

Truly Knowing Jesus [Eyes To See]

Discussion Guide

Summary

This sermon opens a new series focused on moving beyond surface-level faith into a genuine, transformative relationship with Jesus. Jonathan draws a distinction between knowing facts about Jesus and truly knowing Him through personal encounter and spiritual revelation. Using the example of an optical illusion, the sermon illustrates how people can look directly at something and completely miss it, just as many people in the Gospels saw Jesus but did not recognize Him as the Messiah.

The core message is that spiritual blindness is not an intellectual problem but a heart problem. Hardened hearts, shaped by disappointment, fear, pride, or distraction, prevent people from truly seeing Jesus. The disciples were not smarter or more righteous than the Pharisees, but they stayed close to Jesus with open, willing hearts. That same invitation to see Jesus clearly, to move from head knowledge to heart transformation, is available to every believer today through prayer, honesty, community, and a willingness to let Jesus rewrite our expectations.

Intro Prayer

Lord, we come to you today with open hands and willing hearts. We admit that sometimes our faith can feel more like routine than relationship, and we want more than that. As we gather together, we ask that you do what only you can do: open the eyes of our hearts. Help us to

set aside our assumptions, our distractions, and our defenses, and give us a genuine hunger to truly know you, not just know about you. Holy Spirit, lead our conversation today. Speak through your Word and through one another. May what we discuss move from our heads into our hearts, and may we leave this time changed by an encounter with the living Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one thing you believed as a child that you later discovered was completely different from what you thought it was?

Key Verses

- John 9:39-41
- Matthew 13:10-17
- John 1:10-12
- Luke 24:13-16, 28-31
- Ephesians 1:16-20
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 6
- Psalm 119:18

Questions

- Jonathan described the difference between knowing about Jesus and truly knowing Jesus. In your own words, what do you think that difference looks like in everyday life?
- Jesus said the Pharisees were spiritually blind even though they were brilliant theologians who had studied

Scripture their whole lives. What does that tell us about the limits of religious knowledge on its own?

- In Matthew 13:15, Jesus says the hearts of the people were hardened and they had closed their eyes. Jonathan identified disappointment, fear, pride, and distraction as common causes of a hardened heart. Which of these do you think is most common in your own life, and why?

- The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus at first, but when their eyes were opened, they said their hearts burned within them (Luke 24:32). Have you ever had a moment where something about Jesus suddenly became real to you in a new way? What was that like?

- Jonathan said that even Satan and demons believe Jesus exists, but they are not in relationship with Him. What is the practical difference between believing in Jesus and being in a genuine relationship with Him? How does that show up in daily decisions?

- Paul prays in Ephesians 1:18 that the eyes of your heart will be flooded with light. What do you think it means for the eyes of your heart to be open? What does that look like practically?

- The sermon offered several steps for moving from surface-level faith to truly knowing Jesus, including asking God for open eyes, creating space for encounter, being honest about what you really believe, and doing it in community. Which of these feels most challenging for you personally, and why?

- Jonathan closed by saying Jesus is not asking you to clean yourself up first. He is asking you to soften your heart and come as you are. How does that challenge or encourage you where you are right now in your faith journey?

Life Application

This week, make Psalm 119:18 your daily prayer: 'Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions'. Pray it every morning when you wake up, pray it during your commute, and pray it in any quiet moment you can find. Alongside that prayer, choose one specific distraction to set aside for at least 30 minutes each day, whether that is your phone, social media, or background noise, and use that time to sit quietly and invite Jesus to meet you. At the end of the week, write down or share with someone in your group one way you sensed God responding to that prayer.

Key Takeaways

- Spiritual blindness is a heart condition, not an intellectual one. You can know every fact about Jesus and still miss who He truly is if your heart is closed or hardened.
- There is a critical difference between knowing about Jesus and truly knowing Him. Real relationship with Jesus is transformative and impossible to compartmentalize into just one day of the week.
- Hardened hearts, caused by disappointment, fear, pride, or distraction, are the primary barrier to genuinely seeing and encountering Jesus.
- Spiritual sight is a gift from God, not something we can earn or think our way into. It begins with an honest, humble prayer asking God to open the eyes of our hearts.
- The invitation to truly know Jesus is open to everyone right now. Like the disciples, we do not need to be the

smartest or most righteous. We simply need to be willing to stay close to Him with open hearts.

Ending Prayer

Father, thank You for this time together and for the truth that You want to be known by us even more than we want to know You. We confess that we have sometimes settled for surface-level faith, going through the motions while keeping our hearts at a safe distance. Today we choose differently. We ask You, Lord, to open the eyes of our hearts. Soften the places that have grown hard through hurt, fear, pride, or distraction. Help each of us to move from simply knowing about You to truly knowing You in a way that burns in our hearts like it did for those disciples on the road to Emmaus. As we go into this week, may the prayer of Psalm 119:18 be on our lips and in our hearts every single day. Open our eyes, Lord. We want to see You. In the precious name of Jesus, amen.