

Seeing Jesus | Dave Geldart | 2019-11-10

1. Have you ever really encountered Jesus, personally?
 - a. So many Christians have subtly given up hope of experiencing a real relationship with God and have settled for and theological acumen and sporadic church attendance.
 - b. But you and I were made to really know God.
2. In this teaching mini-series, we (re)discover the tangible Jesus you could physically see, hear, and touch.
 - a. Last week Ben did a great job leading us to consider how we might hear God's voice
 - i. Go listen, watch!
 - b. GREAT activity at the end – so encouraging to hear yall stories this week of encounters with Jesus, life giving words of truth you heard from him
 - i. Really rich for me
3. tawG last week
 - a. explain tawG
 - b. my longing to actually BE WITH JC
 - i. to hear him, to see him
 - c. draw empty outline in bench

Oh how GREATLY I desire to meet with you Jesus. In this booth. To hear your voice, feel your touch, see your face. I NEED you, your closeness. Your presence. To sense you with my senses - my heart. How I long to be with you IN THE FLESH. To see you WITH MY EYES. TOUCH you with my hands, HEAR you with THESE EARS. NO distance. NO imagination. Doubt. Letdown. My yearning is high - this morning. I feel my desperation to BE WITH you. I'm not content, satisfied with how it is now. Really hard to comprehend how it is BETTER that you be physically distant and have your Spirit. My mind says the Spirit is the gift beyond gifts. But I sin have got unfulfilled. Lacking. Longing. I can't write it fast enough. BLS enough I to express. His lonliness and desire. Pain. Tears. Angst. HOPE. I can't regularly connect with this appetite. This yearning. It's not JUST in my soul. My BODY yearns to sense you - REAL. WITH me as you designed me to be WITH another. To know. To delight. To rest. To sigh. I feel like a crying

infant, hungry, cold, scared, sad, unable to be comforted with a pacifier. I need you, God. Where can I go to meet with God. I don't FEEL like your Spirit

4. I'm not often that connected like that. What about you? Have you ever been like that? That DESPERATE to be physically present with with God?
 - a. To feel his touch

- b. To be able to carry on an actual, verbal conversation
 - c. To see the look on his face
5. This is a relatively new experience for me – at least to be connecting so viscerally and honestly with that longing
- a. But this is nothing new to humans
 - b. We were MADE that way
 - i. And that’s what this little miniseries on the TANGIBLE Jesus is about
 - ii. Our great longing to be physically with God
 - c. Even my kids are beginning to connect with it
 - i. We play WOULD YOU RATHER at dinner
 - 1. This week Benji asked me “WOULD YOU RATHER FLY AND PLAY IN THE AIR-----“
 - a. I said yes that one
 - 2. Ben: no matter what the other one is?
 - a. ME: Yes
 - 3. Ben: What about actually being with God??
 - a. Touche!
 - ii. Actually being WITH GOD is the trump card of all trump cards! The ultimate WOULD YOU RATHER!
 - d. Our ears were made to HEAR the voice of Jesus audibly
 - e. Our skin to feel his nearness, the warmth of his touch, the REALNESS of his embrace
 - i. Next week
 - f. Our eyes were made to SEE God, visibly
 - i. That’s what we’re going to lean into today
6. When God created Adam from the dust of the earth, and breathed life into him, when the first human being opened his eyes, for the very first time, I’m fairly confident the first thing he saw was the face of God, looking down on him just like a new parent looks with great affection and joy into the face of their child.
- a. Our eyes were MADE to see God
7. And yet most of us will go our entire lives without seeing God.
- a. And most humans throughout human history have never even caught a glimpse
 - i. In the old testament, many hear God’s voice, and some even see the brightness of God’s glory, but none see God’s face
 - b. In fact, ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, and became corrupted by sin, we’re told we CAN’T SEE GOD’S FACE
 - c. Ex 33:20 - But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"
 - d. Even Moses himself, the man who talked with God, whose face SHONE with the afterglow of God’s glory, he was not allowed to see God
 - i. He begs God to see him, to see his face, and God says, get in a crack in the rock....
 - ii. Ex 33:23: "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."
8. Yet the longing to SEE GOD is written into our very genetic code. Our souls LONG to see God.
- a. King David, about 500 years later, writes,
 - b. Ps 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.
 - c. And in Ps 24: [we are] the generation of those who seek [God], who seek your face, God of Jacob.
9. And yet none saw God’s face
- a. Many sought, none saw
 - b. And the scripture is filled with accounts of people trying to satisfy or numb this great desire to see and be with God a thousand ways, from a thousand other sources
 - i. Sources we still run to today, whether we realize it or not

