



Tell Me the Story: Come and See

March 31st, 2024 - Easter Sunday- Pastor Jason Carter

Jesus is one of the most intriguing and yet polarizing figures in history. Everyone wants Jesus on their side and for their cause **but not everyone wants to follow Him wherever it may lead.** There are many assumptions about Jesus.

Most theologians and historians believe Jesus lived and existed, even if some deny His deity. Other religions identify Him as a respected prophet in the Muslim Quran, Hindus believe Jesus to be a holy man and wise teacher. Buddhism proclaims Jesus to be a wise/enlightened teacher and a holy man. Jewish Talmud: miracle worker and respected teacher.

In the time of Jesus, people loved Him for His teachings, healings, the rebuke of the religious leaders, and their hypocrisy. Many hoped he would be the Messiah and overthrow the Roman government.

Often we ask, "What would Jesus do?" and today we will show you some of what Jesus did. BUT ultimately, we have to ask a bigger question: **What will I do with Jesus?**

All of us have biases toward God based on a bad example or experience with religious people. It now affects the way we see, understand, and interact with God. But today I want us to see how God responded to people by looking at the person of Jesus. To see how Jesus met people where they were and gave them **an invitation to "Come and See."** And then ultimately take the next step of **"Come Follow Me."**

Come and See is an invitation, not only just to know **about** Him, **but to know Him.**

Let's start with the empty tomb.

Matthew 28:1-10 NIV "After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." ⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet

and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; **there they will see me.**"

PJ's thoughts: I want you to understand that I know I can't convince you that Jesus was the son of God, died on a cross for the sin of the world, and rose from the dead. This must be revealed to you.

John 1:14 NIV ¹⁴ "The Word (of God) became flesh (Jesus) and made his dwelling among us. We **have seen** his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

This means Jesus experienced all that we feel. He was troubled, angry, frustrated, tired, wept, everything. He can identify with what it means to be human.

He gives up His place in Heaven in order to become the perfect sinless sacrifice for sin. But also, to reveal to His people His nature and invite us to come and see what He is truly like. He wants us to see all different types of people, their hang ups about coming to Jesus, and then invite them to Himself regardless of their hang ups.

John 5:19 NIV ¹ "Jesus gave them this answer: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what **he sees** his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'"

John 14: 9 NIV "Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me **has seen** the Father.'"

1. When Jesus was calling His disciples, how does He handle the unqualified?

Often people do not feel qualified to follow Jesus, but Jesus extended an invitation to them!

John 1:35-39, 45 NIV ³⁵ "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!' ³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What do you want?' They said, 'Rabbi' (which means "Teacher"), 'where are you staying?' ³⁹ '**Come,**' he replied, '**and you will see**'... ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus.'"

They weren't the best of the best. Jesus was not an elitist, hierarchal, nor did He choose best title, best religious backgrounds, or best families. He chose based on an earnest desire for God.

To those of us who feel unqualified, Jesus says, "Come and See."

- Aren't you glad God does not preselect based on your past or where we come from? How do you identify with the disciples Jesus chose?

2. How does Jesus handle the skeptical but curious?

In this case an actual religious leader in Israel.

John 3:1-2 NIV "Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.'"

Nicodemus recognized different authority and decided he had to see it for himself. He was a religious leader (Pharisee) who were trying to pull Jews back into a strict adherence to the law of Moses by adding

more laws. Nicodemus has a lot to lose- his reputation, his position but he has to know! He shows up at night, when no one can see him, **yet Jesus was willing** to meet with him at night because He knew what was at stake for Nicodemus if he were caught with Jesus.

- Do you remember when God began dealing with you? You know you know there is something about this Jesus, but you are not ready to commit. In your gut, you know it to be right?

You can see the metamorphosis of Nicodemus. He defends Jesus: **"Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"** (John 7:50-51)

Then he helps bury Jesus. **"He and another man helped to bury Jesus. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen."** (John 19:39-41)

Nicodemus encountered the real truth of Jesus. And when you do, you can't shake it.

To those of us who are skeptics and curious, Jesus says, "Come and See."

3. How does Jesus handle the broken?

Many of us have had experiences in life. Things that have happened to us, some that we have done. And you may be thinking, "If you only knew what I have done or what has been done to me. If you only knew my backstory..."

John 4: The woman at the well: Many would label her as Damaged goods

Jesus goes to a well at midday and a woman came to the well to get water. Culturally, women normally did not go at midday, nor did they go alone. She was a "half breed", a Samaritan woman, who had 5 previous husbands, and the man she was now with was not her husband. She was vulnerable, whether through death or divorce, there was not much she could do.

- Have you ever felt so down or beaten down you believed you could not be reached?

Jesus tells her, in the midst of the struggle, there is living water that will satisfy that desire in her that nothing in this life can quench; it's more than just her physical thirst. Jesus tells her "I know your story." He meets her at the wrong time of day, breaking Jewish and religious protocol, to tell her she has value. He does not sin. He just defies cultural expectations to reach people. He is a Jewish man, meeting a mixed ethnic woman breaking religious rules to reveal value, worth and love.

John 4:27 NIV ²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

- Jesus puts Himself right by you if you will notice and respond. Have you experienced this in your own life? Share.

Her response to her community: John 4:29 NIV **"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"**

To those of us with a past, Jesus says, "Come and See."

4. How does Jesus respond to the sinner and the outcast?

Every culture has groups others don't want to hang around with.

