.
  - God planned, designed, and built this mount to amplify the voice of His Son!
- The Western Wall at the Temple Mount
  - People writing their prayers and stuffing them into the cracks of the walls in hopes God will hear. What I wanted was to hear Jesus in person.

## What are you seeking?

- The first words recorded in the Gospel According to John.
- **John 1:37b-38** <sup>37b</sup>...they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?"
- What would it have been like to hear Jesus voice? What would the inflection of His voice be like?
- How would His words have sounded to Zacchaeus? "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." See Luke 19.
- How would His words have sounded to the woman caught in adultery? "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."
- What do you think Jesus sounded like specifically? Did He sound mad, detached, kind, distant, harsh? How do you think Jesus sounds?

## The Power of Voices

- The power of voices in our lives can't be overstated, both for good and harm.
- "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."
- "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me but words can hurt forever."
- Each of our voices are unique.
- We Can Identify A Friend's Voice After Hearing Just Two Words—[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/voice-recognition-study\\_n\\_5617c7b2e4b0082030a2071d](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/voice-recognition-study_n_5617c7b2e4b0082030a2071d)
- Waiting for that phone call. Waiting for someone to pick up the phone.
- When someone passes away and we long to hear their voice again. And then we struggle to remember what their voice sounded like.
- Love Languages
  - 8 out of 15 in our LIFE Group had Words of Affirmation as their top Love Language
  - We long to hear people speak words of affirmation, to repeat words to us that we already know are true.

- Words are powerful and words must be spoken to make their impact. So there's a big challenge here relationally because I will never hear Jesus speak to me like He spoke to those two disciples of John the Baptist who crept up on Him and started following Him. I may never hear the voice of Jesus audibly with these two ears until after physical death and physical resurrection.
- I long to have that conversation with Jesus where He asks me, "What are you seeking?" And I can tell Him everything and then just listen to Him speak to me about how He sees me, what He hopes for me, how much He loves me, how everything will be ok.
- And yet, according to John, we are invited into fellowship with the Father and with the Son, the same fellowship that John and the other disciples enjoyed as they walked and talked and were simply with Jesus. Are you seeking this fellowship? Are we seeking to hear Jesus speak to us?
- Your ears were made to hear the voice of Jesus. God is moving heaven and earth so that your ears will hear the voice of Jesus. And you will hear Jesus audibly one day if you put your hope and faith in Him!

## Hearing Jesus: The Scripture, The Spirit, & The Saints

- Checks and balances to help us discern the voice of Jesus.

### The Scripture

- The main way to hear the voice of Jesus is through His Word.
- The spiritual disciplines aren't the ways we make God happy with us, they are the ways we train ourselves to hear God.
- Mere Scripture isn't enough.
- **John 5:39-40** <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup>yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.
- Hearing the voice of Jesus is different than just reading rules or pithy statements of wisdom and trying to live by them. Life truly is about relationship with the Divine, not just life hacks to make your life better.

### The Spirit

- **John 14:16-17** <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup>even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.
- **John 14:26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
- **John 16:13-14** <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
- The Bible, The Body, and The Breath of God

### The Saints

- Jesus speaks to us through one another.
  - In Christ, Mystical Union
  - **Acts 9:4-5** <sup>4</sup>And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" <sup>5</sup>And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.
- The Body of Christ helps us discern if we're hearing from Jesus.
- All the "one anothers"—discernment, encouragement, admonishment, rebuke, speak the truth in love, etc.
- The Body of Christ also helps comfort us with the comfort of Christ. See 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.

## Solitude and Silence

- Since we aren't physically present with Jesus we need to practice solitude and silence to hear from Him.
- If solitude and silence are good enough for Jesus it's good enough for me!
- **Illus:** River water jar

### *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence*

By Ruth Haley Barton, p. 19

- "It is much easier to talk about it and read about it than to actually become quiet.
- We are a very busy, wordy, and heady faith tradition.
  - The Enlightenment and the Scientific Method have been great to substantiate the claims of the Scriptures but we have swung to far towards mere Empiricism at the cost of connection with the Divine.
  - We've taught a lot about evidence for the Bible and what the Bible teaches.
- Yet we are desperate to find ways to open ourselves to our God who is, in the end, beyond all of our human constructs and human agendas."
  - Mysticism
  - Desperation drives us to the Divine.
- "We are starved for intimacy, to see and feel and know God in the very cells of our being. We are starved for rest, to know God beyond what we can do for him. We are starved for quiet, to hear the sound of sheer silence that is the presence of God himself."
  - Desire drives us to the Divine. Desire for intimacy.
  - Of course, the point isn't sheer silence. It's the presence of God, and hearing from God.
  - There's a humility that leads us to recognize we don't have all the answers and can't obtain 100% certainty and we need to connect with the Transcendent, the Triune God.
  - There isn't sheer silence. You quiet yourself to hear the still, small voice that is God speaking to you.