1. Pleasure
 2. Self-advancement
 3. Power
 4. relationships with other people
 5. social causes
 6. even religion
 7. Intellectual pursuits and conceptual development
- c. Yet, as Jewish Rabbi and philosopher Abraham Herschel, pictured here w Dr MLK, has said, all men and women, since Adam and Eve, when we're thinking clearly,
- i. "realize that all concepts are but glittering motes in a sunbeam. [We] want to see the sun itself"
- d. There is indeed a GOD SIZED HOLE in our souls, that nothing can truly fill or satisfy
- i. No human pursuit is strong enough. Even loving human relationships, excellent as they are, are not strong enough, big enough, bright enough to illuminate the deep recesses of our hearts, and satisfy our very souls
 - ii. We want to see the sun
 - iii. Because, after all, we were made to
 1. But now, in symbolic disconnect, all who try to look at the sun go blind.
- e. Can you feel this disconnect?
- i. In your own heart?
 - ii. Perhaps you've connected with this longing, identified it through recent seasons of struggle or loss. Through pain or despair.
 1. As CS Lewis has pointed out, "Pain is God's MEGAPHONE to rouse a deaf world"
 - iii. For indeed many of us have halfway succeeded in deadening this unmet longing. Conceal, don't feel.
 1. But just like in frozen, that strategy doesn't work for long.
 - iv. Can you relate to this?
 - v. To this LONGING to be WITH God. To hear his voice, feel his touch. SEE HIS FACE.
 1. Or have you succeeded in ignoring it?
 2. Snacking constantly on the cotton candy of success or pleasure or relationships or even religion?
 3. Follow the trail of unmet longing for God, and you'll find your addictions to substitutes
 - a. Could be alcohol or drugs
 - b. Could be work
 - c. Could be praise from others
 - d. Could be a drive for control or power
 - e. Could be sex or pleasure or love addiction
 - f. Could be video games, books, Netflix, and other amusements to keep you entertained and thoughtless. To keep you from having to sit with yourself. With your hunger. With your longings.
 - vi. You were MADE to see God.
 1. But it's been a very long time since the Garden.
 2. **How are you doing living in a world you weren't made for?**
- f. The Good News of the Bible is that God has not left us hungry and alone
- i. Though we can't see him, he sees us.
 - ii. And moved with compassion, desire, and self-giving love, he's moved heaven and earth to come close.
 1. So close.
 2. Hope beyond hope close.
- g. The Sun came here

- i. John 1
 - ii. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it.
 - iii. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - iv. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and^[b] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.
- h. JESUS
- i. God Himself, the Sun of brightness, whom we long to see, but never could, corrupted and enfeebled by sin and death,
 - 1. When we could never come close to him
 - 2. He wrapped himself in humanity, and came close to us
 - 3. Veiled his glory for a while so we could come close, without dying
 - ii. Became a HUMAN
 - 1. God himself
 - 2. With a face.
 - 3. That we could see
 - 4. John 14:9 – JC himself says that anyone whos seen him has seen the father -God
 - iii. Do you see the incredibility of it?
 - 1. In Jesus, the God who could never be seen by fallen broken sinful human eyes became visible.
 - 2. So that we who groan with longing could, hope beyond hope, see the face of God
- i. Jesus
- i. His disciples saw his face
 - 1. And they never forgot it
 - 2. Writing later, John recounts:
 - 3. 1 John 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our^[a] joy complete.
 - 4. These Disciples SAW JESUS, and even talking about it brought them COMPLETE JOY
 - ii. But this was but the first step.
 - 1. We were made to see God FULLY – to look at the sun
 - 2. But we cant as we currently are.
 - 3. It would probably literally burn our eyeballs out
 - iii. So God wasn't done.
 - 1. He was determined to restore what was lost, heal what was broken,
 - a. Whenever Jesus healed people who were physically blind, he was pointing to a deeper healing he would bring, a fuller restoration of our sight
 - 2. God wouldn't be satisfied until we were able to see him AS HE IS. What alone will satisfy the longing he made in our hearts.
 - 3. 1 John 3: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ² Dear friends, now we are children of

