

A Personal Relationship with Jesus Will Reveal More About Him

Series: The Empty Tomb and a Risen Savior
Fairview Memorial MBC, February 10, 2025

Introduction

Before we dive into the Scriptures, I would like to say that I have personally experienced this topic before us tonight entitled, **“A Personal Relationship with Jesus Will Reveal More About Him.”** A little before I turned 5, my parents moved from Texas back to Tennessee to raise me in the little town of Clarksburg, Tennessee. My father had worked in iron works, and we had lived in and out of a small camper for the first few years of my life. My parents wanted to settle down in the same town where my Johnson ancestors had arrived in the early 1800s. Throughout this community, there were many Missionary Baptist Churches, where as a child, I heard about Jesus. I heard about him at home, around my grandparents, and at church. My dad led the singing at church, and he would practice at home with Daywind soundtracks at random times during the week. On Sunday mornings, I could hear him practicing in the room next to my bedroom. Many significant truths were expressed though those songs about Jesus.

When we arrived at church, we would sing from the black covered Heavenly Highway hymnal. One of those songs was “Victory in Jesus,” which had the following chorus, declaring, **“O victory in Jesus My Savior, forever, He sought me, and He bought me with His redeeming blood. He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.”** Let’s highlight the phrase, **“He loved me ere I knew Him.”** The word “ere” in the phrase means, “previous to, before, preceding in time.” As we sing this song, we testify that before we came to know the Lord, He loved us and gave Himself for us on the Cross as an all-sufficient atonement for sin. The Apostle John, whose Gospel we will be looking into tonight, tells us some things about the great, big love of God:

- **1) God’s Love is an Eternal Love** - John 17:24-26
- **2) God’s Love is a Generous Love** – John 3:16 (see also Romans 5:8)
- **3) God’s Love is a Faithful and Enduring Love** - John 13:1
- **4) God’s Love is a Sacrificial Love** – John 10:17; 15:13
- **5) God’s Love is a Conquering Love** – John 20:1-10 The Resurrection; Love stronger than death- Song 8:6
- **6) God’s Love is a Personal and Intimate Love** - John 16:27
- **7) God’s Love is a Restoring Love** - John 21:15

I believe the Holy Spirit and the Apostle John would be delighted in this description of God’s love. The Apostle John was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 20:2, 21:7, 20). He knew the love of God, because the Apostle John had a personal relationship with Jesus. For many years, I was like the rest of the world, because I did not know the love of God or have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. However, I can testify tonight about the words of **Victory in Jesus**, **“He loved me ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.”** As we explore this subject tonight, we will consider the following: **1) The World Does Not Have a Personal Relationship with Jesus 2) Having a Personal Relationship with Jesus 3) A Personal Relationship with Jesus Will Reveal More About Him 4) Practical Application: How to Keep the Love of God Burning Bright in Your Life**

1) The World Does Not Have a Personal Relationship with Jesus

- **The purpose of the Gospel of John is for people to know Jesus Christ (20:30-31)**
 - **1) Believe (Know, Saving Faith)**
 - **What must be believed?** Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - **2) Believing (Knowing, Christian life) – (Abundant life – John 10:10)**
 - **You may have life in His name** – zoe, life (state) — the condition of living or the state of being alive; especially healthiness, happiness, exuberance, energy, vitality, and the like.¹
 - **Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29).** For all who repent of their sin and believe the good news about Jesus, His perfect righteousness, which has been secured through His death,

¹ Rick Brannan, ed., [Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

burial, and resurrection is applied to a believer's account. The problem of sin is removed, and a sinner becomes a saint who is reconciled to God in a personal, intimate relationship.