### Both desperation AND desire drive us to the Divine.

- Desperation—"This isn't working. I can't deal with life."
- Desire—"I long for more. I want to be with God. I want more out of my relationship with God."
- Both are good motivators and if you're struggling to have desperation or desire than I pray for you.
- **John 10:27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
- Solitude and silence are for those who already know Jesus AND those who don't yet. Why not risk hearing from the Creator, if He actually exists? If He's actually out there? What's the worst that could happen? Nothing happens and your mind is just a little clearer for the day ahead. What's the best that could happen? You actually connect with your Creator and begin a new relationship, the most important relationship of your life!
- Hearing from Jesus is, in fact, the most productive thing you can do.
  - Identity, purpose, next steps, refreshed body and soul!
  - To think more about the productivity of time with Jesus, go and study the story of Martha and Mary at the end of Luke 10.
- You may be thinking, "I will probably go to church my whole life without ever experiencing Jesus in a transformational way."
- Silence is difficult. Start where you're at. 5 minutes. Set the timer. Embrace the awkward. Be still, or cease striving, and know that God is God. See Psalm 46:10.
- I want to invite you into a time of solitude and silence I recently experienced. I've been longing to hear the voice of Jesus and struggling to hear it. So I took a personal retreat.

## St. Benedict's Abbey

24+ hour personal retreat at St. Benedict's Abbey in Atchison, KS with the Kansas monks

- Most of my time spent in silence. It took me awhile to quiet down my humming of old hymns. One of my goals was to be present with Jesus.
- I walked through the first six chapters of *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence* by Ruth Haley Barton. Ruth served as a guide to my time of solitude and silence.
- Chapter 1—Beyond Words—From my journal:
  - What is happening inside me and my relationship with You that seems to be inviting me into solitude and silence?
  - As I lay down and breathe deeply the phrase that comes to mind for what's needed or why I seem drawn to solitude and silence is relational capacity.
  - I get tired of people so quickly. I'm sluggish to want to connect with people deeply even though I know that is good. I truly want what's best for people and want to make an impact on their lives but just seem to grow weary so quickly.
  - I know You're calling me into greater relational capacity with You, Father. And with You, Jesus.
  - I want to be relationally available and present.
  - Perhaps I really need to declutter some things...
- Chapter 2—Beginnings—From my journal:
  - Where's my sacred space and time?
  - What's my simple prayer?
- Going on a walk
  - "Allow others to love you. If you want to be a shepherd like Me, you've got to allow others to love you."
  - Luke 7—The woman loved Jesus much...and He received her love.
- Two of the three meals I ate with the monks at St. Benedict's Abbey were in silence. Yes, it seems odd...at first. Our souls are like river water that's all stirred up. We need to let it settle so we can see clearly and then hear clearly.
- Hearing the same thing from different people has a different affect. My wife may be telling me something for months and then when I trusted friend says the same thing sometimes I finally respond. Imagine Jesus telling you something that others have been trying to say for months, like, "You are truly loved!"

## Practicing Corporate Silence

- Let's practice silence together now...just to get a little taste of it.
- Direct this time of silence.
- Play hymns on the piano.
  - Blessed Assurance, Come Thou Fount, Be Thou My Vision

## Reflection questions:

1. Is there any grief you've been holding in that you need to bring to Jesus?
2. Is there anything you're grateful for that you need to thank Jesus for?
3. What words of truth do you need to hear Jesus speak to you? Can you hear Him speaking these true words to you?
4. What is happening inside you and your relationship with Jesus that seems to be inviting you into solitude and silence?
  - He who has ears to here, let him hear.

## Gospel Connection

- The Word took on flesh. Jesus lived the perfect life. Jesus constantly sought to connect with His Father through times of solitude. And then, after He demonstrated obedience as the Son for 33 years. Jesus experienced utter silence from the Father...bitter silence... so we don't have to.
- In the pit that Jesus spent in solitude the night before His death He must've been reflecting on Psalm 88.
- **Psalm 88:2** Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry!
  - Darkness is my only friend!
- Right before Jesus death He cried out the words from Psalm 22.
- **Psalm 22:1-2** My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