God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

- iv. We need NEW EYES to see God
 - 1. These weak eyes aren't up to the task our hearts are begging for
 - v. That's why He's going to resurrect us. For all who LONG for Jesus' appearing, his return and his kingship in our lives and in our world,
 - 1. We'll get new physical bodies.
 - 2. With real, stronger physical eyes.
 - 3. Finally cleansed of sin, finally strong enough to look at our heart's desire
 - 4. The sun
 - 5. AS HE REALLY IS
 - 6. In the fullness of his glory.
 - 7. THAT'S what you're made for.
 - 8. And that's now, hope beyond hope, your birthright and promised future
 - a. Jesus himself promised that Mat 5:8 – blessed are the pure in heart, THEY WILL SEE GOD
 - b. We whose hearts are purified will see God.
 - 9. In rev 22, we see a vision of the future, heaven and earth finally merge- when we're resurrected, with God, in his city...
 - a. Rev 22:1-4 – “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life ... the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face”
 - vi. Do you remember the impossibility of that great hope?
 - 1. It's been SO LONG since the Garden...
 - 2. The booth remains empty!
 - 3. None can see God's face and live
 - 4. It would mean our death
 - vii. So God came died for us
 - 1. So that we might, through HIS death, finally come home, eat again of the Tree of Life, and see God with our very eyes
 - 2. But not just back to the Garden.... Back to where we started
 - a. It's MORE!
 - b. It started in a garden It ends in a city!
 - c. Where there were once two, now there are millions upon millions of redeemed and renewed humans gazing directly on the face of God
 - d. No more distance from these eyes
 - e. and worshiping him -- not in a church service, BUT in the deep fullness of every aspect of life, every thought, conversation, hike, invention, discovery,
 - f. All finally and fully to the glory of God and the joy of every longing heart
 - 3. This is what you were made for
10. So what do we DO with this now?
- a. I submit that this one is different from hearing God
 - b. We're told that through the mediation of Christ, we can approach God's throne with confidence in our prayers. Confident that he hears us
 - i. And because Jesus has sent us his Spirit, and a promise, a down payment on what is to come, God will speak to us
 - 1. In our hearts through his spirit

