

Discovering God

Part 1: Is God Ok With My Questions?

John 1:35-42

Summary: God invites our curiosity and questions so we can discover and enjoy who he really is.

Main Ideas:

Expectations can keep us from discovering who God really is.

To enjoy God we have to know God.

Jesus' interactions with people revealed God's heart toward people.

God invites our curiosity

Jesus tends to spark curiosity in people.

Jesus expects us to have questions.

Jesus is patient and personal with our questions and doubts.

When we ask questions we might just find answers that help others.

The journey of discovering God usually starts with honest curiosity.

Ask your questions but be willing to follow where they lead .

When we are willing to question God we begin to discover God for who he really is.

Invitation:

Think through and write down...

- What questions do I have for/about God?
- What am I going to do to explore some answers?

Discussion Questions:

1. Re-read John 1:35-42. What stands out to you the most?
2. If you could ask Jesus anything, what would you ask?
3. Why do you think curiosity is so important in a relationship with God? How has your curiosity shaped your faith?
4. What practical steps can you take this week to explore some of your questions about God?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

ME: Expectations. Are the worst.

- Ruins friendships, relationships, families.
- Hate them... sometimes swear within first 5 min of someone finding out what I do for a living just to buck some of the usual expectations of a pastor.

Expectations don't just hurt relationships with others...

- Expectations can keep us from discovering who God really is.
- Maybe you've felt expectations from churches/people to believe/behave/vote a certain way.
- Made you think God expects same things too?

But what if, instead of meeting and conforming to some set of divine expectations God simply wants us to know him and enjoy him?

What if God's goal for us wasn't behavioral control but to enjoy, have fun with, savor, cherish, delight in, celebrate him... even when life closes in and threatens to overwhelm us?

I don't know, that sounds pretty great to me...

And I think it's what God wants for each of... But if we want to enjoy someone we first have to know them right?

Think about it—how can we truly enjoy a relationship when we're not sure who the other person really is?

If we want to enjoy God fully, we need to know who He is, not just who we think He is based on our own expectations.

To enjoy God we have to know God.

But how do we know God?

Throughout history people have tried all sorts of ways...

- Nature, signs, miracles, prophets, religious texts, looking inside of ourselves...
- Can be good and he probably does in these ways too...
- But just seems inadequate to really KNOW him

Wouldn't the clearest, most effective way be just to come and show us who he is... interact with us, talk to us, and live with us?

- That's exactly who Jesus claimed to be...
- Jesus' interactions with people revealed God's heart toward people.

Series: 6 weeks Talking about Jesus' interactions with people so we can discover God for ourselves.

And to discover God we have to get rid of some expectations... especially when it comes to questioning God.

- For some reason, whether from within or from other people, we think there is an expectation on us to just believe everything w/o question.

We think God is going to be annoyed/angry/disappointed by our questions and doubts

- I can't ask that/ I'm scared to ask that/ I never thought about asking that.
- I was told to stop asking that when I was younger.

But guess what, if there really is a God, the God Jesus said he was, then he should be able to handle any question we can think of.

And if God really wants us to know him... one of the best ways to know someone is to ask them questions...

- Actually a conversation secret many people seem to have forgotten.

We might think we know who God is... but if we don't ask questions we'll never discover who he really is.

- And we'll never be able to truly enjoy him in every part of our life.

And in one of the first recorded interactions Jesus had with people he showed us it's ok to ask questions

- B/c God invites our curiosity

GOD: We see this idea play out in what we call the Gospel of John (Good News)

Very interesting piece of ancient literature...

- Basically a biography of Jesus' life written by one of his closest friends/followers... John.

After Jesus' D&R, John spent life telling people about his friend Jesus...

- As he got old and near death realized he needed to write down his experience before it was lost...
- And in his account he tells us how his curiosity and questions led him to first meet Jesus.

From what we can tell John started as a student/follower of a different John... John the Baptist.

Who we think was a relative of Jesus'

- Became very famous for his eccentricities and fiery sermons against the religious elite
- Baptizing people to prepare the way for God's Messiah... anointed one who God promised would restore his people.

So one day John is doing his thing and Jesus walks by and John freaks out!

- "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"
- "He's the one I've been talking about and that I've been preparing you all for!"
- And everyone seems to find that interesting and goes along with their day.

But then it happens again...

V. 35-37 These two guys, one of which many believe was the author John himself, heard what JB said...

- They are obviously curious and want to find out for themselves who this Jesus guy was.

Maybe you've experienced something similar?

- Heard someone tell you about God/Jesus/difference it's made in their life and you want to find out for yourself.
- As we read further, you'll see you're in good company.

So these two start following Jesus and it just seems like a funny scene...

- Miss out on so much when we read the Bible religiously

Like how close are they following?

- Right on his heels?
- Being nonchalant hands in pockets whistling while keeping enough distance but not too much to lose him?
- Hiding behind bushes so they don't tip him off?

Either way, they are curious and want to know more... very common, has happened to billions of people since...

- Jesus tends to spark curiosity in people.

What we read next is Jesus' first words in John's account... how John wanted to introduce his friend/teacher/God...

V. 38 "What do you want?"

Again how does he say it?