## PRAY

# The Chopping Block:

## *The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo*

- Slight difference between the fingers—God reaching out. God is most interested in reaching out.
- The **Sistine Chapel ceiling**, painted by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512 (500 years ago), is a cornerstone work of High Renaissance art. The ceiling is that of the Sistine Chapel, the large papal chapel built within the Vatican between 1477 and 1480 by Pope Sixtus IV, for whom the chapel is named. It was painted at the commission of Pope Julius II. The chapel is the location for papal conclaves and many other important services.
- Perhaps the most famous painting of all time behind the Mona Lisa.
- The overt subject matter of the ceiling is the doctrine of humanity's need for Salvation as offered by God through Jesus. It is a visual metaphor of Humankind's need for a covenant with God. The Old Covenant of the Children of Israel through Moses and the New Covenant through Christ had already been represented around the walls of the chapel. Some experts, including Benjamin Blech and Vatican art historian Enrico Bruschini, have also noted less overt subject matter, which they describe as being "concealed" and "forbidden."
- Detail from The Creation of Adam, portraying the creation of mankind by God. The two index fingers are separated by a small gap [ $\frac{3}{4}$  inch (1.9 cm)]: some scholars think that it represents the unattainability of divine perfection by man.

## Reflection Questions:

- What's a powerful story where someone hears Jesus speak to them?
- What are impactful words that someone hears Jesus speak to them?
- When has Jesus spoken to you? What did He say?

## Martha and Mary

**Luke 10:38-42** <sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

- Let's look at a story where one person really struggled to hear Jesus even though they were physically present with Jesus and another person listened intently to Jesus.
- This story is set immediately after the parable of the Good Samaritan that teaches us to take care of those in need, even if they are our enemies.

Martha: Short-Term Thinking	Mary: Long-Term Thinking
Talked/Commanded	Listened/Absorbed
Rushed around/Busy	Sat down/Rested
Indignant/Critical	Humble/Learner
Unfocused due to many things	Focused on one thing
Hindered/Worried	Free/Peaceful
Trusting her own abilities	Trusting Jesus
Concerned with worldly things	Considered with Godly things
Thought Mary was the key to her help	Jesus was the key to her help



Welcomed Jesus into her home...to impress Him.	Welcomed Jesus into her heart...to relate to Him.
Frantic serving to meet urgent needs now	Intentional engagement with needs over the long haul
A good deed a day keeps the devil away	Walking in the good works that God has prepared for us (Eph 2:10)
Humanly-keepable niceness; navigate social circles	Supernatural kindness; Fruit of the Spirit
Behavior modification that puts pressure on yourself and others	Internal change bleeding into external changed behavior over time that becomes contagious
Quick fixes	Culture change
Survival mode	Thrival mode
Superficially pragmatic	Truly pragmatic
Veneer of service	Servant-heartedness
Put out fires	Cultivate passion for the right things

## Key Concepts:

- Ted Loder prayer
- Westminster Shorter Catechism: The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
- What are the voices in your life? Can you discern the voice of Jesus?
- Conviction vs. Condemnation
- Seven Keys to Hearing God's Voice— <https://www1.cbn.com/prayer/seven-keys-to-hearing-god>
- The poor will always be with us. There will always be more need than time and resources to meet the needs. What's priority? Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8
  - Deuteronomy 15:11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'
- **John 12:2-8** <sup>2</sup>So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. <sup>3</sup>Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>"Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup>He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."
- Hearing Jesus
  - How Could A Crowd of Thousands Hear Jesus Teach?— <http://www.biblestudymagazine.com/amphitheaters>
- Concerns—The Gap—Aspirations: The Creation of Adam
- Extreme Isolation
  - <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20140514-how-extreme-isolation-warps-minds>
  - *Cast Away* with Tom Hanks and Wilson
- Seen, known, enjoyed
  - How does Jesus look at you?
  - Does Jesus enjoy being with you?
  - Do others enjoy being with you?
- Philosophy of spiritual growth—lots of love
- Ephesians 3 Prayer
- Fellowship with the saints
- We want to get Jesus more tangibly involved in our lives and the lives of our neighbors.

- This is why we pray, “In Jesus’ Name.”

## Passages:

- **Isaiah 30:19-21** <sup>19</sup>For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. <sup>20</sup>And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. <sup>21</sup>And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.
- **Hebrews 5:11-14** <sup>11</sup>About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup>For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup>for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
- **Matthew 11:15** **He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**
- **Matthew 13:9** **He who has ears, let him hear.”**
- **Matthew 13:43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. **He who has ears, let him hear.**
- **Mark 4:9** And **he** said, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**
- **Luke 8:8** And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As **he** said these things, **he** called out, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**
- **Luke 14:35** It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**
- Hebrews 10:19
- Hebrews 4:16
- Psalm 73:25
- Matthew 1:23
- John 1:14
- Exodus 3
- 1 Samuel 3
- Psalm 36:8-9
- Ephesians 3 prayer
- Romans 8:32
- John 14
  - another helper (or comforter), or simply the helper
  - the Spirit of truth
  - the Holy Spirit
  - the one sent by the Father
  - the one who would teach Jesus’ followers and bring to remembrance (after Jesus’ ascension) what he had said while with them for three short years