

## **Life with God: Learning from Jesus**

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Centre Presbyterian Church

**Text: John 17**

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### *Faith Conversation Starters*

- What is one of your favorite stories about Jesus?
- What are three things you admire about Jesus?
- What are two things do you think Jesus likes about you?

### *Introduction*

**Life with God - This is what is all about!** Jesus Christ came as the fulfillment of God's loving and cosmic initiative to be deeply engaged with you and me. This year in our preaching we will combine an exploration of spiritual practice with expansive scripture study to deeper our connection with God.

**For the whole year we will be using a daily devotional, A Year With God** by Richard Foster & Julia Roller, as our guide. My sermons will dig into one of the scripture texts and the faith practice introduced each week. No matter where you are or go, we can travel together in allowing God to transform each of us into the wonderful likeness of Jesus Christ. Copies of A Year With God will be available at church or order online-there is also a Kindle edition available..

### *Learning from Jesus*

**For the next two weeks we are going to consider what we can learn from Jesus.** If you following along in your devotional, we will cover days 14 to 25. Today I want to look at how we can learn from Jesus that God is real and what we can become with God's help.

#### *1. Learning Jesus - God is Real*

**What can we learn from Jesus?** This may seem like an obvious question. We can and have learned a lot from Jesus. We have a whole book full of his life story and teachings. What we know for sure is that he claimed to be God's Son and the Savior promised in the Hebrew scriptures. Jesus came so we could understand God in a whole new way. Face to face, up front and close.

**Do you remember the first time Jesus became real to you?** When I was eight years old, I was living outside of Tokyo, Japan at Yokota Air Force Base. I loved all the new sights, sounds, and smell of the Japanese culture. My friends and I would ride our bikes to the local stores and buy gum and candy. I can still remember how the shop owners used an abacus to calculate the total cost. It all was very engaging and fun. One day, though, the fun stopped abruptly. A friend

from Sunday School, Glenn, and his brother were racing their bikes through town and Glenn did not see a train coming. He was hit and killed. Later as I sat in the pew at his funeral, I was in shock. This world I was exploring was more dangerous than I ever realized. In that moment the life and words of Jesus came to me in a new way. This was not the end for Glenn. He was in good hands and so was I. I would not be alone in this world. Jesus would guide me and help me.

- *Take a moment to talk about an early memory you have of Jesus.*

## *2. Learning from Jesus - What We Could Become*

**As I continued to grow in my faith, I was struck how wonderfully whole and mature Jesus was.** Not only did Jesus teach a new way of relating to God and people, he lived it. Jesus seemed to know what to do, how to respond in every situation he found himself. Whether it was answering the questions of disciples or reaching out to heal a man suffering from leprosy, Jesus knew how to respond. Like in the confrontation with the Pharisees in John 8 who brought Jesus a woman caught sleeping with man who was not her husband. The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus. Would he be legalist or lenient? It was a no win situation. Jesus, however, turns the tables on them by giving a both legal and mercy response: “*Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.*”

**After reading a passage like this I would often would say to myself, “I want to be like that...**knowing how to respond with wisdom, courage, and compassion in every interaction I have. I want to be like Jesus...fully human with God working in and through me. That was one of the early motivators for me becoming intention about grow in my Christian faith. How about you? What attracted you to Jesus? What in his life you would like in your life today?

- *Take a moment to talk about your response to these two questions: What attracted you to Jesus? What in his life you would like in your life today?*

## *3. Learning from Jesus - the Heart of God*

**In John 17 we overhear a Divine conversation.** The Apostle John records this prayer of Jesus talking to God about us, you and me. Listen to Jesus share his heart for all who want this life with God. “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me— so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

**I have always found it comforting that Jesus even had followers in the Twenty First century on his heart.** He prayed, *“My prayer is not for them [my disciples] alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message [that’s us!].”* Thank you, Jesus, for remembering us! Friends, please know that Jesus is carrying you and me in his heart and prayers today. How does it make you feel knowing that the whole Holy Community of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit is remembering you today?

- *Take a moment to talk about God’s love has changed your thinking and life.*

*Closing Prayer:* Gracious God, you are always reaching out to us. Thank you for sending your Son to be with us, teach, and rescue us and your Spirit to guide and empower us. Help us to live and thrive in your circle of love. In Christ, Amen.