- **The world (present evil culture) does not know Jesus Christ.**
 - World – kosmos, world system — the people constituting the world whose values, beliefs, and morals are in distinction and rebellion to God's.²
 - **Man possesses knowledge without knowing God or being in a personal intimate relationship with Him. God made us to know good and now evil.**
 - John knows people do not know Jesus, so he wrote the Gospel to reveal the true nature of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, in order that people in the world could be saved.
 - **1) Many people know about the historical Jesus.** 2 Corinthians 5:16
 - Radical rabbi, crucified carpenter, or someone greater?
 - **2) Many people are open minded and ever learning, but they are not willing or able to come to a knowledge of the truth.** Convictional truth has not settled in their souls.
 - 2 Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - **3) Many people are Christian in name only.** Some know about Jesus's name without knowing Him. His name very little influence on their lives. 2 Timothy 2:19
 - **4) Many people can know about Jesus through the Scriptures** – John 5:39, 2 Tim 3:15
 - **5) Many people think they know Jesus due to close affiliation with His works and teachings, but they do not know Him in personal salvation.** Luke 13:25-28
- **It's tragic to leave this world without knowing Jesus Christ.**
 - Jesus diagnosed the hearts of the Jews who did not have the love of God in them- John 5:42
 - The unbeliever is condemned already and unprepared for eternity. John 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:8

2) Having a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ

- **Man can know things about God through general revelation of creation and conscience (CREATION)**
 - What is general revelation? The knowledge of God's existence, character, and moral law that comes through creation to all humanity³ (Romans 1:20-23).
- **Man can know God through special revelation in the canon of Scripture (REDEMPTION)**
 - What is special revelation? God's words addressed to specific people, including the words of the Bible. This is to be distinguished from general revelation, which is given to all people generally.⁴
 - The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, *although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation....* Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith, 1742, Article 1, Paragraph 1.
 - What special revelation is revealed about Jesus Christ in John?
 - **Revelation-**apokalypto - to reveal (make public) to make known information that was previously known only to a few people or that was hidden or meant to be kept a secret.⁵
 - **The Great I AM is leading a New Exodus** – He is the Self-existent Savior of the world. John 8:58. Jesus said, "I am the...1) Bread of Life (Jn 6:35), 2) Light of the world."- Jn 8:12 3) Door of the sheep." Jn 10:7, 4) Good Shepherd." Jn 10:11, 5) Resurrection and Life." Jn 11:25, 6) Way, Truth, and the Life." Jn 14:6, 7) Vine, you are the branches." John 15:5
 - The special revelation in Scripture is accompanied by the Holy Spirit to convict and convert the souls of man. 1 Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
 - **The world by its wisdom did not know God** – World's wisdom -*sophia*
 - You can be an expert in all the philosophies of the world yet not know God. Philosophy means love or pursuit (philo) of wisdom (sophia).
 - **God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**
 - The preaching of the Son brings pleasure to God.

² Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 1509.

⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 1524.

⁵ Rick Brannan, ed., *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

- God uses the foolishness of preaching to bring sinners to saving faith.
- **God convicted and converted Mary Magdalene, John, Peter, and Thomas (the disciples, except for Judas, and many others).**
- **God had revealed Himself through the person and works of Jesus Christ.**
 - 1) Mary Magdalene – Her heart had been pierced by the love of God displayed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. She had been a bad woman who was filled with seven devils (Luke 8:1-3)
 - 2) John – Tradition states that John followed John the Baptist and heard him declare as he looked upon Jesus, stating in John 1:36, “Behold the Lamb of God!” John heard Jesus called him and his brother James and they left their family fishing business to follow Jesus.
 - 3) Peter - Matthew 16:17 “...Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”
 - 4) Thomas – He had heard John the Baptist’s preaching and was chosen as an Apostle to follow Jesus. ***These individuals who are listed by name in John 20 came to know Jesus and the love of God in a personal and intimate way. However, the point of salvation is only the beginning of the journey. God wants you to know more about Him.
- **A person can know and be in the double handed grip of God and forever secured in His love – Jn 10:28-30**

3) A Personal Relationship with Jesus Will Reveal More About Him (John 20)

Illustration: Our wedding picture on my bathroom counter. I knew Jenna 18 years ago when I asked her to marry me. I look back on that picture and realize, “I barely knew her.” I know her more today than I did yesterday and will know her more tomorrow.