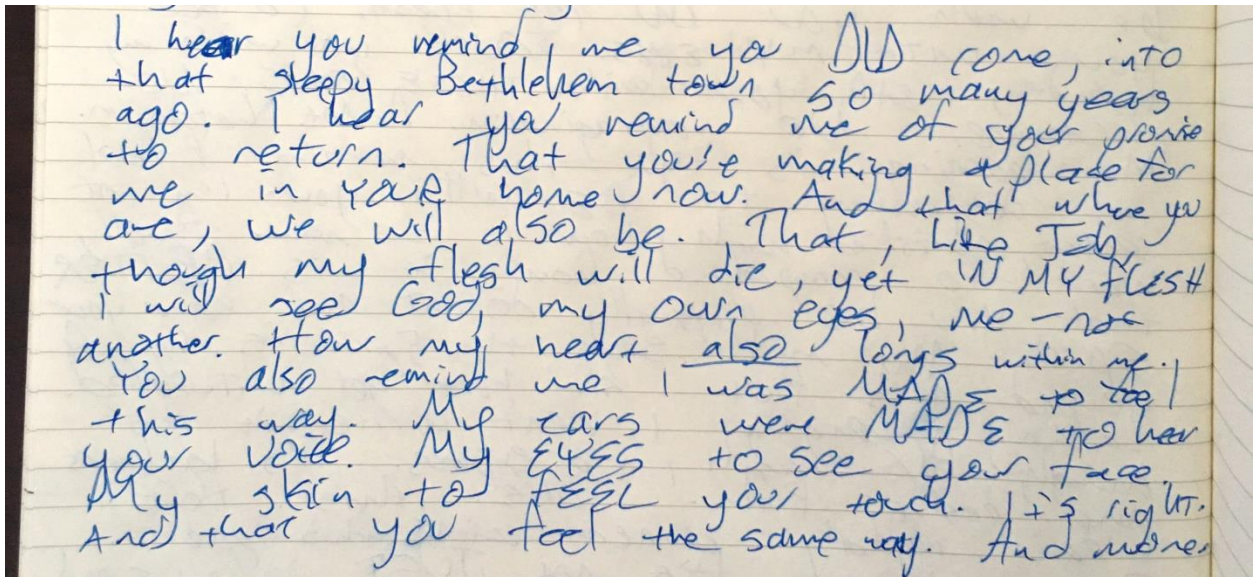
2. And also through his world, and through other believers
- c. But sight is different
 - i. We're not promised that one on this side.
 - ii. But we're clearly to long for it.
 - iii. True Christians are those who LONG FOR HIS APPEARING (2 Tim 4:8)
- d. Our desire to be fully with God, to see his face, is to be central to our Christian Lives.
 - i. This hope, this longing, to be finally and fully WITH GOD, to be with Jesus PHYSICALLY, is to be the arc reactor in the center of our iron man suit
 1. The ARMOR OF GOD if you will
 - ii. To know and experience God's great love for you, and be confident that one day you'll be with him as you were made to be, for your deepest longings to be seen and known, and loved, and to see and know and touch God will happen, because of what God has done FOR YOU in Christ
 1. This is the only thing STRONG ENOUGH, powerful enough to empower your life now
 2. Success isn't strong enough
 3. Pleasure isn't powerful enough
 4. Romantic relationships don't have enough juice
 5. Work will never be able to power the suit of the Xian life
 - iii. Only the love and longing for God, the great hope of resurrected life WITH HIM can power THAT suit
 1. Can enable you to stand firm against the schemes of the evil one
 2. Can empower you to see others around you, and move toward them in self-giving sacrificial love
 - iv. What's powering your suit? Your Christian life.
 1. Is it this? Or something else?
- e. In fact, it's the desire and hope to see Jesus that brings perspective and clarity into our lives now
 - i. Orienting our lives around what's important
 1. People
 2. The mission
 - ii. Bringing us hope and comfort in the midst of suffering
 1. It WILL be ok eventually,
 2. He will wipe every tear from our eyes
 3. Hold on!
- f. We also can train ourselves to see God's work in and around our lives while we wait with eager expectation
 - i. In nature & beauty (God's invisible attributes...) – Romans 1:20
 1. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.
 - ii. In answered prayers
 1. Healings
 2. Heart change and growth
 - iii. Folks turning from darkness to light
 - iv. Not seeing Jesus directly, but indirectly!
 - v. Seeing his hand at work all around us – seeing more and more clearly!
 - vi. 1 Cor 13 - ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1. (Doubting Thomas story – John 20:29) – ²⁹Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”
 2. blessing now for those who don’t get to see JC physically yet, but still believe, still lean in with hope and action
- vii. 1 Peter 1
1. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
11. Finally, some do see Jesus even now
- a. Scripture filled with those who see Jesus after his resurrection
 - i. Stephen during his martyrdom, sees JC in heaven STANDING in his honor
 - ii. Paul on the Damascus road, his eyes literally SCORCHED with the sight
 1. Later restored in poignant symbolism and realism
 - iii. John in his vision in the book of revelation → Jesus is BRIGHT!!!
 1. Took him a bit to realize this is the same guy he knew... slept against.
 - b. A staggering amount of people from Muslim backgrounds are having dreams of Jesus. Isa al Masih – Jesus the Messiah
 - i. It seems that Jesus is hard at work, pursuing men and women in their dreams.
 - ii. Appearing to them.
 - iii. The sheer number of accounts are hard to ignore.
 1. For more about these documented accounts, check out Dreams and Visions: Is Jesus Awakening the Muslim World by Tom Doyle
 - a. Not just a few isolated dreams, but by the hundreds of THOUSANDS
 - b. Doyle tells of one website that asked muslims to share if they’d dreamed of Jesus, and they received over 700,000 stories!
 2. A recent article from THE GOSPEL COALITION (not known for charismatic leanings!) report on more and more stories of MBBs dreaming of Jesus
 - a. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/muslims-dream-jesus/>
 - b. Study after study confirming this
 - iv. And following pretty consistent pattern
 1. Jesus Appearing to them as a man in a white robe
 2. Pointing them to a person or a home
 3. And then, miracle of miracles, these people follow these instructions, find the person described exactly, discover they are Christian, and they lead them to the World → and the Word who became flesh, and dwelled among us 2000 years ago. And who will someday soon return to dwell with us again, forever.
 - v. Indeed, seems like Jesus is hard at work continuing his great mission to draw all groups of people to himself
 - c. Many seem to see Jesus when they are near death
 - i. Pretty common
 - ii. My grandfather, my mom’s dad, years ago when he was dying in a nursing home told my grandma right before he died, when she’d come back in the room, that he’d just seen Jesus.
 1. Where she asked?
 2. Over there, in that corner
 3. What did he look like (HOW WE LONG TO SEE HIM!!!)
 4. But all Grandpa Williams could say was Glory. Glory.
 - a. I believe him.