- "Uhh what are you guys going in the bushes?"
- Or "Why are you breathing down my neck w/o saying anything?"

But he sees them and asks, "What do you want?"

Probably 2 meanings to this question

- 1st- Why are you following me?
- 2nd- More to the root... What are you hoping to get from following me? What are you expecting to find by following me?
- "I heard John yell who he thinks I am, I know you heard him yell it... what do you want to know?"

Jesus expects us to have questions.

- If he really is who he said he is... that's kind of mind blowing.
- He doesn't expect us just to agree and be like, "Ok yeah God in a body, sure I get it."

Now at this moment these 2 guys could have asked Jesus anything...

- Are you really what John said you are?
- And if so what does that even mean?
- Are you going to fight the Romans?
- Do pets go to heaven?

But instead they ask.... Where are you staying?

- Basically inviting themselves over to spend one on one time getting to know him.
- To ask him their pressing questions and have his attention in his answers.

And Jesus thinks that's a great idea...

V. 39 Come and see... Jesus gives them a personal invitation to investigate.

- John says they were with him for the rest of the day... Jesus cleared his entire schedule for them.
- Jesus is patient and personal with our questions and doubts.

Must have been an amazing conversation... one of those conversations that range from deep thoughts, joking around, eye-opening insights

- While having you thoughts/feelings/self affirmed and invited.
- Mind-blowing.
- John never forgot it... knew the exact moment he first talked to Jesus... 4 pm

And this afternoon conversation changed their lives.

So much so that they had to tell someone else about it..

V. 40-41 Andrew had discovered something that changed his life.

- The answers he'd been looking for
- The person he'd been looking for

And b/c of his curiosity and his willingness to ask questions he discovered someone he knew his brother had to meet.

When we ask questions we might just find answers that help others.

- Your questions might be something your friend, sibling, kid will ask someday.
- You being willing to ask now will give you insights that could help then.

And b/c of Andrew's willingness to ask questions Simon's life is changed too.

V. 42 This is weird... miss it when reading the Bible religiously...

Jesus: So your name is Simon? Nah, you're gonna be Peter.

Peter: Uh ok.

Jesus showing he knows who Peter will become.

- Knows that b/c of Andrew and John's curiosity and questions... These guys' lives are changed forever.
- Knows they are going to become people who truly know and enjoy God.

The same thing that has happened to billions of curious people for the last 2000 years.

The journey of discovering God usually starts with honest curiosity.

YOU: So you're turn.

- Just like Andrew and John we all have questions.

What are you curious about? What have you always wondered about God

- What doubts/concerns are still lingering in your head?

If Jesus welcomed their questions, he's inviting yours too.

You are here/listening for some reason...

- What do you want? What are you seeking/ What do you want by following Jesus?

If Jesus really is who he said he is... if there really is a God who knows us and loves us and wants us to know and enjoy him... he can handle any question and doubt you have.

Think about this... maybe God has put those questions and doubts in your mind/gut b/c he wants you to ask, and dig, and get to know him better so you can enjoy him more.

- Maybe he's put those questions in your head for the first time b/c he's been purposely pursuing you and knows now is the right time for you to ask questions and get answers.

Don't be afraid of your questions and doubts b/c God can handle them.

- He already knows you have those questions and doubts anyway... you're not fooling him.

Whether JF or not... This is your invitation to ask your questions.

Invitation: Think through and write down...

What questions do I have for/about God?

What am I going to do to explore some answers?

Nothing is off limits. No question is dumb. (Teachers say that to make kids feel better, but in this case it's actually true)

Just b/c you've always believed something or always been told something doesn't mean it's true.

- Maybe it is... but in your exploring you'll discover why it's amazing that it is true

And the more you dig, the more you're going to discover how much there is to enjoy about God.

The questions that have really grown my enjoyment of God in the past few years...

- What's the deal with hell?
- Why did Jesus really have to die?
- What does Jesus' love really look like?

I'm sure your questions will be different... Maybe theological about God or more personal about God and you...

- Why so much violence in OT?
- Where are you, God? Can you really do anything about my situation?
- How does a God of love allow so much pain?
- Do you actually love/accept/forgive me?

Also great to explore with others... That's what Andrew and John did.

- Maybe Andrew asked Jesus a question that then sparked another question in John or helped clarify something John couldn't put into words.

Why we have created a community at Crosscreek where it is safe for JF and Not JF alike to ask questions and explore doubts.

- Connect Groups.

Advice: Ask your questions... all of them... but be willing to follow where they lead.

We can get so used to asking questions that we forget why we started asking in the first place.

- Honest doubt is about growing. Doubt for doubt's sake is just annoying and boring and stuck.

So have the courage to go where your answers lead you... even if it's not where you thought they would go.

WE: Jesus' interactions WITH people revealed God's heart TOWARD people.

And through these interactions we see beyond a shadow of a doubt that God personally invites the curious.

He wants us to know him so we can enjoy him in every part of our life.

Imagine the freedom of asking God any question you have.

Of not being afraid of where the answer will lead b/c you know it will lead to enjoying him more and more

It takes us out of a religion of expectations into a living, breathing, daily relationship of enjoying and being enjoyed by God himself.

When we are willing to question God we begin to discover God for who he really is.