- **Each of the people listed by name in John 20 had a personal relationship with Jesus, but each would come to know more about the Lord.**
- **Mary Magdalene – (Luke 8:1-3)**
 - 1) She had a dark past and knew what it was like to live without the Light of the world.
 - 2) She experienced a powerful and dramatic healing when 7 demons came out of her (Lk 8:2). Love flooded her soul, and she knew the forgiveness of God.
 - 3) She used her own finances to support the work of Jesus’s ministry.
 - 4) She followed Jesus closely, and Jesus allowed these women to follow, learn, grow, and serve others. In a time when women were looked down upon, Jesus elevated the role of women.
 - 5) She led women closer to Jesus. Anytime her name is mentioned in a Scripture, her name is listed first. Lk 24:10
 - **She was at the cross (John 19:25), the burial (Mark 15:47), and the empty tomb.**
 - 6) She came to know more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 20:1-10) She may have heard him talk about going to cross, being, buried and being raised on the Third day, but she experienced the power of the empty tomb and power of the resurrection.
 - **She experienced grief at the shock and disappointment of Jesus’s death and burial.** She believes someone had taken and stolen the body of Jesus which only added to her sorrow (Jn 20:13)
 - **She saw the empty tomb with angels at the head and foot where Jesus had laid.**
 - **She experienced the comfort of God in ways she had never experienced it.** Angels asked, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Sometimes, a simple question on how are you doing can make all the difference in the world.
 - **She was willing to retrieve the body of Jesus and take care of it if only she knew where to find it.**
 - **She had a personal intimate relationship with Jesus.** In the midst of her grief and sorrow, Jesus said, “Mary”. He knew her name and comforted her in her dark hour.
 - **She was taught a lesson about the ascension of Jesus Christ.** John 20:17

- **She had personally seen the resurrected Lord and was sent to relay Jesus's message to the disciples.** She was used by God mightily to relay the message of Jesus's resurrection and ascension.

- **Peter**

- 1) He had been overconfident though he could not see that in himself. Sometimes, trials remind us of how far along we are in this journey. Matthew 26:35
- 2) He denied Jesus three times and had wept bitterly. Matthew 26:75
- 3) He was the first to go into the Empty Tomb although he was not the first one to make it there (Jn 20:2). Jesus had told them 3x in the Gospel of Mark: 1) Mark 8:31; 2) Mark 9:31 3) Mark 10:34
- 4) He came to know the peace of God while the early church was hiding in Jerusalem for fear of the Jews (20:19).
- 5) He experienced the struggle of knowing what to do next. He resorted to what he used to do. John 21:3
- 6) He came to know the restoring love of Jesus on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Do you love me? 3X John 21:15
- 7) He experienced Jesus giving him a fresh vision for his life and ministry. Feed my lambs (21:15); Feed my sheep (21:16); Feed my sheep (21:17), "Follow me" (21:19). (See 1 Pet 5:1)
- 8) He would experience the power of God in preaching. Acts 2:14
- 9) He would learn to stand corrected by a fellow apostle in Gospel matters. Galatians 2:11
- 10) His last written words are "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:17-18

- **John – The Beloved Disciple.**

- 1) He had been entrusted to care for Jesus's mother, Mary. John 19:27
- 2) He experienced the Empty Tomb with Peter. He outran Peter, looked in, but did not go into the tomb (20:4).
- 3) He saw and believed Jesus had been risen from the dead (20:8-9).
- 4) He had not processed the Scriptures which testified that the Messiah would rise from the dead. There was much in the Scriptures that needed to be sorted through.
 - We have a lot of Scriptures to learn and process in our own lives. 2 Peter 1:3
- 5) He experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit in the upper room and watched his friend and brother, Peter, preach (Acts 1).
- 6) He experienced the grief of losing his brother, James, to martyrdom due to the ruthless political leader named Herod. Acts 12:2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.
- 7) He was known as a pillar of the church in Jerusalem and served other churches (Ephesus). Galatians 2:9
- 8) He was exiled to the island of Patmos for the Word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 1:9
- 9) He was privileged to write 5 books of the NT—the final being entitled, "Revelation." In Revelation, we see the glory of the resurrected and ascended Christ in heaven, the seven golden candlesticks (churches), and the conclusion of God's purposes for the ages.
- 10) He desires to see Jesus and be in His presence without the hindrance of sea or sinful flesh. Revelation 22:20

