

How many people in this room would you say know you? Raise your hand if your answer would be less than a dozen. More than a dozen? How many people in the whole world know not just your name, but actually know the real you? A dozen? A hundred? A couple? None?

Let's talk today about a man who discovered, to his great surprise, that there was a person whom he had never met who somehow knew all about him.

This man's name was Nathanael. We heard his name in our Bible reading, from John chapter 1. Nathanel's sitting under a fig tree one day, when his good friend, Philip, comes up, all excited. "Hey, Nate, we have found the Messiah! The one our people have been waiting for! The one God promised would come to save our nation! His name is Jesus, and he's from Nazareth. He's the one! He's the man!"

Nathanel's suspicious. "Nazareth?" he asks. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth? There's not even a Chick-fil-a, or a Bojangles, in Nazareth. You're telling me that the Messiah, the Chose one, is from a puny little village like Nazareth?"

But Phillip talks him into going to meet Jesus. And as the two of them are coming into Jesus's eyesight, Jesus says, about Nathanel, "This man here is a true Israelite. There is no deceit or guile in him"

Nathanel stops in his tracks. "How do you know me?" he asks Jesus. "How can you possibly know me?" Jesus says, "Before Phillip found you today, I saw you sitting under that fig tree."

And Nathanael realizes—he has an epiphany—that this Jesus of Nazareth is someone special. He’s superhuman. Jesus has divine abilities, godly powers. “Wow!” Nathanael exclaims. “You are the son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Nathanael suddenly grasps the truth of who Jesus is. He’s God! He’s divine! He may have grown up in Nazareth, but Jesus really came from Heaven. He’s God! “He’s the God who knows me,” Nathanel marvels.

And he’s right. Nathanael’s right. Jesus is the God who knows me, the God who knows you. Now, the Bible tells us that God is omniscient. That means he knows everything. He knows the future, and the past. He knows all about quantum physics, and string theory, and microprocessors, and paleontology. God knows who really killed Kennedy, what really happened at Area 51, and what the Russian hackers really hacked. Our awesome God knows everything!

But what Nathanael came to realize is even more awesome. God knows me. Jesus is the God who knows me, knows you, knows every little thing about you!

Psalm 139 says so: “O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar .... Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord” (vs. 1-2, 4).

Jesus knew Nathanael, and Jesus knows you. He’s not just looking at your name tag, and trying to remember your name. He’s searched you completely. He knows you inside and out. Jesus is the God who knows you.

Now let’s be honest. Sometimes people like us are a little bit hesitant and nervous about his divine knowledge. We’ve got

secrets, issues, things we're ashamed of: habits, selfishness, lusts, failures.

But you can't hide any of that from him. He knows it all. We don't confess our sins each week in the liturgy so that Jesus can find out what we did. He already knows. We confess sin for our own good. So that we can be honest and real, and get humble before the only one who can possibly get rid of our sin.

Because Jesus, the God who knows me, is – amazingly – the God who loves me nonetheless! The God willing to save me! The God of grace who died on the cross to forgive me!

And here's the really important take-home point today. Jesus is the God who wants you to come to know him. He invited Nathanael into his inner circle, and Nathanael got to know Jesus' power, his compassion, his humor, and his love for every person.

And now, today, right here, Jesus is inviting you to come to know him, too. Know his story better. Dig into his teachings. Study his miracles, his healings, his sacrifice. Scrutinize Jesus' dealings with the true believers and the outcasts, the religious and the non-religious – and see what you can learn about how he interacted with people. Sort through Jesus' parables, and figure out how they apply to your life. Dive in to the Gospels, and get to know the Son of God's motivation and his purpose in coming to earth in human form. Read and re-read about the mission that he wants you to carry out. There's a lot to know about Jesus, isn't there?

He already knows you, inside and out. How well have you really come to know Jesus?

So come to know Jesus. Pick up your Bible. Try out a small group here at church. Bring your kids to Sunday School. Sit in on an adult Bible class. Volunteer in some ministry. Brush up on your catechism. Read one of the Gospels this week, and talk about it with a friend, or a family member.

Whether you're a teenager, a grade school student, a senior citizen, a parent, a millennial, a baby boomer, or something else, it's time to get to know Jesus better. I don't know every single one of you. But I'm speaking today for the one who does. Jesus is the God who knows you. And he wants you to come to know him more.

In Jesus' name. Amen.