



Meeting Jesus: He Knows
John 1:43-51 (Pew Bible p. 887)
Dr. Jeff Reynolds
Sunday, May 31, 2020
Sermon Link: <https://bit.ly/3eINUGr>

We live in a broken, hurting world. It has been that way since Genesis 3, but we are often faced with new (or painfully familiar) expressions of that reality. We need help. We need hope. We need love. We need healing.

God knows the state of our world, and He has moved to give us the help, hope, love, and healing we need. He gave us His Son, Jesus. When biblical characters met Jesus, their lives changed for good. When we meet Jesus, our lives change for good, too.

Then we, filled with the Holy Spirit, must live out the renewal Jesus brings. We who follow Jesus are to be His hands and His feet, to show the world His love. We grieve the continued brokenness in our world, and we seek to embody the presence, peace, and love of Jesus right where we are. Things will only get better as we live in a manner that truly expresses the love of Jesus Christ for all people, to all people.

In Christ, that can happen. In the name of Christ, that MUST happen. May the world experience Christ in us today.

Today, in an interaction between Jesus and some of His first disciples, we're going to see the extent to which our Lord knows us. I pray we will find comfort and encouragement as we realize that Jesus is deeply aware of what's going on in our lives, and that He is deeply invested in what's going on in our lives.

Big Idea – *Jesus knows.*

1. Jesus comes to us (1:43-46).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see" (John 1:43-46).

Notice that Jesus *decided* to go to Galilee. Why? He had a providential appointment with Phillip and Nathaniel. He was going to transform their lives and employ them in His service. He moved first to get to them. He has moved first to get to us! Here's some scriptural proof:

Galatians 4:4-7 - ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

John 3:16-17 - ¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Matthew 1:23 - ²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

In the 2008 movie “Taken” (not for family viewing), Liam Neeson plays a retired CIA agent whose daughter travels to Paris against his hesitations. In a particularly jarring scene, she faces imminent abduction while on the phone with her father. He says to her, “They are going to take you,” but then he gives her several instructions to indicate that he will come for her. You can view the scene here (parental discretion advised): <https://youtu.be/rJiml5xzK68>

He will pursue her. He will rescue her. He will come for her.

That’s the gospel. We had been taken captive by the hollow philosophies of a world opposed to God, by the carnal longings of a flesh that wants only to please itself, and by an Enemy who desires to steal from us, kill us, and destroy us. But God came for us. By sending His Son, Jesus, God came for us.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion:

- 1) The Bible teaches us that God moved first to reach us. He sent Jesus to rescue us. How did He get to you? Was it through your parents? A teacher or coach? A friend? A Billy Graham Crusade? Something that caught your attention on social media? Think back and share the story of how you first encountered Jesus.
- 2) At the end of “Taken” (spoiler alert), Liam Neeson rescues his daughter, and as she melts into his embrace, she says, “You came for me!” What does it mean to you that God came for you?

2. Jesus knows us (1:47).

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” (John 1:47).

Before they ever met, Jesus knew Nathaniel. He knew that Nathaniel was “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit.” We’ll see that Nathaniel was pretty impressed with Jesus’ knowledge of him, but what Nathaniel didn’t know was that Jesus knew him much more deeply than he thought. He knows you more deeply than you might think, too. Here’s some scriptural proof:

John 2:23-25 - ²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Psalm 139:1-4 – ¹ O Lord, you have searched me and known me! ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

Psalm 139:13-16 - ¹³ For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Matthew 10:30 – ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Think about how well God knows you. He knows what's going on inside you – even the parts you hide from the rest of the world. He sees past the masks you wear (both your literal COVID-19 masks and your figurative masks by which you try to hide from the rest of the world). He knows the real you, and He loves you.

What's more, God knows what you're going to do before you do it. He knows your thoughts before you think them. He knows your words before you speak them. He knows everything about you, and He loves you.

What's even more amazing is that God knew you before you were you. He created you, knitting you together inside your mother's womb. There's design behind you – God's design. He created you uniquely to worship Him and to bless the world. Is His design in you marred by the Fall (see Genesis 3)? Yes. Is His design in you marred by your own sinful decisions? Yes. Is His design in you destroyed? No. Can His design in you be restored so that you might recover and pursue God's good plan for your life? Yes, by placing your faith in Jesus Christ!