- **Thomas**

- We do not have a lot of information in the Scriptures about Thomas. He experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ, was chosen as an Apostle, spent time with Jesus, was commissioned to preach, heal, and cast out demons.
- 1) He was ready to die with Jesus - John 11:16
- 2) He had scattered with the rest of the disciples at Jesus's death. Mark 14:50
- 3) He had learned that Jesus is the Way, Truth, and the Life. John 14:5
- 4) He had heard about the resurrection of Jesus, but he did not see Jesus the first time the disciples saw him. He had not experienced the post-resurrection peace of Jesus. John 20:21,24
- 5) He said he would not believe in the resurrection unless he saw for himself the scars in Jesus's hands and side. John 20:25

- 6) He experienced the peace of Jesus when He entered the room eight days later. John 21:26
- 7) He was encouraged in the faith by Jesus. Jesus provided tangible evidence for him. John 20:27
- 8) He declared of Jesus, "My Lord and my God." This is one of the strongest statements in the Bible on the deity of Jesus Christ. Thomas worshipped Jesus, and Jesus received the worship. If He were not God, this would be blatant idolatry. John 20:28-29
- 9) He was in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. This is the last we hear of him in the Scriptures. (Acts 1:13)

4) Practical Application: How to Keep the Love of God Burning Bright in Your Life

1. **Know Jesus Christ - Do you have the love of God in your heart?**
 - a. The Holy Spirit sheds the love of God into the heart of a sinner who is saved by grace- Romans 5:5
 - b. Support the ministry of the Word at your church – Through special revelation contained in the Word of God, people can learn about Jesus and His saving grace.
2. **Worship Jesus Christ privately and publicly – Be like Thomas who declared, "My Lord and My God!"**
 - a. Like John, let the glory of Christ drop you to the floor and allow Him to lift you up with truth.
 - i. Rev 1:17-18
 - b. The church is to be marked by love -John 13:34
3. **Keep yourself in the love of God be remembering the Gospel** – Be like Mary and who came to know the love of Jesus. Remember: *"O victory in Jesus My Savior, forever, He sought me, and He bought me with His redeeming blood. He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him. He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood."* Jude 1:21
 - a. God's love is 1) eternal, 2) generous, 3) faithful, enduring, 4) sacrificial, 5) conquering 6) personal and intimate, and 7) restoring.
 - b. Stay close to your first love - Revelation 2:4
4. **Maintain your growth** Philippians 3:16
5. **Set your desires on the Lord** Philippians 3:10, Colossians 3:1-4
6. **Spend time with the Lord** – Be like John, who stayed close to Jesus. If we want to get to know anyone, we have to spend time together in personal and public fellowship, communicate (prayer and Word), and service.
7. **Be quick to turn back to the Lord when you stray.**
 - a. Repentance belongs to the sphere of the mind, and reformation to the sphere of the life; or, in other words, the former is inward, and the latter is outward. Let no one, therefore, suppose that the command to "repent" is obeyed by a reformation of life; and let no one think his repentance genuine, unless it leads to reformation of life. (JM Pendleton, Christian Doctrines 264-265)
 - b. Confession - 1 John 1:9
8. **Share Jesus with others.** God will work in your life and others as you witness for Him.
 - a. Mary Magdalene led other women to a closer walk with Jesus.
 - b. Peter, John, and Thomas would share Jesus with boldness in Jerusalem and other places where the Lord sent them.
 - c. We talk about the things we love that are the closest and most burning in our hearts. Matt 12:34
9. **Be a life-long learner – I want to know more about my Lord...**
 - a. Desire the sincere milk of the Word - 1 Peter 2:2
 - b. Chew on the meat of God's Word - Hebrews 5:12-14
 - c. Stay committed to maturing in Jesus Christ
10. **Look forward to getting to know the Lord more each day and throughout eternity.**
 - a. I'm glad I know the blessed Savior, For through His blood He set me free, Though rough the road, I shall not waver, For some glad day His face I'll see. Chorus: I want to know more about my Jesus, I want to know more about my Lord, I want to know more about that mansion, I'm gonna receive as my reward, I want to know more about that homeland, I mean to go there, someday somehow, And after I reach that heavenly city, I mean to know more than I know now (Lee Roy Abernathy, 1947).
 - b. A Personal Relationship with Jesus Will Reveal More About Him.