- b. That Jesus had come to him, to encourage him, and to let him know it was almost time for him to take Grandpa home.
 - i. He who had spent his life telling others about JC
 - ii. He whose body had failed him and lay awaiting rescue.
- 5. And I believe that He seems him now.
- 6. And that I'll see him myself either this side, or certainly on the other.

d. **Revisit the EMPTY BENCH –**

i. **Read Journal**



e.

- 12. Your eyes were made to see God. And your soul was designed to be really WITH Jesus.
- 13. Listening & Reflecting Activity (5min, 5 Qs: pick a question or 2 to sit with, reflect, pray on, listen for God's voice):
 - a. **How connected are you to your longing to be WITH God?**
 - b. **How are you doing living in a world you weren't made for?**
 - c. **What's powering your Christian life?**
 - i. What substitutes do you look to?
 - d. We who long for his appearing are confident that He sees us. Fully seen. Fully known... so
 - e. **As you imagine Jesus looking at you, what's the look on his face?**
 - 1. Is he disappointed with you?
 - 2. Angry?, Annoyed?
 - 3. Is he bored or uninterested?
 - ii. The consistent message from God through his word is that he loves you more than words can describe, more than any human parent has loved their child,
 - 1. And that through the cross, he's removed all our sins, every last stain
 - 2. And "drunk fully the cup of God's wrath due them" to the dregs, every last drop
 - 3. So that no anger is left, no disappointment, no frustration, no condemnation (Rom 8)
 - 4. All that is left is deep, profound, universe filling love, **DESIRE for you**
 - iii. Ask God to show you how he sees you now. To help you see more clearly the look on his face.
 - f. Finally, **imagine what it will be like to really, physically, be with Jesus.** To see him with your new eyes, glorified and radiant, real and relatable.
 - i. To hear his voice TO YOU, to be able to talk with him as friend to friend
 - ii. And to feel the warmth and strength of his embrace around your shoulders.
 - iii. And for the first time in your life know you've come home, and be finally and fully satisfied in the deepest depth of your soul.
- 14. You were made to see God. And if you trust in Jesus, you will. → Come and speak to us, Lord Jesus