If you have repented of your sin and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, God has forgiven you of your sin and positioned you to recover and pursue His good design for your life. How amazing!

One more thing: God knows you better than you know yourself. He knows the number of hairs on your head, and I'm certain that you don't even know that about yourself. And do you know what? He loves you. He really does.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion:

- 1) Nothing about you is hidden from God, and while He loves you too much to condone the sin in your life, He nevertheless loves you with a love beyond compare. What does it mean to you that God knows you perfectly and yet loves you completely?
- 2) God designed you. How are you using what He gave you to glorify Him and bless the world?

3. Jesus sees us (1:48).

⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you" (John 1:48).

Jesus saw Nathaniel before He could physically see Nathaniel. We'll see that Nathaniel was pretty impressed with Jesus' ability to see him, but what Nathaniel didn't know was that Jesus saw him much more clearly than he thought. He sees you more clearly than you might think, too. Here's some scriptural proof:

Genesis 16:13 - So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

2 Chronicles 16:9 - For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

Psalms 56:8 - You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

Hagar was suffering under the oppression of Sarai, who despised her for carrying Abram's child. God met her in the wilderness and illustrated to her that He saw her and was actively looking after her.

In his song, "El Shaddai," Michael Card (who attended First Baptist Church while he was a student at Western Kentucky University) referenced Hagar's story when he wrote, "To the outcast on her knees, You were the God who really sees." You can hear that amazing song here: <https://youtu.be/0dorEYyfuUQ>

God sees you. He is not ignorant of your suffering. He is not ignorant of your pain. He has kept count of your sleepless nights. He knows every tear you have shed. Every single one. He loves you.

Casting Crowns picks up on this truth in "Praise You In This Storm," as they sing these amazing words: "And every tear I've cried / You hold in your hand / You never left my side / And though my heart is torn / I will praise you in this storm." You can hear that song here: <https://youtu.be/0YUGwUgBvTU>

Questions for Reflection / Discussion:

- 1) God is actively looking after you. He never sleeps or slumbers, and He is never inattentive to you. How does the knowledge that God sees you reassure you today?
- 2) If you can always be assured that God sees you and is looking after you, you can also be assured that you can always go to Him with your needs, concerns, anxieties, hurts, and questions. You can also just rest in His presence, knowing that He is there. How might this knowledge change the way you respond to life's difficult moments?

4. Jesus destines us (1:49-51).

⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” ⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”⁵¹ And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” (John 1:49-51).

Jesus went to Galilee, because He had a providential appointment with Phillip. That appointment would lead Phillip to go to Nathaniel, and it would bring about a providential meeting between Jesus and Nathaniel. Jesus came to them. He knew them. He saw them. And He didn’t stop there.

Jesus had a new destiny for those men. He would call them to follow Him, to experience His miraculous ministry, and to pronounce the coming of God’s Kingdom to earth through Jesus Christ to all people. He has a new destiny for you, too. Here’s some scriptural proof:

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

1 Corinthians 2:9 - “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”

Jeremiah wrote to the exiles that God still had plans for them—plans for their welfare and not to harm them. He had hope for them, and He had a future for them.

For we who follow Christ, who are in exile here (see 1 Peter 1:1 and 2:11), God has plans for us, too—plans for our welfare and not to harm us. He has hope for us, and He has a future for us.

Questions for Reflection / Discussion:

- 1) Do you believe that God has plans for you—plans for your welfare and not to harm you, plans for hope and a future? If so, how does that affect your everyday outlook on life?
- 2) The hope of eternity with God has encouraged Christ-followers for 2,000 years. How does that great, eternal hope encourage you today? How might having that hope encourage someone you love today?

Final Thought

Our world is broken, and so many of our fellow image-bearers of God are hurting. We know that Jesus is the answer. He comes to us, knows us, sees us, and gives us a new destiny. We, filled with the Holy Spirit, must live out the renewal Jesus brings. We who follow Jesus are to be His hands and His feet, to show the world His love. We grieve the continued brokenness in our world, and we seek to embody the presence, peace, and love of Jesus right where we are. Things will only get better as we live in a manner that truly expresses the love of Jesus Christ for all people, to all people. In Christ, that can happen. In the name of Christ, that **MUST** happen. May the world experience Christ in us today!