Mark 2:15-17 NIV ¹⁵“While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’¹⁷ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

People say often, “If I showed up at church, the walls would shake.” That is not true. But I can guarantee that Jesus would draw near. **He would sit right next to you.** This is what God is like. Jesus drew near to the prostitute, the tax collector, and the sinner.

To those of us who are the sinner and the outcast, Jesus says, “Come and See.”

5. How does Jesus treat the one who carries shame from sexual sin?

The woman had been set up. She was caught in adultery and by Jewish law, they could stone her. It was a trap for Jesus. The religious leaders asked Jesus what He would do with her. Jesus told them whomever was without sin should throw the first stone at her....

John 8: 9-11 NLT ⁹“When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, ‘Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?’¹¹ ‘No, Lord,’ she said. And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I. Go and sin no more.’”

Don't get me wrong, God hates sin. It separates, us from God; it destroys relationships; it undermines trust; it keeps people imprisoned through shame. People hide. But He is willing to meet us in it and help us sin no more.

- Notice it was the oldest who walked away first. The older you get, the more you realize how much you don't know, and how much you need a savior. How have you seen this in your own life?

To those of us caught up in sexual sin, Jesus says, “Come and See” how I will meet you and free you from it.

6. How does Jesus greet the one who mocks God?

In Mark 15, we read where the criminals crucified with Jesus mocked Him and in Luke 23, one of the men has a change of heart.

Luke 23:39-43 NIV ³⁹“One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don't you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence?’⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.’⁴² Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’⁴³ Jesus answered him, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

God does not hold a grudge. We all know that people do, but in the worst moment for Jesus, His response to the thief who once mocked Him was forgiveness and mercy. Not anger or a grudge.

To those who need forgiveness, Jesus says, "Come and See."

- What grudge do you think God is holding against you? This is keeping you from truly knowing Him.

7. How does Jesus address the doubter?

- Have you ever struggled with doubt? The disciple Thomas did. He is protecting his heart and is afraid to believe and afraid to be let down. Ever been there before? You honestly don't have any room for disappointment? How do you relate to Thomas?

What does Jesus do? He didn't rebuke Thomas. He told him to come to Him.

John 20:27 NLT "Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!'"

Jesus understands your doubt.

PJ's story of his proposal to Carissa: Come find me. He gave her clues because he wanted her to find him, and to spend her life with him. That is how God feels about us.

To those who doubt, Jesus says, "Come and See."

8. How does Jesus engage historian and the researcher?

To many of us, details matter. Jesus throughout His life and even while on the cross has been quoting the Old Testament scriptures that have been pointing to Him for centuries. The Jews would have been studying all these scriptures, these prophecies. Prophecies that spoke of the time, place, His lineage, betrayal, the suffering servant, etc.

Matthew 27:46 NIV ⁴⁶"About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, ^[a] lema sabachthani?' (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")."

Check out [Psalm 22](#).

God cares about the details. Even in His death He is leaving breadcrumbs to the researcher saying go research it and you will find me. Read the prophecies of the Old Testament. Read what I have quoted in the New Testament. Read history. You will find Me.

More and more people within the scientific community are studying the data in the disciplines of mathematics, biology, cosmology, physics and chemistry and beginning to have a larger conversation about origins and where they actually lead. They are leading back to Jesus.

Francis Collins is a physician-geneticist noted for his landmark discoveries of disease genes and his leadership of the international Human Genome Project, which culminated in April 2003 with the completion of a finished sequence of the human DNA instruction. God answered Collins' intellectual and spiritual questions, especially when looking at nature, especially when he understood the "15 constants" needed in our natural world for life. The specificity of these constants' points to design.

Collins also read C.S. Lewis and felt the conviction of moral law. He and science also confirm that there is no evolutionary process that explains how one would care for an enemy.

Luke 23:34 NIV ³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

John 3:16-17 NIV ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Nothing in science explains how a person can love someone who despises them.

- Have you known this kind of love/ the purity, the passion (suffering), the willingness to love so completely that He allows us to make a choice to choose? Have you wrestled it out and received it? How does its reality affect you?

To the historian who cares about the details, do the research. You will find that God left you clues all along the way and Jesus says, "Come and See."

So we have seen how Jesus met the unqualified, skeptical but curious, the one described as damaged goods, the sinner and outcast, for the one who carries shame from sexual sin, to a mockers change of heart, a doubter failed Jesus, to the historian and the researcher who is looking.

And **in every case**, Jesus meets people where they are and invites them to Come and See. And there are many more examples. We can see how Jesus responds to us. **You have seen what Jesus is like**. If you have seen what Jesus is like, you have seen what our Heavenly Father is like as well. **When you look at the cross you see a God willing** to pay the price for sin that we may be saved and have relationship with Him. And in the Resurrection, **we see there is nothing impossible**. No person, no situation, no past, no present and no future issue that God can't deal with. This is what Easter means. For God so loved the world that He gave.

- The questions you must answer is: What will I do with Jesus?

- Who do you most identify with? Maybe it is several?

- What does Holy Spirit want you to do now that you have this reality in front of you?

- Who do you know who may be caught in one of these "lies" that keeps them from the truth of Jesus? What truth do you need to take them? Make a plan today of how you will do it. Tell someone your plan and keep yourself accountable to it.

- Practically, no matter where you are in your faith journey, you have recognized something new or have been reminded of something about our Savior that you haven't thought about in a long time. What can you thank Him for today? What do you need to repent of and come to Him?